

“Raised to be a breeder” by his mother Bazy Tankersley, Mark Miller is scripting the production of a lifetime directing Al-Marah’s legacy into the future.



Bremervale Andronicus++++// and AM Power Raid+++/ in 2006 after they were pinned Sport Horse National Champion and Reserve National Champion Sport Horse Stallions, possibly the only time the same breeder has ever had National and Reserve Champion Stallion.

OPPOSITE: Bazy Tankersley and son Mark Miller on AM Canadian Beau++ and Al-Marah Garcon+, opened the Living Pedigree.

A New Kind of Show



For 25 years, Mark Miller directed the award-winning Arabian Nights Dinner Attraction that he founded in 1988 in Kissimmee, Florida, and produced 365-days-a-year. He shared his love of horses, world-famous equestrian talent, and Al-Marrah Arabians with 10 million people from around the globe until the show wrapped on December 31, 2013, after the New Year's Eve show. Now, his biggest assignment unfolds, directing the course of history for the legacy of Al-Marrah Arabians.

BY ELIZABETH KAYE MCCALL



Suzanne, Inc.

LEFT: Al-Marah Create Astar
RIGHT: AM Good Oldboy+
BELOW: Al-Marah Lady Anne+
OPPOSITE TOP: Mark and the AM Canadian Beau++ son AM Beau Triomphe who was syndicated for \$1 million in the 80's.



“I was raised to be a breeder,” says Mark, son of the late Ruth “Bazy” Tankersley, who left him a breed legacy — the oldest continuously-bred, privately-owned band of Arabians in the world. He says, “I was trained for more than 55 years by the pre-eminent breeder in the world, my mother. This herd doesn’t just represent 70–some years of Al-Marah history. It is the core herd of the Arabian horse, first gathered in the desert by Abbas Pasha 200 years ago. Breeding and preserving this band of horses is a privilege and an obligation.”

Born in Chicago, Illinois, Bazy’s only son grew up with “cowboys and politicians,” as Mark describes his early life on the 1,000+ acre Arabian farm in Maryland outside Washington D.C., that was once called Al-Marah Ranch. (“I don’t know when it changed from ‘ranch’ to ‘farm,’” he

says.) An oasis for dignitaries and every famous equestrian act passing through town, Mark's formative years ranged from playing poker with Barry Goldwater to riding Roy Rogers' horse Trigger. "Mother had me making my own breeding decisions before I was 12," says Mark. "I think she pretty much knew what decisions she wanted me to make, but we would have a discussion. Even when I didn't understand what she was doing, she would allow me to have my opinion. Sometimes it would be years later and she'd say, 'The reason I did this, was...'"

Yet, even Bazy did not realize the full impact of her landmark 1957 importation of the Crabbet Arabians from England immediately as Al-Marah's part in a destiny seemingly scripted by Fate unfolded.

"In the winter of 1957 an importation to America as significant in Arabian history as that made by the Blunts to England, was the landing at Al-Marah Farm of thirteen mares and five stallions from Crabbet Park, and thirteen mares and one stallion from Hanstead House..." wrote British author Margaret Greely. In her authoritative work ARABIAN EXODUS (© 1975; J.A. Allen & Company Limited), the author chronicles generations of unbroken lineage from the desert and Abbas Pasha Stud to Ali Pasha Sherif's Stud to Wilfrid and Lady Anne Blunt's part "in the very survival of the breed" to the role of Bazy Tankersley in preserving the unity of a group of horses "whose descendants are still valued for perfection."



Mark (on the ground) talking with trainer Kim Barteau (Kassie's stepfather) who is on *Saika at Al-Marah Micanopy in Micanopy, Florida in the 80s. Kim was Harold Brite's last apprentice and worked for Mark for 20 years.

Mark was 10 when the importation of Crabbet stock arrived from Lady Wentworth's estate [the daughter of Lady Anne Blunt]. "I mostly remember how amazingly excited Mother was. How could you, at 10 years old, realize we had just saved the core herd of Abbas Pasha's horses? I didn't know who Abbas Pasha was, much less Lady Wentworth," he says.

"When the Crabbet horses came, they were not what she was breeding. I noticed they were different. They were much more of an English type horse than a Western type. Mother looked at them and said, 'Wow, this is the same gene pool, but they've done it differently.' She didn't imme-



AM Count Rafla was a major stallion and is found in important pedigrees of the present-day herd.



TOP: Young Bazy and her pony Agate around 1929-30.

CENTER: Bazy on Indraff in Peru, Illinois.

BELOW: Bazy and Al-Marah El Hezzez at Devon in 1955. He was one of her favorite Indraff sons and the first Al-Marah horse to win a National High Score Award given to the most winning Arabian before there was a National Championship. He was sold at the first Arabian horse auction in America in 1956 because she wanted to demonstrate that she would sell the highest quality horses. His new owner never bred him, and Bazy leased him back for one season of breeding in 1962 and he sired exceptional foals.

diately know what to do with the Crabbet horses, because she didn't know what their ancestors looked like, so she had to relearn everything she learned with the *Raffles horses."

Al-Marah's foundation stallion Indraff, by *Raffles, was the grandson of Skowronek, who became the hallmark of distinction for Crabbet Park following his acquisition by Lady Wentworth in 1920.

"By 1960, we'd seen what the Crabbet imports were doing with our horses and by the mid-1960s, we had these horses tearing up the Nationals. That's when Mother really started talking to me. When I was in college and came home for summers, we would go look at the herd and evaluate everything," says Mark, who's made his home in Florida since graduating from Rollins College. "Others didn't get what she was doing. She was never untrue to her horses and she was never untrue to herself. These are ab-



solutely the horses that came out of the desert. What she figured was she needed different ways to get back to Skowronek.”

CURRENT EMPHASIS

As Al-Marah evolves its legacy now at a new home in Clermont, Florida, Mark has placed dressage as the destination for his horses at both Arabian and open shows. He says, “I like dressage for the same reason I like cutting cattle or the Tevis Cup. It’s one of the athletic proofs of a horse. Dressage is where the elite athletes are now. Another thing I love is with dressage there’s a tradition of continuing education and that’s extremely important.” Home just three weekends from January 15–May 15 due to Al-Marah’s Arabian Sport Horse and



ABOVE: Count Bazy++ outside the broodmare barn at the stud farm in Barnesville, Maryland with Bazy



FAR LEFT & LEFT: *Count Dorsaz winning the Winston Churchill Cup at the International Show in White City, London in 1953

Open dressage show focus, Mark shares the significance of seeing his horses and riders on the open circuit in Wellington, Florida, this year competing against top horses (primarily Warmbloods) from around the world. Of note, he travels with his show team, personally hauling treasured Al-Marah horses.

“Did we win championships in Wellington?” he ponders. “No, but, we’re in the conversation! Kassie [Al-Marah head trainer Kassandra Barteau] scored a 68.5 percent on AM Chance Command+++++// (AM Power Raid+++ / x Al-Marah Chanel) in his first show at 4th level (placing third) in front of an Olympic judge. Halfway through the test, the skies opened up and started this driving rain storm.

He bobbed both his leads and he doesn’t bobble leads very often. I’m not making excuses, but I really think if it hadn’t rained until after the class he would have had a 70. Kassie, 26, who has since advanced Chance to Prix St. George level, represented the United States in 2009 at the FEI Young Rider Dressage World Cup in Germany on her Warmblood and holds USDF bronze, silver, and gold medals.

Al-Marah has remained competitive in open shows for more than 70 years, notes Mark, for instance, winning open cutting classes at the annual American Quarter Horse Congress. “And, now, we’re in the conversation at 4th level in Wellington on a purebred Arab that’s 14.3 and looks like an Arabian. Chance will do anything for you.

JERRY HAMILTON — 33 YEARS & COUNTING

HAT RANCH ON HORIZON FOR AL-MARAH FARM MANAGER

For more than three decades, Al-Marah Arabians has shaped Jerry Hamilton's life and he's helped shape the world-famous ranch.

By Elizabeth Kaye McCall

It was mid-winter during a “gap year” between high school and college when Jerry Hamilton left his Flint Rock, Michigan, hometown for warmer climates, landing a six month apprenticeship at Al-Marah Arabians in Tucson. He never left, instead becoming Al-Marah's Farm Manager and longest continuous employee at 33 years and counting. With a move to the historic Hat Ranch on the horizon next year, where he will oversee the farm's young horses, Jerry will be a consultant as Al-Marah's next chapter is written in Clermont, Florida, once the Tucson property is turned over to the University of Arizona on February 5, 2015.

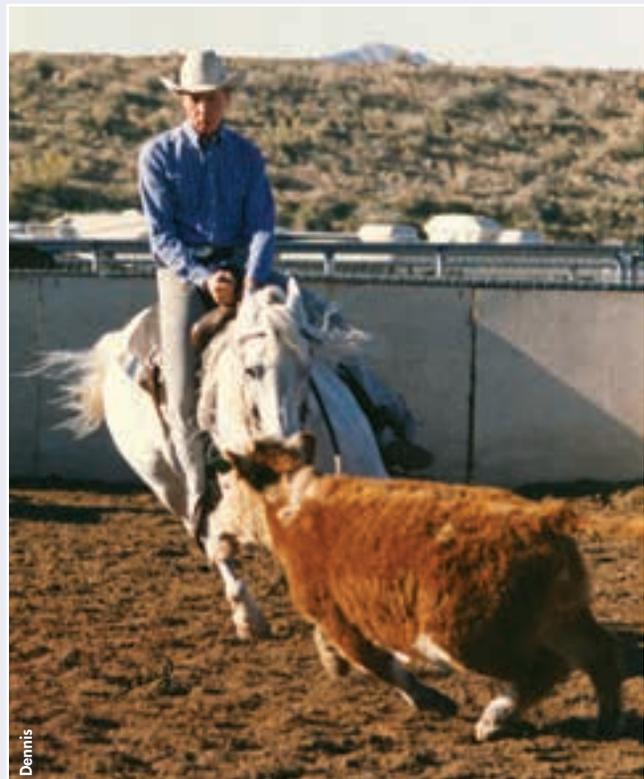
“No one was ever more loyal to my mother than Jerry Hamilton,” says Mark Miller, sole owner of the historic band of horses that trace back 200 years to Abbas Pasha. “Jerry took care of Mother when she was sick. He did things that only family members will do for you. Whenever anything went wrong in Mother's later years, the first response team was Jerry, whether it was her health, the farm... anything,” adds Mark, who's lived in Florida since graduating from Rollins College with a double major in philosophy and religion. “Jerry never quit learning from Mother. That's something he and I have in common and I don't know that anyone else does. Jerry and I never thought we knew more than she did.”

Mark laughs, “Now, that doesn't mean we didn't hide horses from Mother. We did. One that we hid from her is the most winning Arabian that Al-Marah's ever produced, seven-time National Champion Al-Marah Swift++++// (Al-Marah Quebec+ x Reem Al Fala). Swift went through a real bad ugly duckling stage when he was a yearling and mother was the ‘quickest knife’ in the universe [to geld],” he explains. “Pretty much, when Mother was at the Hat Ranch, Swift was in Tucson and when Mother was in Tucson, he was at the Hat Ranch. It's too late to ask her, but I'm pretty sure she knew what Jerry and I were doing.”

A 2,800-acre ranch west of Flagstaff near Williams, Arizona, in the heart of the Kaibab National Forest, Bazy acquired the Hat Ranch in the late 1970s as a family escape from the scorching Tucson summers after Al-Marah relocated from Maryland to the West. The historic property came with a picture of President Franklin Roosevelt having lunch at the ranch headquarters during his first presidential campaign in 1932, two original settler cabins built on the land about 1880, and lots of cattle. A trust established before Bazy's death ensures the Hat Ranch will remain a retreat for family and continue Al-Marah's tradition of allowing young stock an opportunity to grow up like horses and run on the range.

“I just love seeing them grow up in large herds and in big pastures,” remarks Jerry, who spent many summers working cattle on Al-Marah Arabians at the ranch when “Mrs. T.” was alive. Jerry, who turns 52 this year reflects, “They are the best, physically sound Arabians in the world. Our horses are bred to be companion horses, work horses, family horses. They are not meant to be yard ornaments or horses you can only lead in a show ring. They are meant to do something with. It was very important to Mrs. T. for the horses to have an Arabian tail carriage. She would always want you to say, ‘It's an Arabian,’ when you saw it. You can see the structural characteristics of her horses also, and the movement. Usually, they have a big swingy gait and are very relaxed horses. They won't be the tensest horses in the arena.”

“I learned from Mrs. T. that everybody needs a goal. You can always change it, but you need a goal to wake up and work toward every day. You need to enjoy life, but you need to accomplish something. She was one of the most driven, accomplishing-type people I've ever met and she managed to do it all on schedule.” Jerry adds, “I have great respect and admiration for anyone who lives up to their goals and has a





LEFT: 2011, Al-Marrah Jessica++// and Jerry winning the Sport Horse Yearling In Hand National Championship.

OPPOSITE: Jerry on AM Lapis Lazuli competing in cutting at Scottsdale in 1990. The horse was the last shown by Harold Brite who won a Reserve National Championship without being able to use his right arm when he was in his early 70's.

standard like she had. It's easy to go breed to whomever won last year. True breeders, and people who want to be breeding horses in 30 years, I admire them." He elaborates, "She never intended to breed Lady Wentworth's horses [per se], she intended to breed the Al-Marrah horses she liked and use them to accomplish that."

Mark's admiration for Jerry is clear. "It would be an understatement to say he's the best employee Al-Marrah ever had. He went beyond that at some point. He is a member of our family. I have a huge respect for Jerry and his knowledge. I think we know different things. He is absolutely someone I want on any committee being set up to preserve Al-Marrah bloodlines. He knows how to breed these horses. He understands the vision. I think Jerry is one of the best people on earth and unbelievably loyal, but not to the point where he won't voice an opinion if he sees something wrong."

"My great Jerry story is after Mother died and we were in Scottsdale. I went for a walk with Jerry outside the barn. It was just him and me. I said, 'Look, I'm not my mother. I'm much more collaborative and I like opinions. If I say something and you disagree and think there's a better way and I say, 'I like

my way better,' you're absolutely allowed to say, 'I wish you'd reconsider one more time.' Jerry was quiet for awhile and then said, 'No. I can't do that. It's not the way I was trained.' So, I listen up when Jerry tells me something because I know he's not going to repeat it." Mark jokes that the only thing he and Jerry really disagree on is slant load versus straight load trailers.

"We will bring the two-year-olds to Florida once a year in spring," explains Mark. When Al-Marrah Clermont's first crop of 2015 weanlings is ready to travel, they will go to the Hat Ranch for the rite-of-passage experienced by so many Al-Marrah champions before them.

Jerry comments, "I look at every new foal crop as hopefully, being the best we've ever had. I am very happy it's an old herd and appreciate where they came from. I know they'll stay sound. Physically sound horses are the most important if you're trying to do something."

He reflects, "I enjoy all the events that Arabians are good at. I love working cattle, sorting cattle. I've only done the Tevis Cup once. I finished in the top 50 (giving him a 100 percent completion rate he jokes.) I love to crew the Tevis. But, I'm more of a 50-mile endurance person." While Jerry contemplates a fresh-water fishing jaunt when things get "caught up," he's content remembering Barrumundi fishing in Australia for now. "Our horse world is shrinking. Our breed used to register 20,000 Arabians in one year. We're well under 50 percent of what we once were. We have to start with the children of riders and owners and also the offspring of the horses coming along and train them properly," Jerry notes.

The Arabian Sport Horse division, which Al-Marrah's embraced with Mark at the helm, prompts more thoughts, "I love it. I didn't think I'd like having non-Arabian judges, but I enjoy a fresh opinion," says Jerry. "They don't judge on who's in the saddle, or on the end of the line. They don't know anybody. They just judge the horses. I think the strongest suit of Sport Horse is that an amateur can be very competitive and do a lot of it themselves. I think that's what horse showing is all about. People enjoying their horses as much as possible."

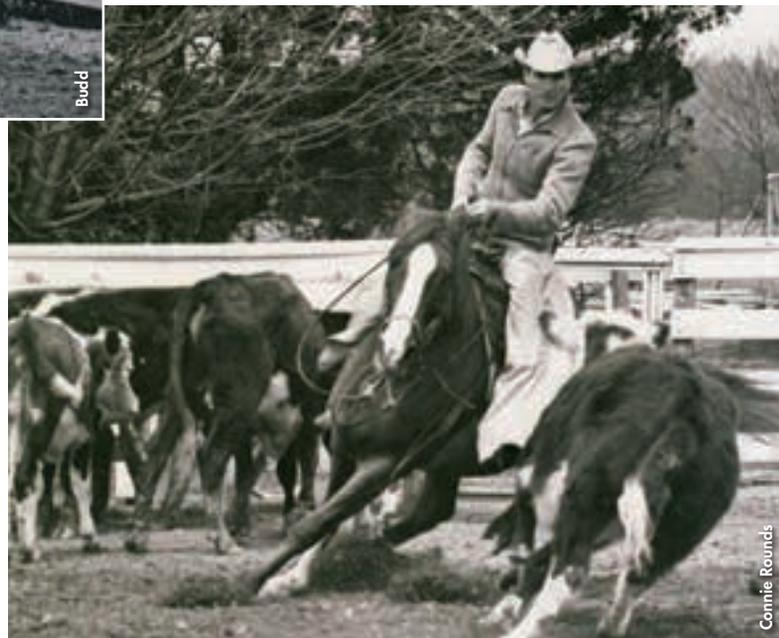
As the countdown for Al-Marrah's historic migration to Florida and his forthcoming Hat Ranch move approaches, Jerry shares the kind of insight that knowing Mrs. T.'s son for 33 years allows. "I think Mark has shined his whole life. He's been a great role model for so many of us to just do what your dreams are. He has now been given a huge opportunity to create another dream. Mark's bringing it all together in Florida." ■



Budd

to Wellington. “They want to say, ‘How good a car can we make?’ You get a really good trainer like Kassie and she shows you how good your horse can be. If Kassie can’t win on one of my horses, it’s my fault. (He also supports his trainer’s continued competitive efforts on her Warmblood, along with her mission to break new ground for Al-Marah Arabians.) Like Robert Duvall in the movie *Days of Thunder*, Mark attributes an inherent Al-Marah mission to “test the quality of its product.”

“We’re a bloodline farm. We don’t just go out and buy a horse. Ninety-nine percent of the time, we’ve won on our horses. There’s a difference in whether you’re doing it to win or doing it to prove your horses. Al-Marah has remained competitive in both Arabian and Open events for more than 70 years. We continue to breed horses that



Connie Rounds

He comes off his hocks like there’s no tomorrow and that’s what they like.”

Mark likes Wellington, already putting it on 2015’s plans. “I’d never seen Grand Prix horses coming off their hocks like those before. They don’t look like they’re touching the ground with their front feet. They’re going airborne. I looked at them and thought, ‘Our horses can do this.’ I’m not trying to get to the Olympics tomorrow; I just want to get in the conversation.”

Although Arabian events still dominate the competition calendar for Al-Marah, Mark compares dressage at Wellington to car racing. “We show to test our product,” explains the lifelong car buff, comparing the rationale for auto makers like General Motors, Toyota, and Ford to race in NASCAR with taking Al-Marah dressage contenders

TOP: Mark Miller on Indraff daughter Naha riding with Lois Selby on El Hezzez daughter Taffeta. Lois is the daughter of Roger Selby who imported *Raffles from Lady Wentworth.

LEFT: AM Queen Titania & Stanley White Sr.

ABOVE: Harold Brité, 1951.

the Bedouin warriors of old would be proud to own,” he says.

BREEDING FOCUS

“There are three or four decisions Mother made about certain horses that I felt were a mistake at the time. The biggest thing was we didn’t linebreed the Crabbet imports. I’m not going to repeat that mistake. I’m going to linebreed the Bremervale horses because I know what I want from them.” [Al-Marah gained new connections to old bloodlines in the Crabbet program through the

RIGHT: Kristie Miller, age 10, rode Al-Marah Ralla to win third in the AHSA National High Score Awards which were yearly awards based on points from all classes. Hanover Farms, N.J., Show, 1955.

BELOW: Finger Lakes All-Arabian show, 1970's, Billy Stewart on AM Count Pine+/. Billy was an apprentice at Al-Marah in Maryland and became famous for his western bits.



Australian ancestors of Bremervale stock, today importantly with Bremervale Andronicus++++// (Desperado x Bremervale Rhaposody) aka “Andy.”

“Most people in this country think of Crabbet being *Raffles or no *Raffles. That’s not true. The horse that was closest to our vision of perfection was AM Canadian Beau++ (*Ranix x Al-Marah Caliope by Indraff). He was 15 hands and moved like a freight train. He never saw a weighted shoe, chains, or a rubber band, and still won as

a park horse. Canadian Beau had all the type in the world and he threw it, but we didn’t keep the ingredients.” A bit of going back to the drawing board is already set in motion. “I’m not trying to reproduce Dreamazon (BF Rageymazon x Gai Dream). I’m trying to reproduce Canadian Beau. Al-Marah Quebec (AM CanadianBeau x Al-Marah Ironlady), AM Beau Triomphe (AM Canadian Beau x AM LaLaLa) — these are horses that made Al-Marah. The problem was, we didn’t keep certain elements.”

When we got Andy, we started to produce horses like Canadian Beau,” notes Mark. “Andy is linebred new Crabbet blood. This is sort of a big horse pedigree for us, but he’s pretty. He’s got fabulous shoulders, an amazing rear end and 3-finger coupling.” Bremervale Andronicus++++// was imported from Australia during Bazy’s sunset years. As Selby Stud manager Jimmie Dean long ago said about Bazy — No one will ever know how good a breeder she was because she was the luckiest person on earth. She seemingly helped script Al-Marah’s future for her son by acquiring Andy.

Mark proudly notes that his stepdaughter Keeley Clark is already a four-time national champion and USDF bronze medalist at 17, on top of earning reining awards and more. While Kassie (head trainer) and Keeley are known to swap mounts, who is aboard which horse sometimes doesn’t matter.

At one show, with the sun glaring in his eyes as he piloted his electric bike across the showgrounds, “A group of horses was coming toward me and I saw this big, powerful lead horse and thought, “There’s no way to beat that.”” Then his eyes refocused and he saw the familiar

WELCOME TO CLERMONT

AN OASIS FOR AL-MARAH

By Elizabeth Kaye McCall

Mark Miller climbs out from behind the wheel of his Ford F-450 Super Duty Lariat truck wearing a cowboy hat in Clermont, Florida, as a huge, white standard poodle named Daffy jumps from the back seat to stretch her legs. Scanning the lakefront farm that's becoming the newest headquarters of Al-Marrah Arabians, Mark glimpses some of the national champions already at home in the lush pastures — a marked contrast from the desert terrain in Tucson that was home to Al-Marrah for half of its seven-decade existence. Founded by Mark's mother, the name Al-Marrah is an apt tribute to Clermont. Loosely translated from Arabic, Al-Marrah means "a garden-like oasis."

"There is something about the farm. It gives you a fresh slate every day," says Mark, 67, who recently received Osceola County's Community Vision Humanitarian of the Year Award for his work with the homeless and human trafficking. Located west of Orlando in the gently sloping hills of Florida's Lake County, the commute to Clermont seldom finds Mark's "bluetooth" silent as he follows up on projects ranging from chairing crucial re-development agency projects to organizing research studies with the University of Central Florida to prove the effectiveness of hippotherapy for returning military veterans and others with PTSD.

"Coming in, the entrance is 40 to 50 feet higher elevation than the farm. You look down on it and see this absolutely idyllic picture," says Mark. The pastures are green, the horses are beautiful. Even, the cow is pretty good looking. We just painted the barn gold, with green accents. Mother always liked green with gold accents." He pauses. "That's kind of typical of our views of the breeding program. It's the same colors, just in a different order. I look at the farm and I feel good. We have an opportunity to do something special."

With a sparkling lake on two sides, the 78-acre property seems backlit for a photo shoot. "The barn has 22 stalls and we put in a new dressage arena," says Mark. Multiple arenas on the farm offer plentiful space for other disciplines. "It is going to be a different size of operation. We're going to have to maintain the herd with fewer horses, but, I don't see that as a problem." About half have already arrived. According to Mark, the herd will number around 50 horses, each one meticulously selected, when the move to Clermont is complete. Of these, nearly half will be National or Reserve Champions, many with Legion of Masters honors. When Al-Marrah's breeding operation moves to Florida, seven stallions will stand at stud.

Come this November, the "migration," as Mark dubs it, will reach its crescendo. "We're going to have a welcome home party for the herd. There will be an open house, people coming in from out of town. It's going to be fun. We will have Feisty Star [Al Marrah Feisty Star++++//] and Swift [Al-Marrah Swift++++//], Andy [Bremervale Andronicus++++//] and Good Oldboy

[AM Good Oldboy+] arrive with 10-15 drop-dead gorgeous mares. This is the crème-de-la-crème if there ever was. They are just amazing mares, and I'm so excited about the foals they are carrying."

A historic herd, privately owned by only three families in 200 years, Mark is the sixth person in the third family to hold the honor and responsibility for a band of Arabians tracing back to the Abbas Pasha Stud. ■

www.al-marrah.com/almarah-clermont



INTERACTIVE FARM TOURS

Entertaining, educational, and an ideal equine outreach, Al-Marah Clermont's new Interactive Farm Tours put innovation and Arabian horses in the mix of hands-on visitor offerings for Orlando's booming tourism industry. "It's a lot like the Performer for a Day program that we did at Arabian Nights. That was such a popular event," explains Mark Miller, citing an activity where individuals got a day-course in the art of equestrian entertainment and then performed in the show at the popular dinner attraction. (Founded by Mark in 1988, Arabian Nights Dinner Attraction wrapped its 25-year run in Kissimmee [Orlando] on Dec. 31, 2013.)

Likening Al-Marrah's Interactive Farm Tours to a tourist activity, Mark describes, "People arrive in the morning, help us feed, and we teach them what we check for: Are the horses all eating normally? Did anything happen overnight? We go through the basics of horse care. Then, they learn a little liberty work in the round pen with one of the horses that used to play the Black Stallion at Arabian Nights." Following a skills evaluation on a solid school horse, the visit includes a riding lesson, potentially on one of Al-Marrah's National or Reserve Champion horses. "We also put them on one of the former trick horses from Arabian Nights that does Spanish march and piaffe, so they can experience that too," adds Mark. "After we bathe the horse, there's time for photos. We do a farm tour and explain our breeding program too." To schedule an Interactive Farm Visit, contact Al-Marrah Clermont for cost and available dates at (352) 536-1502.

face of Kassie aboard the strapping 2007 gelding Al-Marah Prince John (Bremervale Andronicus++++// x AM Warrior Princess). That's when Mark told himself that "Prince John will be the first great Arabian Grand Prix horse in open dressage."

With Mark at the helm, Al-Marah mares are enjoying competition careers before broodmare lives. Keeley frequently competes on the Prix St. George level mare AM HeyYouStar++++//, a liver chestnut like her daddy, AM Good Oldboy+ (AM Sea Captain++x AM Tis Beverlie), yet even more athletic by Mark's assessment.

"I know the horses. They are not just names and pedigrees." A look in an eye can be all he needs to spot a mare in a herd. "I don't have the same need for instant gratification that some people have. Don't get me wrong. I love to win. But, when I build an Arabian horse, I'm trying to build the ultimate machine that's going to take feed and oxygen and transfer it into great athleticism. Don't start talking to me about skinny necks and shallow chests and long cannon bones. I've got no use for a horse that can break over level and can't go anywhere. It would have died in the desert. I don't have the right to tell anyone else the type of Arabian to breed. What's for me to say is what kind of horse I'm going to breed." Mark also loves reiners. "You want to talk about a horse that's light in front. AM Star Ofthe Sea (AM Good Oldboy+ x Carmel-Bythe-Sea) comes off her hocks exactly the same way a dressage horse does."

True to the legacy, Mark won't follow fads. "The reason we don't show an English pleasure horse today is that they don't do something we think this band of horses is supposed to do. The most important thing we really do is race our horses in hundred mile races. We have won the Tevis Cup once, (Al Marah Xanthium tied for first). What we want to know is that the horses we are producing can do that ride and finish in the top 10."

"There are all kinds of things we can do now scientifically," says Mark. "Our low heart scores are better than most other Arabians' best ones. Our good heart scores are off the chart when you get into Quebec and Xanthium and horses like that. Those are such great horses that they were cross-registered to a different breed." He's serious. Quebec became the first Arabian stallion to be accepted into the American Trakehner Registry, following the first Arabian mare, Xanthium. "If we can be a source horse for a different breed, we sure can be a source horse for our own. At 28, Quebec can still do single tempi changes as long as you want. He does them bareback and without a bridle for Keeley.



ABOVE: Lois Selby, Bazy, Mark and sister Kristie in Tucson in 1998.



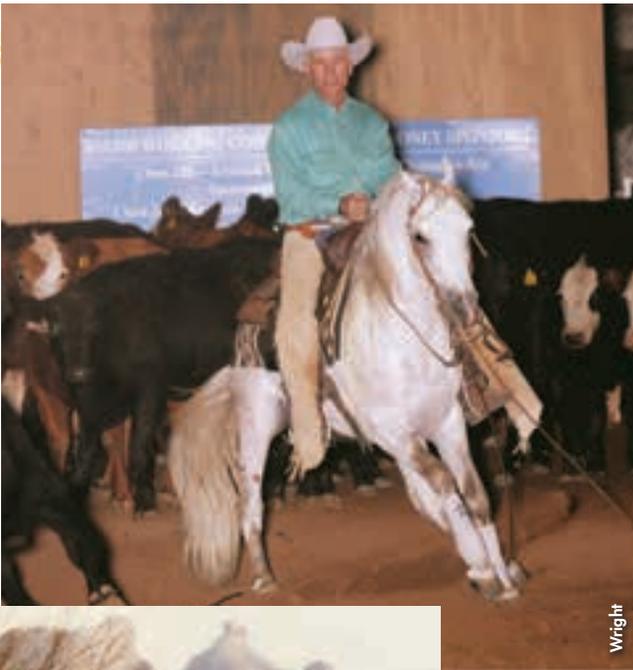
LEFT: Lee Bolles and Denni Mack at the Winter Forum, 1998.

BELOW: Former Al-Marah Farm manager and trainer Lee Bolles (left) and former resident veterinarian and University of Illinois Veterinary School professor Dr. Dean Scoggins.



CRITICAL COUPLING

Mark illuminates one of his top priorities — why the coupling is so important. "The first thing I do on every horse is to see how long the coupling is. Coupling is the only unsupported part of the back. It's between the last rib and the point of the hip. If it's over three of my fingers [about three inches total] we're in trouble. They will never be able to do the really athletic things. A long back doesn't bother me at all. I do believe there are some



Wright

ABOVE: RS Sea Raider

TOP RIGHT: Canadian National Reserve Western Pleasure Champion AM Sundance Sox+.

RIGHT: 1990 AM Canadian Beau++ with Victor Kerr.

LEFT: Bazy on AM Sea Captain++ (Al-Marah Indraff x Am Lady In Red) on the farm in Tucson.



Arabians that have one more vertebrae than others. When you get a '3-finger' coupled horse, you start to see what it can do driving under itself. That's where you get a horse that can override by two or three feet when they get going. That's a hallmark of our horses and it's hard to find."

"I think some people think of Al-Marah horses as "retro" Arabians. I'm not ashamed of our 14.1 hand horses. We will still have Western horses. The bigger horses get their motors from the smaller ones. That Indraff rear end. He



Polly Knoll

made so many stallions famous. Mother would never breed a level croup. We never gingered a horse in 72 years. There's a reason why those rear ends look like they do. It's why we never changed them."

There's a quote Mark attributes to his mother that epitomizes the kind of thinking typical for himself as well. "When she was asked whom she considered her main competition, Mother said, 'Chris Craft Boats.' It isn't anyone else breeding Arabian horses, or any other horse operation. It's fishing, golf, and the other sports that people spend money on."

As plans proceed for the Welcome Home party this fall, when the rest of the historic Al-Marah herd moves from Tucson to the lakeside farm in Clermont, a tradition at every location will be enacted once again. At every Al-Marah location — from Illinois to Maryland, Washington, D.C. to Arizona, and coming next to Florida, there is a sign on the barn with the Arab proverb *Tell Your Woes to Your Saddle Bow and Ride Away Singing*. This tradition created by Bazy will continue, her son assures.

“In my opinion, Mother was probably the greatest horse breeder of any breed most of her adult life. What she really taught me about breeding is there’s one difference between good breeders and bad breeders. Good breeders make hard decisions. Later in life when she got very old, I became the one that made the hard decisions,” says Mark. “What’s the new direction for Al-Marah? It’s the same. Find the best horse in the country and compete with our Arabians in Open competition.” It’s how the 67-year-old father of two was raised by a mother whose eye was “always on the horizon.” (Besides his two adult daughters, Hanna and Tally, Mark has a step-son, Austin, who is Keeley’s brother). Author Mary Jane Parkinson, who co-authored the book *And Ride Away Singing* (© 1998 by Ruth McCormick Tankersley) coined the often-repeated “horizon” description of Bazy.

While Al-Marah’s newest migration raises the bar on Florida’s already \$3 billion horse industry, the legacy Mark embraces is undeniably his biggest endeavor yet. “Since Mother died, everybody tells me how much she did for the breed. It’s all true, but it was paid back to her multiple times by how much she loved her horses and how much they loved her. I think she might have had the most fulfilling life of anyone I’ve ever known. She knew what she wanted and went out and did it and was just amazingly good, but she never compromised. She started schools and did all kinds of wonderful things for the world, but she did it in the same way she bred horses. I like to think a little bit of that rubbed off on me.”

Not one to toot his own horn, Mark continues a tradition of contributing to society in significant ways. As co-founder of Horse Tales Literacy Project, horsetalesliteracy.org, which was conceived in 1999 with lifelong friend Tim Farley (author Walter Farley’s son), more than 650,000 first, fourth and fifth grade children have been inspired to read to date. Featured on the ABC Nightly News as the “best” motivational reading program for school-aged children, the logo depicts Mark reading with the Black Stallion looking over his shoulder (based on a real photo). A Board member and Vice-Chairman for the non-profit 501(c) (3) Heavenly Hooves (www.hhmrl.org) in Osceola County, Florida, the PATH Certified therapeutic horsemanship program has served over 20,000 riders with 60 distinct disabilities.

“Mother used to have this great expression when she

was finished with something and moved on. She said, ‘I ate that apple.’ I feel kind of that way about Arabian Nights. I don’t want anyone to think I didn’t care about shutting down Arabian Nights. It wasn’t my favorite thing to do, but I’ve got an opportunity to do something incredibly special. To me, that’s the greatest gift, to have an opportunity to try to make something work.”



Al-Marah’s current Head Trainer Kassie Barteau showing AM Chance Command++++// to a Second Level Dressage National Championship in 2013.

Bob Jarr

With all he’s accomplished to date, Bazy’s son has a new show to direct, the production of a lifetime. “For this band of horses to survive is probably my hardest dream ever — being able to make this herd a profitable herd over a long period of time. If I make it profitable by selling out, I haven’t achieved anything,” says Mark, who sees the plate stacked “pretty well” at present.

“We have people who believe in our product. My head trainer Kassie is a huge believer. She can like a Warmblood and like our horses at the same time and I don’t have a problem with that.” With Keeley blazing a path in Young Rider ranks for Al-Marah’s show string, opportunities just wait to be explored. “I’m not sure I can get an Arabian to the Olympics, but I’m not sure I have to do that to be successful,” smiles Mark. Don’t think he might not try. Vision came with his birthright, along with an Arabian legacy. “This next chapter will be fun. We will do the best we can and see how that works out.” 🐾