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HORSEMAN'S Roundup

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OUR 25TH YEAR!

The Straight Egyptian Horse

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Discovering the Straight Egyptian Arabian Horse through photography



Hannah with Ali Razeel Gale, a 2009 Straight Egyptian Stallion by Alixir x Haleys Star by Thee Desperado. Owned and bred by Betty Gale Davis, Gale Arabians, Ward, Arkansas.

By Diana Cantey Roundup correspondent

Since embarking on a journey almost 20 years ago to own and breed Straight Egyptian Arabian horses, our love and appreciation of this very special breed has become a passion we enjoy sharing with others. It has also been our goal to promote the breed through membership in The Pyramid Society, through travel, mentorships, sponsorships and also more

recently through photography.

Amongst the many responsibilities that come with having a breeding business, mastering photography and videography was essential for marketing and promotion of our own horses, as well as for those belonging to clients, in order to reach prospective buyers globally.

We hosted a few of the industry's best photographers to shoot at our farm over the years and learned as much as we could in order to become knowledgeable. Capturing the essence

of the Arabian horse is quite challenging and takes a thorough knowledge and understanding of the breed. As one photographer commented, "being able to predict through their body language, and anticipate their next move helps in getting a more impactful shot or video footage."

Having an artistic eye has also helped a lot to capture the unique characteristics that define it as an Arabian horse compared to other breeds.

Perusing through Arabian horse magazines and breed journals to study composition and design helped immensely and the images that impressed me the most were shot in casual portrait style. Some images captured the interaction between the subject and the horse; the "chemistry" between the subjects drew me in and inspired me.

This sparked an idea that later resulted in a unique way to expose young people to our breed and allow them to have a "photographic interaction" as part of their senior high portrait portfolio. During their photo shoot, they would be able to interact with a horse of historical importance and be photographed with one of the most beautiful of all breeds.

I grew up around many breeds of horses and I can say from experience that the Straight Egyptian is a horse like no other. After their sessions, I knew the young ladies would confirm what I already knew to be true. Each found the horses to be smart, gentle, engaging, curious and affectionate.

During their shoots, I explained how these horses lived in tents with the Bedouin families, in palaces with royalty, with the great Pharaohs, graced the stables of Kings, and they were in awe of the history. The girls understood that the Egyptian horse is a living legacy and through their soulful eyes and sculpted faces with desert dry skin that told the tale of their heritage. From the time of the Pharaohs until today, these horses have captivated mankind with their beauty, intelligence and stamina and are revered as the most influential breed in the world.

Today, breeders hope to preserve rare and treasured bloodlines and the unique qualities of the Straight Egyptian. One of those traits is their loving disposition. "The Bedouins believed their horses were rational beings with great intelligence, sensitivity and loyalty. Time spent with the Egyptian Arabian will serve to illustrate the truth of their sentiments." (Excerpt From Pyramid Society promotional handout).

The young ladies commented about their ex-



Alissa with Shyna Al Atiq

periences with the horses and confirmed what owners and breeders have said for years.

The first session I booked was with a lovely young lady named Mallory. At the time she was a junior at Rose Bud High School. She was the perfect model to be paired with our younger mare to launch the first portrait shoot.

The two of them had such great chemistry together. This was the first time Mallory had interacted with a horse, and not only was she absolutely radiant, but you might have thought this horse was hers!

“The experience I had meeting and being photographed with a Straight Egyptian Arabian was one I won’t soon forget. Baariyah seemed immediately drawn to me, and her affectionate personality filled me with joy.

“I have never been around such people-loving horses before. The first thing I noticed about her was her big, black eyes. She was so sweet. I would love to spend more time with these Straight Egyptian horses. Knowing about their history and how rare and special they are made the shoot even more special. I’m sure, like Baariyah, they are all spirited, and their intelligence shows, as they are quick to learn anything, even modeling with a complete stranger.”

Another model we were excited to work with was Hannah Sneed, a college student and art major at Arkansas State University. She was a little nervous when I revealed to her that the special horse chosen for her session was a Straight Egyptian stallion owned by a friend and fellow breeder Betty Gale Davis.

When we arrived at the farm, the horse was being groomed and saddled for our “casual equestrian” shoot. I told her the horse’s name and took her over to get acquainted. At that point I could see she was a little uncomfortable based on a preconceived idea that a

stallion might be a bit spirited and unruly and definitely not friendly. However, just the opposite proved true and upon their introduction, I could see that Hannah became less nervous, and was quite impressed by how his disposition was calm and sweet.

“I had a hard time looking away from him as he was just amazing, big and powerful yet smart, sweet and gentle. Razeel is really special and I gained a lot of admiration and respect for Straight Egyptian Arabians. He was the perfect gentleman during the shoot and is a great representative of his breed.”

This summer we had the pleasure to work with another Rose Bud High School Senior, Alissa Faircloth, who has been a caretaker for our horses on several occasions. She owns several horses and competes in barrel racing like many other youth in our area. She does not see many Arabians amongst the rodeo horses but she always looks forward to spending time with our mares.

“My experience with Straight Egyptian horses is far from anything I am used to, being Quarter Horses. I love the personalities of the Arabians; they love to show off yet they are so sweet. They have such expressive eyes and you can see their spirit in them. I loved my photo shoot with Shyna. She is one of the sweetest horses I have ever been with and it was really magical being photographed with her.”

Nikki Blacksmith, also a senior from Rose Bud High School, joined Alissa and posed with Shyna as well as our senior mare Azaamah. This was her first encounter with Straight Egyptians and I invited her to tag along with Alissa for a fun morning session.

I invited the ladies to wear anything they wanted, even their prom dresses, if they wanted to pose in something a little more formal.



Katy with Azaamah

I promised them that the mares would enjoy it also. I adorned their halters with coordinating jewelry, and we used our imaginations to capture some dramatic images.

Nikki also found the horses to be kind and gentle, and it helped her confidence during the shoot.

“I have modeled in the past but never with horses so I did not know what to expect from them. The mares were just beautiful, very gentle and have sweet personalities. I really enjoyed getting to know them and they made the shoot fun.”

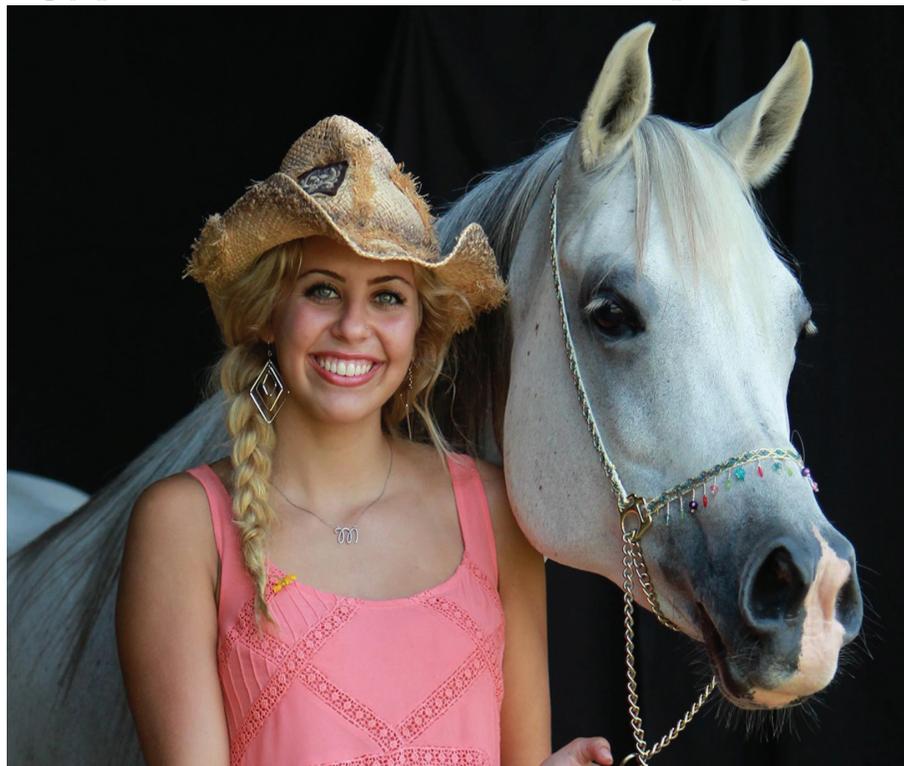
Katy was another Rose Bud High School Senior who happily agreed to pose with our horses during her high school portrait shoot. We paired her up with our senior mare Azaamah and the two of them were comfortable with each other almost immediately. They looked gorgeous together in our west pasture; the field colors were brilliant with the late morning sun backlighting them.

“It’s not every day that you get to have your pictures made with a Straight Egyptian Arabian horse and I’m so very blessed that Diana allowed me to take pictures with one of hers! Being photographed with Azaamah made me feel so beautiful! These horses are such beautiful and unique creatures and it makes you feel like royalty being photographed with one!”

Those of us who are fortunate enough to live with Straight Egyptian Arabian horses are able to renew our love and appreciation of these special creatures every time we introduce someone new to the breed.

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Egyptian, continued from page 7



Mallory with Baariyah, a 2003 Straight Egyptian Mare by Imperial Baarez x Azaamah . Owned and bred by Zajaddi Egyptian Arabians, Arkansas.



Nikki with Azaamah, 1995 Straight Egyptian mare by Tammen x Aleeyah, owned by Zajaddi Egyptian Arabians, Mount Vernon, Arkansas.

Our photo sessions have produced some beautiful pictures and memories, but have also created a lasting impression on many people who were previously unfamiliar with this special horse. For me, photography has grown from a necessary business skill into a personally rewarding form of ambassadorship of the

Straight Egyptian Arabian horse.

Diana Cantey along with her husband Duane own and manages Zajaddi Egyptian Arabians, a Straight Egyptian Arabian breeding farm located in scenic Mount Vernon, Ark. Diana is also a freelance photojournalist, whose photos have been published in many

Arabian breed journals covering shows and events, in the U.S. and internationally. They are located at 129 Brooklan Lane, Mount Vernon, AR 72111 and can be contacted at 501-472-0026; Diana.cantey@yahoo.com; www.dianacanteyphotography.com; and www.zajaddiegyptianarabians.com 

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