

# ASAEEL AL SHAM



**D**amascus, the capital of Syria, combines the traces of her ancient history of multicultural traditions with the signs of a modern civilized society. Which is why it's not a surprise that members of the Syrian high society should be breeding horses and celebrating. Mahmoud Al Anzarouti, an engaging and informal gentleman, is one of the outstanding personalities in Syrian horse breeding. Even back in the 1980ies, as a young and already successful businessman, he bought Syrian purebred Arabians from the Bedouins, using them for riding as well as for breeding. It was only during the last ten years that he decided to include straight Egyptians for breeding and showing. His invitation to delegates and friends of the WAHO



Syrian Arabs, Liberty in the area.



Mahmoud Al Anzarouti, Princess Alia from Giordania and Mazen Sheikh Fadli.



# stad, Damascus

## Noblesse, Beauty, and Performance

conference was taken up enthusiastically. In the garden of his villa, in between roomy barns built according to the requirements of horses and a show ring, there was a party of superlatives. The count of guests amounted to 450, not regarding the bodyguards discreetly blending with the background. It was not only the international WAHO society that was present, but also horse-fan members of the high Syrian nobility from government and city administration as well as horse breeders from the environs.

For a sum-up of the gigantic buffet of traditional Syrian dishes, "hardly ever eaten so well" would do very well. The programme framing the party, music and dancing, let you get a taste of the music male elders in the Arabian world prefer after 11 pm. The centre and pivot of the event, however, were Mahmoud Anzarouti's wonderful horses.

They were shown according to Western patterns, with the Syrian horses shown first - all of them very high in quality, with harmonious bodies, good type, and their nerves coping well with the stress. Music, speakers, and the applause from the spectators would not get any impression on them, even though it was the first time for the horses to be subjected to an event such as this one, as stud employees assured us. The second part of the show was reserved for the Straight Egyptians. Here, we saw a nice collection of Ansata offspring, with SE horses, imported from Italy, Germany, and the Middle East completing the programme.

With most of the people present, the issue of the evening was why Egyptian Arabians should be regarded as any more beautiful or better than Syrian Arabians. Why did the world never before cast a glance at Syrian Arabians? After all, both of these horse populations have the same genetic background. The Egyptian Arabians were originally purchased, stolen or otherwise acquired and then imported to Egypt from Mesopotamia, from what is today Syria, and from the Nejd, by the Egyptian kings such as Abbas Pasha and his sons. So, are Americans and Europeans to blame for rendering Egyptian Arabians into some kind of statue of beauty, with performance potential being rather



Dr. Helmy, the Director of El Zahraa and Dr. Zaghoul, Waho Executive Komitee with Mr. Anzarouti and Delegates.



dubious today? Should breeding now continue the straight Syrian or straight Egyptian lines, or should phenotype be the crucial criterion, being reason to mix the lines and combine the best of beauty and performance?

It was an exciting evening. The guests were fascinated with the horses, but also with the challenge of developing new positions regarding Syrian Arabians - with this discovery referring to the people of Syria as well as to their noble horses. So, this party might be regarded as a kick-off meeting, as the starting whistle to new matches was heard here, at the latest.