

## **RHODES ARABIAN STUD, USA**

**By Caroline Sussex – March 2007**

The time has come to recognise throughout the Arabian World, not just the Crabbet world, of the achievements of Karen Rhodes, owner of the Rhodes Arabian Stud. The Eastern Crabbet Arabian Horse Society of the United States honoured Karen's achievements in 2005 by giving her the Lifetime Achievement Award and her history was written by Merrie Boone. This article tries to highlight the horses and what they now mean to the Crabbet movement in America.

I have been fortunate to meet Karen on at least three occasions, twice in America. The first occasion was in 1981 with her small but special collection of Straight Crabbet Arabian horses. However, the stud started before that. After years of corresponding with breeders, a special visit to Al Marah resulted in Karen gaining the help of the owner Bazy Tankersley. Karen then purchased her first Arabian, the stallion Nakhla (Count Dorsaz x Al Marah Rooth). Al Marah Rooth was a daughter of Al Marah's Crabbet sire Indraff out of a Davenport mare.

The first mare purchased was Shaybet (Blue Domino x Shayba Thania) who had been imported from the UK and had already contributed to the important Lewisfield programme in the USA. She descended from the very valuable blood of Rangoon and Somara coming from Shayba Thania and was to prove an extremely successful cross with Al Marah Ibn Oran. They produced the stallion RAS Royal Bay who Karen rated as a very special foal and the mare Royal Heiress. By Nakhla, Shaybet produced Royal Enchantress, a grey mare.

Shortly after Shaybet arrived, the stallion Al Marah Ibn Oran was purchased. What a smart choice that was. By Oran out of Radeyra, Ibn Oran was imported in utero by Bazy Tankersley and was another one time resident at Lewisfield. He was probably the best and most look alike son of Oran in the world. In 1981 the writer noted his presence and outstanding movement which he had passed onto his famous daughter RAS Orana who was shown very successfully by Karen in open competition. Ibn Oran also competed in driving, almost unbeaten.

The purchase of another imported UK mare Blue Sal (Blue Domino x Salinas) brought in the precious blood of Naziri and Grey Owl from the dam and of course coming from the famous Razina family in tail female. Blue Sal produced the aforementioned RAS Orana and the following year RAS Salina by RAS Royal Bay. She also produced RAS Bint Vanity by Silver Vanity and one of Electric Storm's few Straight Crabbet progeny RAS April Storm amongst others.

Crown of Bolsoya, from the stud of the Malveys in Minnesota, was to add additional depth to Karen's breeding programme. Crown of Bolsoya (Kallal x AM Silver Dream) brought in Indian Gold blood through Silver Vanity and also through a rare line to Rosanthus, grandsire of AM Silver Dream and again the outstanding blood of Rissla. She was crossed with a few stallions but mainly RAS Royal Bay producing in particular RAS Crown Prince, a bay stallion Karen was to sell and later recall to her programme. A full sister Mi Royal T was retained at Rhodes Arabian Stud and then Crown of Bolsoya was sold. Her new owner continued to breed her to RAS Royal Bay, however, and this resulted in two more daughters Mi Royal Spring and Princess Primrose both of whom have contributed to other breeding programmes. Mi Royal Spring went to the Kirkhuffs and is the dam of their promising young Crabbet stallion Crabbet Royalty.

The next stallion to join the stud was the spectacular moving and famous Indian Silver (Indian Magic x Dalika), registered as RAS Indian Silver in America due to there already being a horse of that name. Indian Silver played a major role in the successful breeding programme of the Maxwell family in the UK, being the sire of the half Egyptian mare Aliha who had a very successful family. Karen had been smitten with the outstanding style, action and presence of Indian Magic and was determined to find a son for her farm.

After his purchase Indian Silver was taken by the Rhodes all the way to the first Crabbet

Convention in Denver, Colorado in 1983. Here he was one of only two horses shown with a full mane and tail and the roar and applause from the crowd was so memorable. Karen had refused to take off his glorious mane! A stunning photograph was taken at the Convention of Crabbet Stud's stallion man Fred Rice holding Indian Silver, a very special moment for Karen and the whole Convention.

Indian Silver was an outstanding sire for Karen and his influence was immense in America as well as the UK. He was used by breeders other than Karen and had a great many American foals. Eventually he returned to the UK and has a son Ibn Silver who is being used on Straight Crabbet mares at Daphne Cocksedge's Romac Arabian Stud to retain these lines.

Karen finally fulfilled a life long ambition to visit the UK with daughter Stacey. She visited Rosemary Archer's Worth Arabian Stud and decided to purchase the young colt, Silvern Magic (Silvadoris x Silver Ripple). That breeding should need no introduction to our readers being a full brother to the illustrious and famous mare Silvern Dream in the UK. Silvern Magic was more like his sire and had the qualities of presence, action and elegance so important to a good breeding programme.

The combination of Mi Royal T with Silvern Magic must have been very successful as it was used on four occasions, producing the mares English Rose and Crystal Crown with the stallion Mi Royal Magic retained at the stud.

With her stallions as her base, Karen used them over her existing mares plus a few carefully chosen additions and produced many fine and beautiful horses. From Indian Silver came the stallions RAS Indian Vanity and Legacy of Silver (x RAS Bint Vanity) and the grey mare Oramira out of RAS Orana. Legacy of Silver has proved a good sire for Dr Stoneback and others. The other daughter retained by the stud was PR Dargee's Magic (x Fire Opal). Fire Opal had come from the UK again and was by Dargee out of Wentworth Golden Shadow (Indian Gold x Silver Shadow) thus bringing in more of the Indian Gold blood to Karen's programme. Both Indian Silver daughters were successfully crossed with Silvern Magic and produced many lovely foals. Royal Heiress' Indian Silver daughter RAS Royal Dream is now with the Garofolos and is contributing to another Crabbet programme there.

Silvern Magic was used extensively on Karen's mares throughout his time at Rhodes Arabian Stud. RAS Bint Vanity was bred to him several times, producing the lovely mares Bint Bint Vanity and Crystal Vanity. With RAS Orana, he produced the stallions, Regent of Oran, Beau Ibn Oran, Silvadoran and Silver Amir plus the good producing broodmare Orana Rose and her full sister Oranastasia who Alexia Ross reported in 1999 as a promising filly with a superb front.

Karen was not averse to finding and leasing other stallions to put over her mares. This is particularly fortunate for Crabbet breeders in the States and hopefully others will look at what Karen has bred and think about using the stallion Nasrany. Nasrany (Nefeuret x Indian Moondust) was bred at Worth Arabian Stud and sold to Sally Grissom in Tennessee. Sally rides and produces Nasrany in dressage. Nasrany is a tall grey, stunning moving stallion and his bloodlines are extremely important and valuable. As an outcross, they couldn't have suited Karen's mares better. The success of using Nasrany was evident even in the woolly coats of winter at Karen's farm when I visited and the three fillies Nasrany Rose, Nasrina and Nasrana (RAS Orana) were bred with Nasrana being retained.

Other stallions used by Karen included BL Magestic Gold, a son of Silver Vanity out of Al Marah Sola Mia. Sola Mia was double Rissalix with the Riffal mare Samsie on the tail female line from which her son inherited his unusual bay colour. Karen used him at the end of his life and has retained the stallion Crimson Gold (x Orana Rose) and the mare Oramurra (x Oramira). Karen also bred the filly Mi Golden Sunfire by another borrowed stallion Silvoran Gold (Silver Senator imp.UK x Golden Sunfire imp.UK) from the mare Mi Royal Spring. The return of RAS Crown Prince was arranged to try and regain the bay type of his sire and he left Karen with RAS Bint Vanity's last filly, the exquisite Royal Bay Lady.

Karen also sold and leased horses to friends and new breeders helping and encouraging them to use the Crabbet pool of horses. Many Crabbet enthusiasts got started in this way with Arabians of Rhodes bloodlines. One such was Helen Lewis who started out with the very correct Silvern Magic son RAS Royal Magic (x Royal Heiress), the RAS Royal Bay daughter MC Bint Nizila and the interesting Silvern Magic daughter Rosalaina (x Princess Alaina imp.UK). Established breeders such as Dr Stoneback have also made use of this excellent blood.

It is thanks to Karen's special qualities as a breeder, and her stubbornness to keep the Crabbet horses pure that there are these very valuable lines available to breeders in America. It is to be hoped that the work Karen has undertaken, in sometimes difficult circumstances, and given her life to will be acknowledged, not just in words and writing but in using and purchasing these excellent lines and preserving them for the future.