

THE ARABIAN HORSE

AN ALLY OF MAN AND A LIVING WORK OF ART

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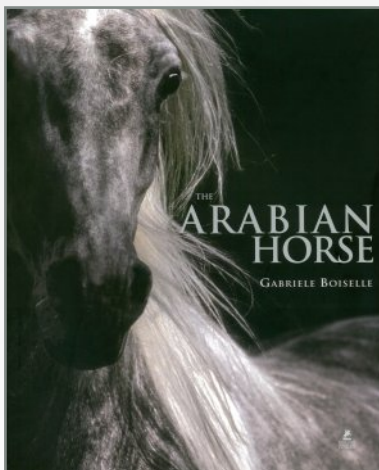
After being a journalist for many years, Gabrielle Boiselle (Germany) decided that what she really wanted to do was to photograph Arabian horses. Here is how she recalls that moment in her album „**The Arabian Horse**”: „At the beginning of the eighties on the occasion of my first visit to the Egyptian State Stud of Al Zahraa, I had a particularly significant encounter. The heat lay heavy over Cairo and the sun scorched down from a cloudless sky as I drove along the main avenue through the stud grounds in a rather ancient local taxi. A stallion, enshrouded in a huge cloud of golden dust, suddenly appeared on one of the sandy enclosures before me. I was instantly fascinated by the lightness of his movements and his elegance. This stallion, which was to have such an influence on my life, was called Echnaton”. For more than a quarter of a century her fascination with Arabians remains unchanged.

The album, bearing an impressive size and huge weight, consists of images which are a result of Boiselle's travels all over the world – everywhere where Arabian horses are bred. This means Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, both of the Americas, South Africa and Australia.

Europe. From the 7th century, the Arabian purebred took Europe by storm – Boiselle's close collaborator Agnès Galletier emphasizes in her commentary – acquiring notoriety amongst horse riders of the Western world: „Its spirit and endurance would be sought after by all armies throughout Europe”. And here is how the modern, European descendants of those conquerors look like – Boiselle seems to say through her works. She shows horses in picturesque portraits and impressive in terms of scale group photographs; on location and in the stables, against characteristic architecture, among the greenery of pastures in the summer and in snowy scenery in the winter: Băbolna, Ismer Stud, Sax Arabians, Marbach, Al Assil Arabians, Rousillon, the stud of the Martensson family in Majorca, Yeguada Domecq – these are just some of the stops during her journey. The artist did not omit Poland – we will find photographs of Janów Podlaski and wonderful, dynamic images of the Michałów broodband among others.

North Africa and the Middle East. „The Arabian horse was, for centuries, the most reliable ally to the Maghreb people in their war struggles” – we read in the commentary. And Egypt is the source of the majority of Arabian horses in the world today. Through her lens Boiselle forever immortalized horses against the pyramids and among the desert sands; walking through the remains of ancient buildings and resting in pampered stables. Arabians in the cradle of their breed, perfectly matched with the landscape and architecture, set loose or in decorative, traditional halters.

The Americas. The history of the Arabian horse across the pond began in 1877 – nearly 30 years before Homer Davenport's famous expedition to the desert – when a general brought back two stallions that had been offered to him by the Sultan of Turkey. Today it is not only the United States, but also Brazil and Argentina that are the leaders in the world breeding of Arabians, used both for recreation purposes, as well as authentic „cowboy” work, which is illustrated by Boiselle's photographs from Colorado and Monument Valley. Horses from Om El Arab International or Zichy-Tissen Arabians confirm the power of both of the Americas. A Polish accent this time is the stallion Ecao, photographed at Haras de Cardenas in Santa Ynez Valley, California, as well as the famous Bandos, for whom Ventura Farms became home in 1982. Its owner, David Murdock, purchased the Polish stallion, a son of Negativ, at the Polish Prestige Sale in Janów Podlaski for 806 thousand dollars, setting a record price.



South Africa and Australia. It was from the island of Java, in the 17th century, that the first Arabian horses were imported into South Africa. Their descendants would, in turn, be exported to Australia. Both African and Australian settlers needed trustworthy companions in their work and travels. Arabian horses wonderfully proved themselves useful in those roles and today are completely at home in these parts. Boiselle confirms this by photographing herds traversing the desert and part-desert terrain on both of these continents. The fiery red earth and bay or chestnut horses with coats glistening in the sun – is a photographer's paradise!

The Orient. Again we return to the desert, from where these extraordinary creatures that fascinate so many people descend. Eastern breeders, who after years of oblivion again discovered what a treasure to their culture the Arabian horse is, accumulated in their luxurious stables a collection of the most beautiful Arabians in the world. These include, among others, Al Shagab Stables, Al Aziz Stables, Al Rayyan Stud and the Royal Stables of Bahrain. They could not be omitted in this photographic story about modern Arabian horses.

The album is four-lingual – the commentary is written in English, German, French and Dutch. On more than 300 pages the author serves a true feast for the eyes of every Arabian horse lover. Upon closing the album it is hard not to admire a woman, who followed her passion the farthest reaches of the globe, creating a work of art worthy of its main characters – pure bred Arabian horses. 🐾

Gabrielle Boiselle, „The Arabian Horse”,
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