

## PORTRAIT OF A JUDGE

# Renata SCHIBLER

*As the battle was raging, King Richard III, almost unarmed, begged: "My Kingdom for a horse." He would have surrendered all his possessions in order to have a steed that would take him away from the melee in which he would have perished by an enemy's hand.*

*On the other hand, there are those who would never barter their Kingdom for a horse, even if they are not inside of a Shakespearean drama. They would not do it because horses are their Kingdom. In the horizon of whom at age 61 is still arguing: «There is no day when I have not thought about my Arabian horses, it is an endless passion», there can only be a life whose notes have the sound of dancing hooves in the arena. And it makes no difference that the arena is that of the International shows or the green pastures of Switzerland. It makes no difference because the horizon stays the same. This woman who from her tender age whispered to the horses, was in fact able to combine her infinite passion for Arabian horses with a desire to turn that love into a long-life commitment first as a breeder and then as a judge.*

Renata Schibler was born in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1957. Raised perfectly bilingual speaking Swiss German and Italian, she later graduated in French, Spanish, and English. She is currently, ECAHO Judge/A List, Instructor for Judges' courses, ECAHO Board Member and President of the Swiss National Association of the Arabian Horse.

Her passion for horses, however, began back in time.

When she was a little girl, she liked to read horsey books and collected horse photos. Her room was hung with horse posters. Of course, Arabian horses were her favourites.

She had her first riding experiences as a small girl, on a part-bred pony, and in the mid-70s, she met a breeder from Alsace where she had the chance to ride purebred Arabians. That's when her big passion got a hold on her.

At the age 18, she had the opportunity to acquire who would have been the foundation mare of her breeding program, the ethereal grey mare Eicka (1980) (Salem [by Karmin by Witraz] x Etica by Tabal and out of Ariana). The sire of





Shaklan lines and cleverly crossed them with Spanish-Egyptians giving rise to what her favourite bloodline still is, the Golden Cross. Her main goal has always been to breed functional horses so not only beautiful horses from a morphological standpoint. For her, a correct horse is the one that combines beauty with a solid and proportionate body and excellent gaits. A correct horse, she argues, is a horse tested under saddle because only under saddle it is possible to see and understand the real nature of the horse.

Renata



Eicka, Salem is a beautiful nephew to the Egyptian stallion Hadban Enzahi and a great-grandson to legendary Nazeer. Eicka's dam, the Spanish -bred mare Etica, was imported from Spain by the Merz family (Om El Arab), together with Estopa, herself a daughter to Tabal, grandsire to the immortal El Shaklan.

Eicka's special quality was her versatility. On the one hand, she was a highly successful show horse, winning a lot of Championship titles internationally. On the other hand, she was a highly successful broodmare, giving Renata a number of high quality offspring in her barns. In addition – and that's something that has always been highly important to Renata – Eicka was a very reliable riding horse. She loved show jumping and foxhunting and made her mark in these disciplines as well, always being ahead of her fellow horses.

Always supported by her beloved husband, Renata based her programme mostly on El

travelled extensively across the world, visiting many farms to consolidate her know-how. In 1980 she spent six months in England where she learned plenty of things about horses at several breeding farms. She also visited Pat and Joanna Maxwell's and she got highly inspired by their breeding program. In 1991, during a show, a very well-known person noticed her when still as a breeder she was participating in many show jumping competitions and her horses wowed the





With the comparative system, you need particularly experienced judges because otherwise, you may have a beautiful horse as the winner just because the judge forgot to take the conformational faults into consideration.

The quality of Arabian horses has steadily increased in recent years, ever more approaching the standard of the Arabian Horse.

Renata had the chance to meet many wonderful horses who won her heart. To name a few to stand for all of these noble creatures, she mentions the mare Pianissima and the stallion Al Lahab, as they were those who especially hypnotised her.

Renata judged all round the world all level of shows. She was also the first non-American judge to judge the Scottsdale Show. Although for her every show is important when judging it. In addition to being



audiences by collecting numerous international accolades. This person approached her and suggested she became a judge. "ECAHO needs people like you, Mrs. Schibler."

And so it was that a busy judge career began for Renata, high in responsibility towards the Arabian breed as a whole, but for sure one filled with many satisfactions and personal acknowledgements. In 1992, the Acqui Terme show in Italy was the first show Renata had the chance to judge together with Mrs. Izabella Zawadzka from Poland. At that time, most shows were more familiar and not as professional as today's, she argues. The horse owners would often train and handle their horses themselves, and everything was much more relaxed.

As soon as all the horses are in the ring, Renata always tries to get an estimate of the level of quality in that class. Though the first impression goes a long way for the final score. She watches the walk and tries to register special characteristics of individual horses. During the individual presentation, she examines the details such as head, neck, body, legs and movements. To her mind, the points system is much more transparent than the comparative system. With the points system, she remarks, owners can much more easily understand the weaknesses and strengths of their horse, and why a particular horse won or not.

President of the Swiss National Association of the Arabian Horse, ECAHO Judge and Instructor for Judges' courses, Renata Schibler is a very proud mother. Four years

ago she came back to live in Basel after having spent 40 years between Lucerne and Lugano. Today, she lives near her two daughters Sandra (34) and (Claudia) (32). Sandra returned to Switzerland after she had long lived in America to study the behaviour of dolphins. She is currently Lecturer of Marine Biology at the University of Zurich. Claudia is a very successful manager.

With her two daughters Renata shares her passion for the Arabian horse and a family that cultivates this passion can only be a blessed one.

