

affiliations

Shagya

North American Shagya-Arabian Society

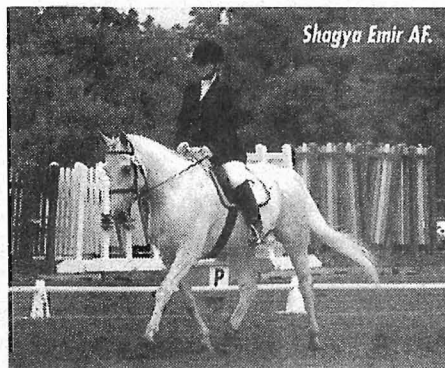
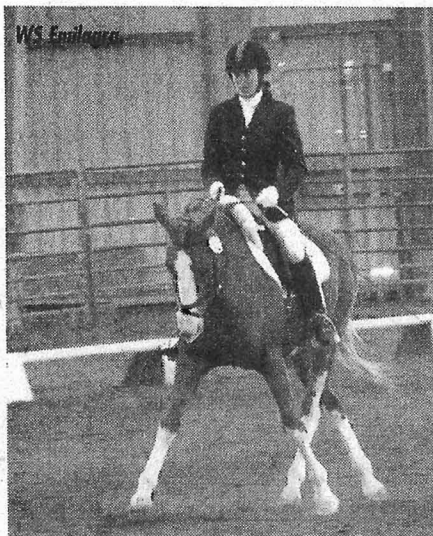
Shagyas: The Ideal Dressage Horse

It's no accident that the Shagya makes the superb dressage horse. Dressage, a centuries-old discipline, originated in the military. Warhorses had to be able to turn and stop on a dime, surge forward or check instantly, lengthen and shorten stride with a minimum of assistance from a rider who was busy fighting for his and his mount's life.

Shagyas were originally developed for the Hungarian cavalry. Founded on the best Arabian bloodlines in the world, they have speed, lightness and endurance. Infused with the blood of the Iberian horse, as well as the English Thoroughbred, they also possess power and elegance. Their rectangular frames allow them to collect easily, yet with a naturally swinging back. Having been bred for reaching, elastic gaits, they are capable of lovely extensions as well. Their work ethic and sane temperament are second to none, and because they were bred to bond with people, they are very intelligent and want harmony as much as their riders do. And finally, they come in a range of sizes to suit all but the very tallest riders. Petite women who desire a sporty horse capable of FEI work but scaled to their size might choose a Shagya under 16 hands – while for the taller ladies, we have Shagyas that are 16 hands or over.

Because of the rarity of the breed, we have no Shagyas who are "household names" in the dressage community. However, the North American Shagya-Arabian Society does boast one Shagya who has been successful at FEI levels and that is the 19-year-old Shagya gelding Blixten, owned by Holly Beach of Madison, Wisconsin, who recently graduated from Prix St. Georges to Intermediare I.

*Shandor, by the legendary Shagal (bred in Europe) was probably the most influential stallion in the Shagya breed for siring excellent dressage horses. *Shandor himself only competed in dressage once, but his show ring performance was phenomenal. He was already 14 years old



and had been a riding horse, but earned his living as a breeding stallion. His owner and importer, Adele Furby, had placed him in dressage training with a promising rider/trainer in Portland, Brooke Voldbaek. She worked with him for several months and declared him ready for his first show. She chose one of the biggest shows in the Northwest; the Champagne Classic, despite Adele's protests that perhaps they should begin with a schooling show. Brooke's reply was "He's not afraid of anything."

She entered him in First Level classes and after warming him up, trotted down centerline. "He settled down and began to work pretty steadily for Brooke...did his job, and at the final halt at X, Brooke dropped the reins and he walked out of the arena as if he'd done it many times before," said Adele. Afterward, they learned he had scored a 70.00% for second place, and later, a 68.86% for another second place. In his final class, *Shandor won it with 71.2% and remarks from Judge Renate Ruzich, who wrote "Lovely ride. Just a touch more impulsion for more 8s and even 9s." This was an amazing first show for an older stallion.

Sadly it was also his last show.

Sometime after his triumphant debut, he suffered a bout of colic that required surgery and left him with a hernia, ending his show career. However, he returned to stud, and proved with his colts and fillies that he could pass on his work ethic, floating gaits and calm disposition. *Shandor died of old age last year; however he left behind over 100 offspring to carry on his legacy.

We have several promising Shagyas just beginning their dressage careers. The chestnut mare WS Emilagra has won USDF All-Breed awards at training level and is currently schooling first and second levels. Her almost full brother, Shagya Emir AF just made his competitive debut in dressage this year, and has gotten scores in the high 60s and 70s at both Intro and Training Level. The two horses have the same dam, Echo Daal by Hungarian Bravo. However WS Emilagra is sired by *Shandor while Shagya Emir AF is sired by the *Shandor son Shagya Scherzo, who also competed successfully in dressage.

Featured in a photo here is Ostwind a Gazal VII-9 son in Germany who was very successful in FEI dressage during the 1980s. Ostwind gave a Grand Prix demonstration in 1989, which was fantastic. Photo of Ostwind is from Dr. Gramatski's article published in *St. Georg*, a German horse magazine, in January of 1988. A truly upper level successful competitor!

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