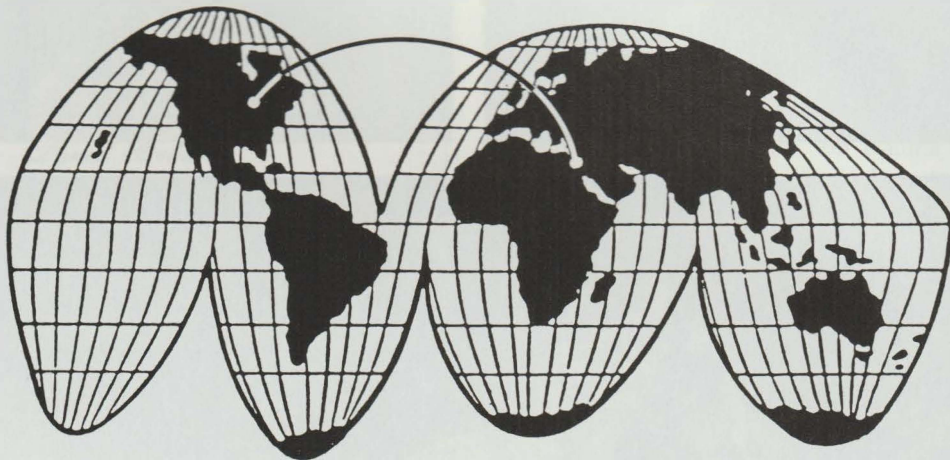


Fa Serr: A Prince's Dream

by Joe Ferriss



Between the years and miles, a prince's dream becomes a reality.

Perhaps it is the dream of most breeders of Arabian horses to produce at least one special horse in their lifetime — a horse which represents the finest in true Arabian character and also has the quality of blood to extend its influence well into future generations.

Such was the case with the beautiful black stallion Fa Serr, whose impact on Arabian breeding is still very strong some 37 years after his birth.

Fa Serr was an Al Khamsa Arabian, meaning that his pedigree traces in every line to foundation stock of the original Bedouin tribes of the Arabian desert.

Foaled in 1947, Fa Serr was bred by the internationally famous Babson Arabian Horse Farm — one of very few Arabian breeding farms in existence since 1932.

Fa Serr's sire, *Fadl, and dam, *Bint Serra I, were part of Henry Babson's original importation from Egypt in 1932.

To understand Fa Serr's pedigree is to realize why he was such a consistent and influential sire. His sire, *Fadl, was bred by Prince Mohamed Ali and imported as a two-year-old. To many, *Fadl needs no introduction as time has shown him to be a most influential imported "Old Egyptian" stallion and a sire whose blood is widely regarded both here and abroad. Thousands of Arabians carry some measure of *Fadl blood today. He was a very typey, athletic horse of classic Koheilan type.

A very versatile horse, *Fadl was successful in endurance, polo, harness and pleasure riding. His extraordinarily

kind temperament also made him an excellent child's mount.

*Fadl was by Ibn Rabdan, one of the most popular and heavily used stallions in Egypt, who was considered by Carl Raswan as a "world champion" type. And, Jack Humphreys, who selected Arabians in Egypt for W.R. Brown, described Ibn Rabdan as "almost perfect." A very dark liver chestnut, Ibn Rabdan sired many dark horses — so dark as to appear almost black in most cases. It is interesting to note that Ibn Rabdan, in old age, was bred to *Fadl's granddam, Negma (a grey), and produced a black. Some feel that this combination of blood was largely responsible for the black color of Fa Serr.

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his descendants and relatives. *Fadl's dam, Mahroussa, was epitomized as one of the most beautiful mares of her time. A daughter of Mabrouk Manial and the aforementioned Negma, both classic Arabians of exceptional quality, Mahroussa also produced such horses as *Zarife, *H.H. Mohamed Alis Hamida, *H.H. Mohamed Alis Hama-ma and *Maaroufa, full sister to *Fadl.

Fa Serr's dam, *Bint Serra I (*Sotamm II x Serra), was a fine bay mare of elegant Saklawi type. She was bred by Prince Kemal el Dine in Egypt. She was one of the favorites of the Babson importation and was also greatly admired by Jack Humphreys. When Humphreys visited the stud of Prince Kemal el Dine, he remarked first about *Bint Serra I's dam, Serra: "This mare is the outstanding animal in the stud . . . I tried hard to get a price on her but nothing doing." When he saw her daughter, *Bint Serra I, he commented: "I put in a lot of hard work trying to get this mare priced or exchanged for one of Prince Mohamed Ali's, but could not. She is all Arab." Fortunately, Henry Babson eventually acquired *Bint Serra I. *Bint Serra I's dam, Serra, was one of the choicest of Old Egyptian breeding, as all four of her grandparents were bred by Ali Pasha Sherif. Serra was a granddaughter of the famed *Ghazala, one of very few Ali Pasha Sherif Arabians to come directly to America. Ali Pasha Sherif blood has a well-documented reputation for

quality. In fact, six of the eight great-grandparents of *Bint Serra I were bred by Ali Pasha Sherif — making her the highest percentage Ali Pasha Sherif mare of the Babson importation.

*Bint Serra I's sire, Sotamm II, was a dark bay stallion used by the stud of Prince Kemal el Dine. Bred by the Blunt's Crabbet Stud, he, too, was rich in Ali Pasha Sherif blood on which Lady Anne Blunt built her foundation. Sotamm II's pedigree also includes lines to the influential Blunt desert-breds Azrek and Queen of Sheba.

But what was Fa Serr like as an individual? He was known to have been the kind of horse that made a lasting and memorable impression on those who came in contact with him. Many said that he was the epitome of the antique-type Arabian typically illustrated in old engravings. In addition to his type, his rich black color made him stand out from the crowd as well. His essence is perhaps best described by Walter Schimanski of Cove, Arkansas, longtime breeder of Babson Arabians: "I will never forget the day I saw Fa Serr. It was also my first visit to the huge cypress show barn. Seeing him had such an impact that I can still picture him in my mind's eye, just as if it were only yesterday.

"Fa Serr was standing quietly in the stall looking out of the window, his head turned away from me. Even in this position I could see his huge black eyes protruding from his head. His tail was

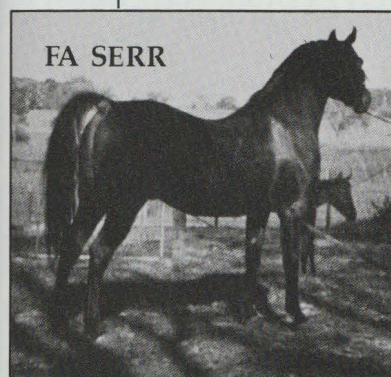
always held in a high arch, even as he stood quietly.

"When he was led outside for me to photograph, his blue-black coat gleamed as he pranced around Homer Watson. He was the blackest horse I have ever seen. He set himself up naturally — arching and stretching his neck to an advantage. He was an elegant, typey, exotic and obviously loved old gentleman. It was one of those horse thrills one never forgets."

Lazelle Atkinson of Anchor Hill Ranch, Rogersville, Missouri, remembers Fa Serr as having had an extremely kind temperament combined with a special peacock-like presence, an extra spark which made him stand out. Homer Watson, longtime manager of the Babson Farm, says Fa Serr was very typical of the best Babson stallions — in some ways a little bit better and a little more special, but always an excellent sire. And this, to Watson, was most important.

As a sire, Fa Serr proved to be extraordinary. He was born at a time when there were little more than 4,000 Arabians living in this country. Traditionally, the Babson Farm has not made a regular practice of standing its stallions at public stud, so Fa Serr's tenure at stud was primarily limited to Babson-owned mares. Only occasionally were a few outside mares bred (13 during his lifetime). Despite this, Fa Serr sired 75 foals, making him one of the most

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*FADL

*BINT SERRA I

IBN RABDAN

MAHROUSSA

SOTAMM II

SERRA

RABDAN (EL AZRAK)

BINT GAMILA

MABROUK MANIAL

NEGMA

*ASTRALED

SELMA II

SAHAB

JEMLA (JAMILA)

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heavily used stallions in Babson breeding. Fa Serr's sons and daughters were equally good and their popularity both as individuals and breeding stock has resulted in his influence being quite widespread. Fa Serr blood is represented in racing, endurance, halter and performance horses, indicating the versatility of his descendants. Space here does not permit highlighting all of his noted get, but a representative sample will serve as an example.

Fa Serr sons were very popular sires. The ten most heavily used sons of Fa Serr are Pharoh (x Rosebruk), Faserouf (x Fay Roufa), Negem (x Fay Negma), Ibn Fa Serr (x Fa Deene), Khemahr (x Khedena), Serris (x Sirefa), Fa Rousse (x Khedena), Ozem (x Ga; Negma), Fa Maar (x El Maar) and Abgar (x Fa Abba).

Pharoh, out of a mare of Polish, Egyptian and Crabbet lines, sired numerous endurance, halter and performance winners including HMR Pharod, 1971 U.S. national champion in formal combination and top ten in formal driving.

The three most heavily used straight Babson Egyptian sons of Fa Serr are Faserouf, Negem and Ibn Fa Serr. Faserouf sired numerous U.S. national top ten performance winners, including Roulette and Serpico. Negem was a very popular sire and was used extensively within Al Khamsa bloodlines. He sired

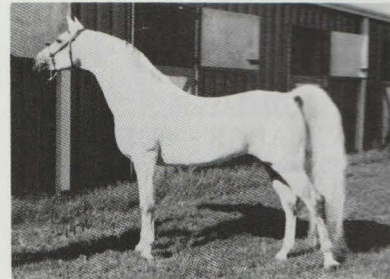
THE EIGHT THAT REMAIN

by Carol M. Schulz

There exists in this country a nearly extinct group of horses which trace in *every* line exclusively to horses bred or used by Ali Pasha Sherif and H.R.H. Prince Mohamed Ali.

Living representatives include the descendants of *Fadl and *Maaroufa (bred by Prince Mohamed Ali), *Bint Saada (born at the Royal Agricultural Society but bred from Mohamed Ali's stock) and *Bint Serra I (by Sotamm II, who was used at stud by Prince Mohamed Ali, and out of Serra who was bred by Lady Anne Blunt exclusively from Ali Pasha Sherif bloodlines. This group consists of:

- Ibn Fa Serr (Fa Serr x Fa Deene), 1960 stallion
- Bint Aaroufa (Fa Serr x Aaroufa), 1961 mare
- Char Serrak (Negem x Serra), 1963 stallion (both parents by Fa Serr)
- Roufas (Fa Serr x Aaroufa), 1963 stallion
- Char Serr (Negem x Serra), 1964 stallion



Roufas (Fa Serr x Aaroufa), born at Babson Farms, owned by Bentwood Farms and on lease to Dogwood Hill Arabian Ranch, Cove, Arkansas, was 1974 U.S. reserve national champion in English pleasure and has acquired top tens in English pleasure, park, formal and pleasure driving.

- Roufina (Fa Serr x Aaroufa), 1965 mare
- Aarouser (Fa Serr x Aaroufa), 1966 mare
- Char Iswid (Negem x Serra), 1966 stallion

Arc Teneya, 1972 Canadian reserve national champion gelding, who was out of the 1972 Davenport mare Schiba. The Negem son Char Serr was a very successful English pleasure champion, and sire of champion Bilkris Sham, out of the Doyle mare Jady. One of Negem's most influential sons is Char Echo

(x Sirhabba), a foundation sire for the Anchor Hill Ranch. Char Echo sired many champions, including Anchor Hill Omar, national champion of South Africa, and Anchor Hill Annah, 1974 U.S. top ten trail horse. Negem daughters were equally prized as show mares and excellent broodmares. Three

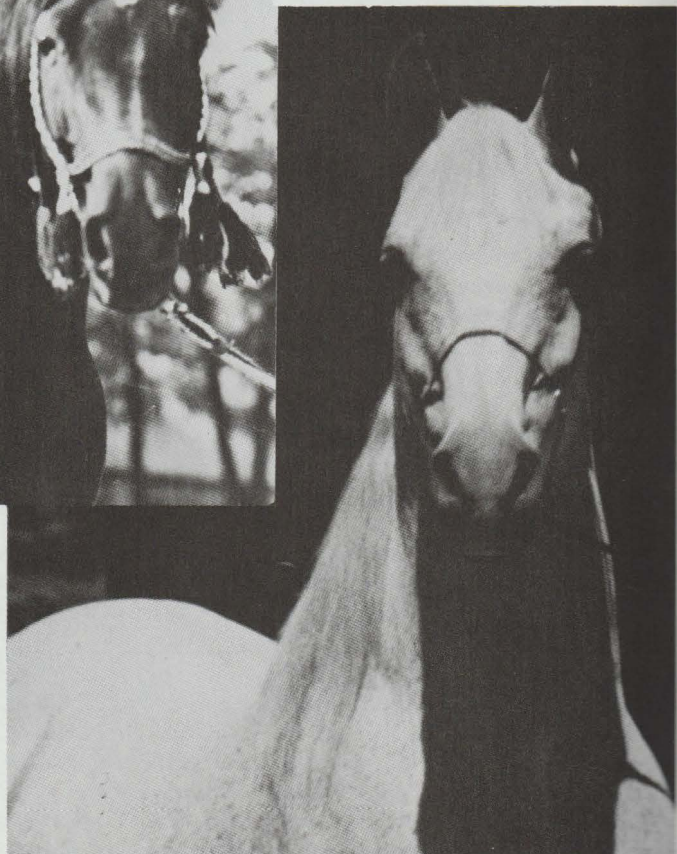


PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT DAV

Fa Serr (left) and Ibn Fa Serr (right) — a study in prepotency.

Negem daughters were exported to Germany: Shar Zarga (x Shar Turfa), Shar Duda (x Shar Hiba) and Shar Gemara (x Faziza), and all are considered excellent producers.

Ibn Fa Serr is the senior sire at the Babson Farm and, at the age of 24, is still producing outstanding get. Out of Fa Deene, full sister to Fa Serr, he is inbred to both *Fadl and *Bint Serra I. The majority of Ibn Fa Serr's get are out of Babson mares and have carried on the Babson type. The few Ibn Fa Serr get that have been shown include the brilliant Roufah, 1974 Canadian and 1976 U.S. top ten mare, dam of Canadian top ten stallion Na Ibn Moniet. Ahroufa (Ibn Fa Serr x Bah Roufa), full sister to Roufa, was also a successful halter champion and produced the popular

European sire Mohafez. The cross between Ibn Fa Serr and Bah Roufa has been a workable nick. Recognizing the compatability of this cross, the Babson Farm leased the stallion Fadl Starr (Ibn Fa Serr x Bah Roufa) from Carolyn Coletts in order to incorporate more of this blood into its program. Perhaps Ibn Fa Serr's most successful son in performance is the stallion Serr Maariner (x Maarena), three times national dressage champion and U.S.D.F. "Horse of the Year" among all breeds at the international level. Currently the most accomplished Arabian in dressage at the international level, Serr Maariner utilizes the strength, intelligence and versatility extracted from his Fa Serr heritage.

Other Fa Serr sons have produced

ARABIAN FOUNDATIONS

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both racing and endurance winners. For example, Fa Maar (x El Maar) sired Kingdoms El Rabi, winner of the 1976 IAHA 1½ mile National Champion Race and 1976 U.S. top ten competitive trail horse. Fa Serr's very first foal, Faaris (x *Maaroufa), sired the Al Khamsa stallion El Beshir (x Sirulla), winner of the first approved Arabian race for purebreds in Germany. The Faaris son Zaaris (x Zarieha) sired Bint Zaaris, an Australian reserve champion mare. The Faaris daughter Faar Ra (x Razima, Crabbet breeding) was 1966 U.S. top ten mare and 1967 U.S. national champion park horse. Faaris also sired Faarad (x Fadba), who was for many years the principal source of Babson breeding in Richard Pritzlaff's Egyptian Arabian breeding program. One of Fa Serr's most successful sons at the national level is Roufas (x Aaroufa), whose wins include a U.S. national reserve championship in English pleasure and U.S. top tens in park, formal driving, pleasure driving and English pleasure.

Fa Serr daughters have made an equally significant contribution to the breed. Highly valued for their producing ability, few Fa Serr daughters have been shown — but among those that were are: Bint Aaroufa (x Aaroufa), 1966 U.S. top ten park horse, a halter champion and dam of champions; Aarouser (x Aaroufa), 1973 Canadian national top ten mare; and Serr Ra (x Rasima, also the dam of Faar Ra), 1964 U.S. national top ten mare.

As producers, Fa Serr daughters have exceptional records: Rose of Egypt (x Fa Abba) produced 1968 U.S. top ten park horse Serr Bruk and the multi-champion Egypt's Al Metrabb; Bint Fada (x Fada) produced Al Nahr Montego, a champion and sire of champions who is currently standing at stud in Israel; Bint Fada is well known as the dam of British national champion The Shah (x Fabah) — a very successful sire in Europe before his untimely death; Serida (x Fay El Aba) produced such champions as Anchor Hill Seranza, Anchor Hill Serfa and Anchor Hill Amida; and Shebaa (x Fay Sabbah) produced Bay Rod, 1968 U.S. national champion in western pleasure, and sire of champions.

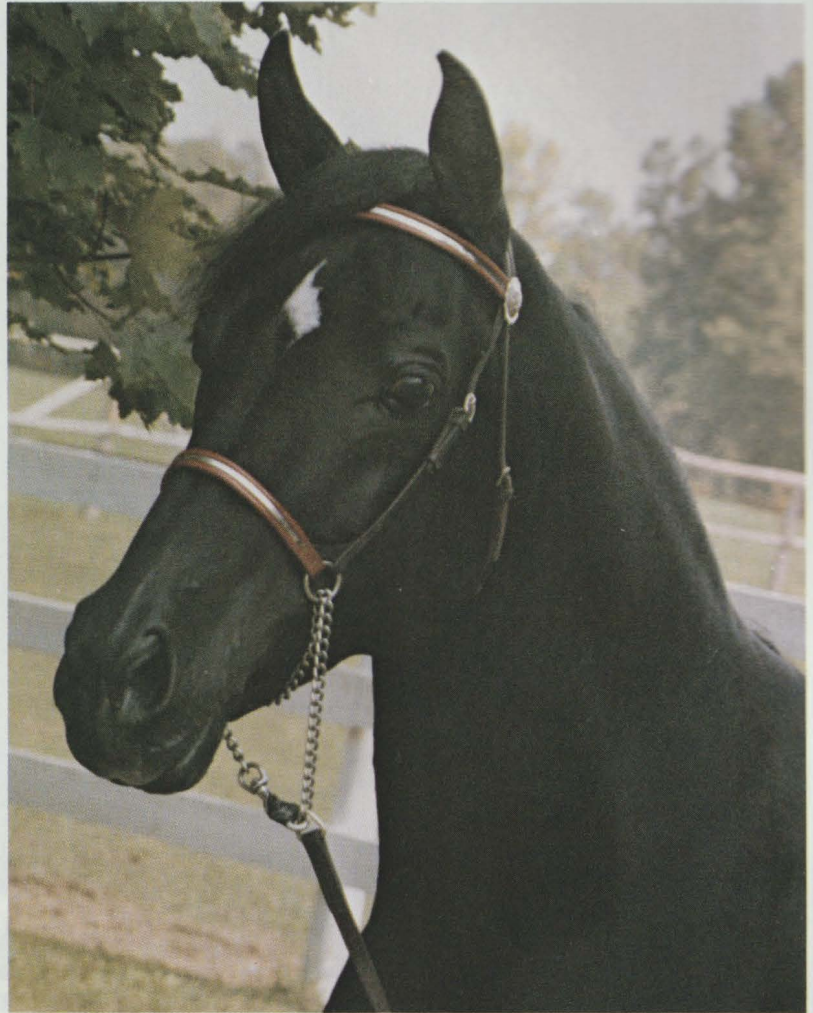
The full sister to Shebaa, Serrasah, is

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RIGHT: A Fa Serr grandson, Serhabbas from Grove Hill Farm, Pittsfield, Maine, displays the black coloring of his heritage.

BELOW LEFT: Fadl Starr, filling the Fa Serr shoes at Babson Arabian Farm.

BELOW RIGHT: Fa Serr shown at age 27 grazing under a tree.



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the dam of Sabrah (x Fabah), who produced the beautiful Fa Halima, 1979 U.S. top ten mare, 1980 U.S. national champion mare, Canadian reserve national champion mare and reserve international champion mare in Paris. Sabrah also produced Ansata El Reyhan, 1976 U.S. reserve national champion trail, English pleasure AOTR and 1978 U.S. top ten native costume, and Ansata Sabiha, who produced Ansata Shah Zam, 1977 U.S. national champion futurity stallion, 1978 Canadian reserve national champion stallion and 1980 U.S. top ten stallion. Another Fa Serr daughter, Misimma (x Fay Khedena), was linebred to *Bint Serra I, carrying 43.5 percent of her blood. Misimma is best known as the dam of Fabo (x Fabah), who has sired numerous Legion of Merit winners and other show winners.

Fa Serr's last foal was Sera Beth, who carried 62.5 percent Fa Serr blood. She is the granddam of the beautiful Ser Beth (x Ibn Fa Serr) and Ser Beth's full brother, Amir Ibn Fa Serr, a young stallion standing at the Babson Farm. The oldest living Fa Serr daughter at the Babson Farm is the black mare Serr Abba, who is 25 years old this year. Serr Abba has produced such horses as Faserrab, Mi Serr, Sunny Acres Batal, Ibn Mahrouf and Bint Serr Abba.

Through such horses as Fa Serr, the Egyptian Arabian has proven its worth. Time after time, Fa Serr descendants have risen victorious in national competition.

Prince Mohamed Ali dreamed of producing a classic Arabian horse which represented the finest in true Arabian character and whose prepotency would perpetuate its greatness on to future generations. The Prince also had a compelling desire to produce all of this in a black Arabian. Some years after his passing, a black horse was born which would represent his ideal. That horse, the Babson Farm's Fa Serr, whose greatness still survives . . . 52 years after his parents left their home country of Egypt. □

Joe Ferriss, a free-lance writer from Quincy, Michigan, is currently a Director-at-Large of Al Khamsa, Inc. and art director of The Khamsat. With his wife, Sharon, Ferriss opened the first Al Khamsa office for continuing education.