



THE LEGACY CONTINUES...

# Allan Dale Arabians

BY CHRISTINA WEESE  
AND JEAN BERG

Most people, when they live through a certain era that made its mark in history, have trouble looking forward to the future when that era is over. Everything familiar, everything they knew and were passionate about, has changed and the world, it seems, has moved on.

Warren Fertig is not most people. With two exotic bay Marwan Al Shaqab fillies (RA Nefertiti and Marwanna AD) having stellar success last year in the show ring, and with Nefertiti slated to move on to the 2010 Canadian Nationals after a unanimous Region 7 Champion Mare win, Warren's kind and soft-spoken manners might belie his inner determination – to keep moving forward.

"The people I started out with, they're all gone now," Warren says reflectively. "Mr. Gainey Sr., Doug Marshall from Gleannloch, Dalton Finkbeiner, they were my mentors. Paul Guthrie, Lorne Thompson, Chic Miller. They helped me to get into the business."

"Paul's nephew John and I were good friends," he continues. "I used to hang out at Triple A Ranches and drool over the babies. We saw some good horses there – one year Lorne Thompson sent his entire mare herd to Paul on lease, when he was in the process of moving from Manitoba to Alberta. He had an excellent, quality band of broodmares."

Warren watched carefully the philosophies of the Triple A breeding program, and took them to heart. "Paul Guthrie was good at moving forward – his breeding program never became stagnant because he was always looking for new bloodlines," says Warren. "He started buying pure Polish even though his first bloodlines were Raffles-bred – it was always interesting to be around Paul because he was always looking for something to improve his breeding program."

"Paul was really a pretty good friend. It was a hard day that I had to do his eulogy."

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## The Beginnings of Allan Dale

It was an iconic moment. In December 1966, Warren and his wife Joyce purchased the Allan Dale property – twenty scenic acres conveniently located along the highway north of Red Deer, half way between Edmonton and Calgary. The farm, with its name prominently visible from one of the busiest highways in Canada, became a local landmark and still is to this day.

Having acquired the farm, the next step was to look for a stallion. In those days travel was the name of the game. “When I got into the business,” explains Warren, “a breeding stallion attracted people to your place. If you had an outstanding breeding stallion, or even one that showed promise, you were inundated with traffic, on weekends particularly. Once you had traffic, people would buy breedings for their partbred or grade mares. Then you started selling purebred foals – all my horses were sold as weanlings. We had a waiting list for fillies. I came through that era; people waited for your fillies to be born and you called them up and said this is what you wanted for them.”

Warren, Joyce, and Joyce’s father C. P. Renouf went in together on the purchase of Allan Dale’s first stallion, **Witezon Zarzon** (*Witezar* [\**Witez II*] x *Ferzona* [*Ferzon*]).

“We went through a lot of ranches to look at prospects, lined them all up and went from place to place,” Warren recalls. “I will never forget what I saw the day I bought Witezon, when I drove into Burr & Lucille Betts’ yard in Parker, Colorado. Painted on their indoor arena – I bet the width of that building would have been 100 feet wide – it said ‘The best thing for the inside of a man is the outside of a horse.’ It’s maybe a bit clichéd now, but that was the first time I saw it, and it’s stuck with me ever since.”

All of this was a lot of hard work on a school teacher’s salary. Warren recalls some insightful advice he was given by a fellow teacher. “Mr. Gainey Sr., who also came from the teaching profession, was just an incredible person. He said to me, ‘Warren, you might never make any money with the horses, and it doesn’t matter, you’ll meet a lot of great people. But what you will do is buy real estate to house your horse farm – that’s where you’ll make your money.’ And he was right.”

Witezon arrived with yet more help and advice from established breeders. “Betts delivered the horse; they even sent his trainer up here to work with him for a week or so,” says Warren. “I was very grateful for that – I ended up getting a lot of breaks. People were willing to help you out because of the passion you had for the horses.”

Multitalented Witezon Zarzon was twice champion stallion at the Aurora show, once at Parkland, champion against all breeds

at Didsbury, Alberta, and was twice a Top Six Canadian Breeders Stallion. His performance career began with Joyce in the saddle, winning both Maiden Western and English Pleasure at Calgary in 1969. More wins came his way but he had caught the public eye and stud duties became a priority. Witezon surpassed all Witezar sons at stud, siring 100 purebred offspring. Warren says it was heart-warming to receive inquiries for get long after Witezon took his last breath in 1997, at age 32.

In those days, breeding that many mares was an awful lot of work. “I would breed 60 mares a year to Witezon,” says Warren. “I’d leave school at noon and run home; Joyce would have the mare all washed up and ready to be bred. Sometimes we’d do another one in the evening – it was pretty hectic. Eventually we were breeding 100 mares a year to three stallions, mostly outside mares – I don’t think anyone else in Canada was doing that at the time. Once I quit teaching school in 1980 I took a course and started doing AI on the farm.”

Warren took just as much time to support the breed’s foundations as he did in the breeding itself. In 1967 he was elected as

a Director of the Canadian Arabian Horse Association (now the Canadian Arabian Horse Registry), a position he held for sixteen years, including four years as Secretary and four as President. He also held a position as Rotating Governing Member in the Arabian Horse Registry of America.

The Allan Dale story was almost cut short prematurely in 1971, when Warren was backed over by a D-7 Caterpillar while building corrals. “I went through hell for a year,” says Warren. “Spent six months in the hospital. I remember travelling to the WAHO conference walking in a steel brace.

Basically Joyce looked after the place, all the horses and the paperwork and the two kids (Allan and Shannon), and she did a good job of that.”

**Proud Silver** (*Tornado* x *Silver Gleam*) appeared on the scene as a weanling in 1974. He was bred by Dr. Howard Kale of Bellevue, Washington, whose “Living Legend” \*Silver Drift horses were a common sight at shows on this side of the border and who, more often than not, triumphed.

“Dr. Kale was a world-renowned breeder,” remembers Warren. “When I bought Proud Silver, Michael Whelihan was working there and he was about 17 or 18 years old. Then the Kales went over to Europe and started bringing over the Russian horses, and you just had to go to their place to see them. He brought in great mares – some incredible mares.”

Proud Silver surpassed Witezon’s one hundred purebreds with one hundred and seventy-eight of his own. He sired four winners



ABOVE The Allan Dale property in the 1970's. The highway is visible in the bottom left. Later, the words on the barn would be changed to read 'Allan Dale Arabians & Llamas'.

RIGHT **Witezaff++**, who went Reserve National Champion in Halter and English Pleasure with Ron Palelek. Pictured with Joyce Fertig in the saddle; she rode him to his Legion of Merit.





LEFT **Witezon Zarzon** (*Witezar [\*Witez II] x Ferzona [Ferzon]*), born 1965. At the Nationals, twenty-three of the WZ family of horses have placed in forty-four classes, with seven direct get accumulating two championships, three reserves (1 U.S.) and sixteen Top Tens.



ABOVE **Style Master** (*Bey Shah+ x Lady Tornado*), born 1981. He stood at stud at Allan Dale until 1993, when he was sold to James and Sherri Allen of Brooks, Alberta. He sired eighty-eight purebreds and two of his get have won National Top Tens.



LEFT **Destiny Lane** (*Proud Silver x Ratina*), 1985 Canadian Nat'l Champion H/A Gelding, owned by John and Jeannette Semotiuik of Vegreville, AB.

LEFT **Proud Silver** (*Tornado x Silver Gleam*). If ever a horse lived up to his name it was Proud Silver, he wore it like a badge of honour, it was seen in his carriage and mesmeric appeal. Proud Silver is 25% Polish thanks to \*Bask++ (*Witraz x Balalajka*), whose son Tornado (*\*Silwara*), 1969 Can. Nat. Ch. Stallion was a forerunner of the supremacy of \*Bask as a sire of National Champions. The other 75% is mainly Crabbet, with lines to Skowronek through sons Naseem, \*Raseyn, Rangoon, and \*Raswan. At the National level, eight of seventeen classes (4 U.S.) won by the Proud Silver family were won by four of his direct get, including Destiny Lane (*pictured above*). In 1990, at age sixteen, Proud Silver sold to Ginger Rohde of Baraboo, Wisconsin.

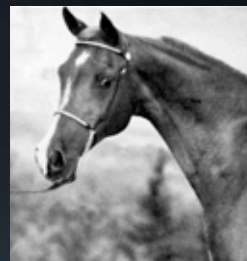
## ◆ ALLAN DALE BROODMARES ◆



**Na-Zeba** (*Ybabi x Roseba*), born 1957. Dam of Zareba and Raffons Nazeba. Bred by N Watts Smyth of Big Horn, WY, and owned by Triple A Ranches when she won Canadian National Champion Mare in 1960. Na-Zeba became an Allan Dale broodmare at age 19.



**Zareba** (*Witezon Zarzon x Na-Zeba*), born 1972. She is the dam of eleven foals including Lady Tornado and Silverette, the grand-dam of a Top Ten winner.



**Taraffa** (*Daal-Abi x Raffana*), born 1961. Dam of Tazaffa (*Tazad*) and Witezaff++ (*Witezon Zarzon*), Canadian and US National Res Ch Gelding. All three were bred by H Lorne Thompson and purchased by Allan Dale.



**Raffons Nazeba** (*Raffon+ x Na-Zeba*), born 1975. Bred to \*Bask in 1979, just months before he died, she produced Nabaaska, a stunning bay filly who went to Tom Chauncey Arabians of Scottsdale and has two Supreme Legion of Honor horses to her credit.



**Lady Tornado** (*Tornado x Zareba*), born 1976. Dam of twelve foals including Style Master and AD Bey Elegance by Bey Shah+. Sold to Nicasio Valley Arabians in 1987, she became one of George Dexter's most adored mares and produced the breeding stallion NV Congo (*Bey Shah+*).



1 Aladinnette  
 (\*Egana x \*Aladdin), born 1982.  
 2 AD Bey Elegance  
 (Bey Shah+ x Lady Tornado), born 1986.  
 3 Q Di Style JM  
 (\*Style SRA [Bey Shah+] x Hestoriah JM), born 2006.  
 4 Cibylla El Yllan  
 (Yllan El Jamaal x Cekwence), born 2003.  
 5 NBW Angels Kiss  
 (Magnum Psyche x BHF Dark Angel), born 2003.

65494 Hiway 20,  
 Bend, Oregon - 97701  
 September 28, 1976.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Fertig:

I am two days late in answering your telephone call, but being slow thinkers, it takes a little extra time in an attempt to come up with the right answers.

In regard to Bey Shah (alias Mr. Perfection), we had decided we would keep him to show as a yearling. We think he is really outstanding and we feel he will make a real show horse. We gave the thought of selling him serious thought after your telephone call. We depend upon trainers to show our horses. We have Bruce Vining now who is very satisfactory, but should he decide to leave, then we are in search of his successor. They are difficult to find, especially the kind who can make an impression with your horse in the show ring. Therefore, maybe we are better off to sell the colts who have possibilities of being stallions as we are not particularly interested in establishing a breeding program. We have come to the conclusion we will offer him for a price of \$15,000.00. We realize the price might read high for a 1976 colt, but I am sure he will make his mark in the world. He has a very good pedigree as you know.

Thank you so very much for your interest in  
 ... us on your return home  
 ... dated

BELOW A weanling Bey Shah+ and, at left, a letter from his breeders, Lester and Jennie Walton.



at the National level, including **Destiny Lane**, Canadian National Champion H/A Gelding in 1985 and U.S. National Top Ten Gelding in '86 and '87.

Warren remembers when showing halter horses started to change. "Back then," he says, "we all used to show our own horses – everyone did. And we were all reasonably good at it. But then Ron came along." Ron Palelek, of Vantage Point Farm, showed the Fertig's gelding **Witezaff++** (*Witezon Zarzon x Taraffa*) to U.S. Reserve National Champion Gelding in Louisville in August, 1976, out of 101 entries. Later that same year in Edmonton, the pair would win Canadian Reserve National Championships in halter and in English Pleasure.

"If there was ever a single person that changed the way we stood up halter horses," says Warren, "it might have been Ron Palelek. I don't think people would disagree with me if they'd lived through that era. He worked for Paul Guthrie for a while, then went to the States and never came back. When I had Ron on the end of a halter shank, I knew I would have a horse that was hard to beat. A lot like Greg Knowles today."

As with many success stories, there is also a story about 'the one that got away,' and Warren's slipped fish is a big one. He still has the letter and foal photo from breeder Jenny Walton giving him first dibs on the 1976 son of Bay El Bey and Star of Ofir, better known as **Bey Shah+**. After much consideration, Warren and Joyce took a pass on the purchase, as \$15,000 in 1976 was a lot of money for a weanling colt.

Bey Shah+ was sold to the Dexters of California, and went on to be one of the leading sires of halter winners throughout both North and South America. As the 8th all time leading sire on the AHA studbooks, he is the sire of 976 foals. In the late '80's and early '90's, Bey Shah+ get totally dominated the show rings and his presence is heavily felt today around the world.

Warren mentioned that he really has no regrets, saying that there is a good possibility that the stallion would not be "the Great Bey Shah" we know today if he hadn't had access to the numbers of quality mares available in California.

Allan Dale instead chose **Bask Rhythm** (*\*Bask x SX Daphne*) as their next breeding stallion. Bask Rhythm stood in Canada for four years before being sold to Tye-Tan's Training Center in Baraboo, Wisconsin, in 1982.

Warren had better luck breeding to Bey Shah+. He used Bey Shah+ extensively in his breeding program, eventually paying the worldly sum of \$10,000 per stud fee at the pinnacle of his siring career.

## The Importance of Broodmares

Early favorites in the Allan Dale broodmare band were **Kaira** (*Kaimr*), twice Canadian Breeders Top Six mare, and **Taraffa** (*Daal-Abi*), who were both out of Lorne Thompson's grand old mare

**Raffana**, and **Tazaffa** (*Tazad x Taraffa*), their first purebred, a 1965 filly bred by Lorne Thompson.

"I had some great mares because I never did have many mares. And the mares were what made it work. The stallions get all the credit, but the mares are the backbone of the breeding program. Between Na-Zeba and Lady Tornado, those horses were a big part of my success."

Buying the 1960 Canadian National Champion Mare **Na-Zeba** (*Ybabi x Roseba*) in 1969 from Paul Guthrie was visionary – in Warren's estimation, Na-Zeba was the best foundation mare Allan

Dale ever owned. At age 19 and suffering from heaves, the mare was a big risk but of the four foals she gave them two were exceptional fillies. Her daughter **Zareba** (*Witezon Zarzon*) was bred to the Kale's stallion **Tornado** to produce the chestnut Lady Tornado.

Warren can't say enough about the greatness of **Lady Tornado** as both a show and breeding mare. "We bred her to several different stallions," he explains, "and she always produced great foals. That is definitely the criteria of being a great broodmare."

A favourite nick was

Lady Tornado and Bey Shah+ – two such breedings produced **AD Bey Elegance**, 1990 U.S. Reserve National Champion Mare, and **Style Master**, who stood at Allan Dale until 1993 and sired eighty-eight purebred Arabians.

Allan Dale dabbled in pure Polish Arabians with the 1979 purchase of Swedish-bred **\*Engana** (*Engano x \*Finisia*) from the 1981 Lasma Sale at Scottsdale. Bred to **\*Aladdin**, she produced two exquisite grey fillies, **Aladdinette** (1982) and **Aladdinness** (1983). Aladdinness was sold to Walter Mishek, then the owner of the Arabian Horse Times. "I really loved \*Aladdin – I liked his body, he was a great horse. We used him several times," says Warren.

Meanwhile, changes were under way at Allan Dale. Warren and Joyce amicably parted ways as their children grew up and left home. Warren's son Allan did not go very far, however – he partnered with Warren first in the family's llama business (holding 15 consecutive annual llama and alpaca sales) and then in Allan Dale trailer sales. Warren had been selling horse trailers from the farm since 1967 and became the first Featherlite dealer in Canada in 1983. The business continued to expand and finally outgrew the farm in 2001, moving two miles south to its own property, although still alongside the busy highway between Calgary and Edmonton. In 2006 Allan Dale Industries Ltd. was the largest Featherlite dealer in North America, and with the exception of one year, has been number one in North America ever since.

In 1988 Warren married his wife Jan, and though the two attended many Scottsdale, Canadian, and US National Championship shows, for many years their involvement in the horse business was minimal.



ABOVE From left to right: Brazilian trainer Fernando Poli, Jan and Warren Fertig, and CAHR President Tex Kam at the 2010 Scottsdale Signature Stallion Auction.

"I needed something to rekindle my desire to have, to raise a good horse," says Warren. Something had to come along that would make it all fun again.

## The Brazilian Connection

That 'something' came in 2003 when they were invited to accompany David and Terry Boggs to South America along with several of their friends and clients. The first stop was at the Brazilian Nationals and for the next two weeks they visited many of the major breeding farms in Brazil and Argentina. Both Warren and Jan refer to the trip as "one of the most memorable Arabian experiences they've ever had."

"In my time," explains Warren, "we went through a transition where the Polish horses became very popular. The Arabs before that were nice, but they could be a bit small, 14.2 hands and around there. The importation of Polish horses changed that – they added substance, size, and motion, but I think we went through a period where we lost some of the prettiness of the Arabian horse.

"Then in the early 80's, we ended up with a soft market due to the change in tax laws. The Brazilians came over and they jumped on the opportunity to buy a lot of these great mares. They bred those mares to outcross stallions, and got incredible horses. The ironic thing is, people like myself went to Brazil to buy horses and found, guess what – we maybe didn't *own* those down-line horses, but we *knew* them. Take Marwanna AD – on her mother's side, four or five generations back, there's **Little Jo**, a \*Naborr son who stood in Westlock, Alberta. He was owned by Scott Durling, who used to be heavily involved in Arabian horses.

"The Brazilians took what we had and said this is great, but we gotta get some pretty in there. And they didn't get hung up on Straight Egyptian, pure Polish, or Russian – they blended those pedigrees and looked for the qualities they wanted in the offspring.

"I like a good stand-up horse," says Warren, "I always did. I probably put more emphasis on a long, stretchy, hooky neck and then if I see something pretty on there looking back at me, well, I'm sold."

Over the next few years they returned to Brazil several times along with another long-time friend and trainer, Greg Knowles. Their first purchase was **Cibylla El Yllan** (*Yllan El Jamaal x Cekwence*), who won a Reserve National Championship in Brazil.

The Fertigs partnered with the Knowles and Robert & Dixie North to purchase the magnificent bay colt **Q Di Style JM** (*\*Style SRA [Bey Shah] x Hestoriah JM*), who won Brazilian National Champion Yearling under their ownership and was later a Top Ten Two-Year-Old at Scottsdale.

Another notable purchase where the Fertigs partnered with Greg was **Almanara DT** (*Mirage LM x My Choice ELS*), Brazilian National Champion Yearling Filly. Warren and Jan also owned the gorgeous NBW **Angels Kiss** (*Magnum Psyche x BHF Dark Angel*). In 2005, Angel was Reserve Champion Two-Year Old Filly at Scottsdale and sold right after the show to David Boggs. The following year she won Champion Futurity 3-Year-Old at both Canadian and U.S. Nationals. She is now owned by Sally Bedecker of Illinois.

This year their exotic bay **Marwan El Shaqab** fillies **RA Nefertiti** (*Maggie Mae PGA*) and **Marwanna AD** (*Cibylla El Yllan*) both won impressive Top Tens in their age groups. RA Nefertiti was last year's champion two-year-old filly at the Scottsdale show; Marwanna AD won a Top Ten in her age group this past April

at the Breeders World Cup in Las Vegas. The Fertigs had just sold Marwanna to Australia and she was sold again to Saudi Arabia prior to the start of the World Cup.

In a version of 'everything old is new again,' Warren has even found himself back in the breeding business, "even though I promised myself I wouldn't breed anymore," he says. "I'm going to get two embryos from Nefertiti – we're breeding with frozen semen from overseas, so it's not easy, but we'll get it done. I hope I get a filly out of it – just one filly – and then I'll go on with that. At the moment she's not for sale, because I can't replace her, but with her pedigree I think I have an opportunity to get something as good as her or better. Just make something a little bit better.

"We're breeding to **Shael Dream Desert** in Dubai, and to **WH Justice** in Italy – it's relatively new blood, it's exciting for me. Age has something to do with that – it's got to be exciting, otherwise I'm going to go buy a race car or something."

Life has slowed down a little bit for Warren, although he's very far from retired. He manages Allan Dale Industries in the summer while his son Allan spends time with his family at his place in the Okanagan; Warren relocates with his wife Jan to Scottsdale in the winter.

Warren still has the same philosophy he's always had, whether it's in relation to horse breeding or to Allan Dale Industries. "Unless we're moving forward, we're moving backwards," he says firmly. "There's no point in getting to a certain point and becoming complacent, or you're not going to have the same kind of business that you were accustomed to having in previous years. You have to keep getting better and you have to grow – you keep working hard at that.

"Next year you have to do a better job than you did this year."

Now that sounds like sound advice for any era. 🐾



ABOVE **Marwanna AD** (*Marwan Al Shaqab x Cibylla El Yllan*), 2008 bay filly. Marwanna AD was fourth in the 2010 Las Vegas World Cup Junior Mare Supreme Championship, after winning Reserve Champion in her section. She was sold to Australia and sold again to Saudi Arabia just prior to the start of the World Cup.