

Breed of the Month: Shagya-Arabian

Rare and beautiful, this arresting breed excels as a sport horse

The Shagya-Arabian was developed more than 200 years ago by Austro-Hungarian breeders whose goal was to produce a superior cavalry mount. The Habsburg/Hungarian monarchy imported a purebred Arabian stallion from Syria called Shagya. Shagya proved so influential that eventually the breed was named after him.

Shagya was bred to cavalry mares “of Oriental type”; later, Thoroughbred, Anglo-Arab, and Lipizzaner blood was carefully added. The resulting offspring were rigorously culled and tested, then bred back to Arabians, until the desired type was produced: a superior riding and driving horse with all of the best characteristics of the Arabian but with a bigger frame, more bone, and a quieter temperament. Shagyas flourished in Europe until World War II, when they were nearly wiped out. Today, the breed is making a slow but steady comeback.

Modern Shagyas excel at dressage, jumping, driving, and endurance. Most stand fifteen to 16.1 hands.

Shagya-Arabians you might know: Out of the fewer than 250 purebreds in the US today, there is one Shagya currently competing at the FEI levels in dressage. Amateur rider Holly Beach earned her USDF bronze and silver medals aboard **Blixten AF** (Hungarian Bravo* - Biala*).

The organization: Shagya breeding in America officially began in 1986 when the Arabian breeder Adele Furby discovered the Shagya stallion Hungarian Bravo in Montana. Then aged 24, he was one of the last offspring of a few Shagyas rescued during WWII by Gen. George Patton. Furby purchased Hungarian Bravo, founded the North American Shagya-

Arabian Society (NASS), imported more Shagyas from Europe, and began breeding and promoting them.

Today, the NASS is the only US member of the International Shagya-Araber Gesellschaft (ISG), the European-based society that oversees the breeding of Shagyas worldwide. The purpose of the NASS is the promotion, preservation, and improvement of the purebred Shagya-Arabian horse; the establishment and maintenance of a Shagya registry for purebreds and part-breds; the regulation and approval of breeding stock; the dissemination of information about the breed to the public, and the promotion of cooperation with Shagya breeders around the world.

The NASS holds breeding-stock inspections

every three years in the US. There are currently 25 NASS-approved Shagya stallions.

All-Breeds awards offered: All divisions and levels.

How to participate: The owner must be a member of NASS in good standing. The horse must be an NASS-registered Shagya or part-Shagya.

Organization contact info: North American Shagya-Arabian Society: shagya.net. ▲



LOIS STANFIELD/LIGHTSOURCE IMAGES

STANDOUT: Blixten AF, owned and ridden by Holly Beach, is the only FEI-level dressage Shagya-Arabian in the US

For the Breeds, by the Breeds

Each month, “All-Breeds Connection” spotlights a USDF All-Breeds awards program participating organization and the breed it represents. Information and photos that appear in this column are furnished by the breed registries.

The All-Breeds program is designed to recognize the accomplishments of specific breeds in dressage. All participating organizations offer “open” year-end awards from Training Level through Grand Prix, and some offer awards in additional categories, such as adult amateur, junior/young rider, and dressage sport-horse breeding. Registry representatives are usually on hand to help bestow awards at the banquet held during each year’s USDF convention.

All-Breeds award eligibility requirements include memberships and horse registrations with both USDF and the participating organization. For details and a list of current participating organizations, visit usdf.org. For more information about All-Breeds awards program participation, send e-mail to allbreeds@usdf.org.