

R O Lervick Arabians

Roger and Linda Lervick Celebrate 40 years of Success as Arabian Horse Breeders

By Christy Egan

Roger and Linda Lervick began their epic journey with Arabian horses in traditional fashion, with a horse crazy daughter and an indulgent grandpa. "Our daughter Tammy was horse crazy at birth," laughs Roger. "I swear, her first word was 'horse', and my dad told her that if she got straight A's he would buy her one when she was ten years old. Well, she was a straight A student and when the time came, he asked me to find her a horse, so I did. Now, I rode horses when I was a kid and admired the Arabian horses I'd seen, so we found her a 20-year-old grey, Arabian gelding and that's where we started. It wasn't long before we found ourselves with more Arabian horses, then a farm and then, a bigger farm. We met and worked with Dr. Kale and Ron Palelek and bought more horses. We got a trailer and then, a bigger trailer."

A member of the El Hilal Syndicate in the early 1980's Lervicks quickly became breeders of fine Arabian Halter and breeding horses. One of their first, big home-bred winners was Bai Moon (El Hilal x Shilow by *Naborr) 1983 Canadian Reserve National Champion Futurity Halter Colt and the sire of national winner Crimson Bai+. Their second national winner was another El Hilal offspring, Scarlet Moon, 1985 Canadian National Champion Futurity Filly. Their program was successful but it quickly became obvious to the Lervicks that they wanted to breed Arabian horses that were every bit as functional as they were beautiful.

"We bred to a number of fine stallions and produced some wonderful show and breeding horses by top stallions like El Hilal and Fame VF+," says Roger. "I remember our young trainer, Dennis Wigren, discussing with me at the time that we should add great performance Arabians into the mix. He thought it would make a positive change in the breeding program and in the marketing. He was right."

At the 1989 U.S. National Championships in Albuquerque, Roger saw a horse that was destined to set the standard for the R O Lervick Arabian. "His name was Cytosk+++ / (Mi Tosk x Cyster)," Roger recalls, "and I remember thinking how impressive it was that he was a U.S. National Top Ten in Informal Combination in 1988 and now, here he was taking Top Ten honors in Stallion Halter. Also, Cytosk's sire, Mi Tosk, was in the ring receiving a Top Ten in Halter Stallions alongside his son. I was impressed. That struck me as pretty rare."

Jeff Schall handled Cytosk to that 1989 Top Ten and he remembers the handsome, chestnut stallion well. "His career as a driving and combination horse had precedence over the Halter," says Jeff. "How beautiful he was. Halter skills were not his forte, but what an amazing 'over achiever' ... you asked and he immediately gave you 110%. There were 16 seriously 'titled' horses in the final group for Top Ten that year at U.S. Nationals. Talk about great for MY career. He was a real eye-catcher. The first horse I ever got on a magazine cover!"

Cytosk+++/'s sire, Mi Tosk, was a full sibling to numerous national winners and producers, including Mi Toska, National Champion or Reserve in Mare Halter, English Pleasure and Pleasure Driving and Toi Soldier, a stallion that became a legendary producer of outstanding broodmares. Their dam Toi, one of the leading American Arabian broodmares of all time, is a special, not-so-secret ingredient in the Lervick recipe for success. Roger tried to buy Cytosk for a number of years and in 1991 he finally succeeded. The stallion arrived at the Lervick farm north of Seattle just in time to breed some mares, and then headed back to Albuquerque for the U.S. National Show. With master horseman Ray LaCroix in the irons he came home with Reserve National Championship honors in the open English Pleasure, and then officially took his place as a foundation sire for R O Lervick Arabians.

Cytosk+++/'s first national winners, Tosk-A-Fire, 1993 Youth Reserve National Champion English Pleasure JTR, and MM Cylent Flyer+//, 1993 U.S. National Top Ten Halter Stallion AAO, were foaled before Cytosk's arrival at Lervick's. But by 1996 Lervick-bred Cytosk+++/ sons and daughters were making successful trips to the national shows. Horses like ROL Cyzze+/, multi-Top Ten Country English, Costume and Show Hack; ROL Cylencer+// six-time national and reserve national champion Western Pleasure and Western Side Saddle, and Cygn Of the Zodiac+//, 13-time national and reserve national champion, began to turn heads and inspire visits to the Pacific Northwest. The first Lervick Arabian's foal crop also produced the magnificent black stallion, Out Of Cyte, who promptly became their second foundation stallion. Out Of Cyte started at the top, his first foal being First Cyte+, Canadian National Champion Futurity Colt; U.S. Reserve National Champion Futurity Colt, and both Canadian and U.S. National Champion Halter Stallion.

First Cyte+, who has been owned by Donna Hentges of Greymoor Farm for 18 years, is an extremely typey and beautiful Arabian and the sire of national and international champions. His daughter, national champion Drama Qyeen, is the dam of her own national champion daughter, Euphoryia. Yet another superb Halter stallion and sire by Out Of Cyte, ROL Intencyty, was the 2005 Canadian National Champion Futurity Colt and is the sire of the fabulous 2011 U.S. National Champion 3 & Under Filly, RH Triana. ROL Intencyty is owned by Robin Hood Farms.

Over the years Cytosk+++/ offspring have become national winners in English Pleasure, Hunter Pleasure, Halter, Country English Pleasure, Show Hack, Dressage, Western Pleasure, Side Saddle, Native Costume and Country Pleasure Driving. R O Lervick show horses, under the direction of trainer Dennis Wigren, are consistent winners at the national level. Year after year they have appeared in the Top Ten of the performance Futurity classes and as strong contenders and national champions in open competition. And there's a real frosting to this exceptional record, Cytosk's daughters are growing into legendary dams of national winners.

The very first Lervick-bred foal by Cytosk+++/ was Cymply Red. Foaled in 1992, she was a stunning half-Arabian mare who began by winning the title of Canadian National Champion HA Futurity Filly and eventually became the leading producing dam of champions in the Lervick broodmare band. The producer of 17 foals, her **nine** national winners are Cylent Ally++++//, Reddy To Rumble+/, Incyde Scoop+//, ROL Out In Style, ROL Cymply Spot+++/, Cycret Agent+/, ROL Shades Of Red, ROL Red Alert and ROL Candy Girl. One of the best purebred Cytosk superstar broodmares is Singularcylection. A 2000 U.S. National Top Ten in the English Pleasure Futurity, she has produced ten foals for the Lervick's and her national winners include ROL Firecracker+// (Afire Bey V), 11-time national and reserve national champion, and his full siblings, ROL Fire Lily+//, three-time national and reserve champion; ROL Lets Dance, three-time national champion, and ROL Pure Asset, a three-time national Top Ten.

"ROL Firecracker is truly one of my favorite all-time horses," says Ashton Kiesner. "Beginning with me, 'Firecracker' has won national championships with every single owner who has ridden him."

"I just got ROL Lets Dance in the barn last year," says leading English trainer, Jim Stachowski. "She's a lovely mare and the perfect Amateur/Country horse for owners Steve and Katherine Kirby. The Lervicks breed progressively, take excellent care of their horses and do a wonderful job. I personally go up to their farm every year to look at and buy top show horses for my customers."

Certainly Jim Stachowski's genuine enthusiasm for the Lervick-bred horses was undoubtedly heightened by the arrival in his barn a few years ago of the Lervick-bred show horses Black Daniels and HA Toskcan Sun. U.S. National Champion English Pleasure Junior Horse in 2012 and U.S. Reserve National Champion open English Pleasure twice since then, HA Toskcan Sun is owned by Scott and Michelle Harris and was purchased by them in embryo from the Lervicks. The 2010 U.S. National Champion English Pleasure Junior Horse and 2014 Scottsdale Champion Pleasure Driving, the dynamic Black Daniels is owned by Bryan and Joanne Grossman.

Another current national superstar sired by Cytosk and bred by the Lervicks, ROL Cycret Service+ is the 2012 U.S. National Champion Country English Pleasure AAO Maturity. Like most of the Cytosk offspring he is diverse and smart. Seven Top Ten awards include English Pleasure Junior Horse, Amateur Country English, and Amateur Show Hack. His owner, Melanie Ronen has lots of praise for the chestnut gelding she calls "Austin". "I owned my first Cytosk gelding in 1996," Melanie explains. "His name was Cyde Show+ and he and I had a great time showing that year. I saw Dennis riding 'Austin' at the 2010 U.S. Nationals in the English Futurity and fell in love. Dennis graciously let me ride him between the cut and the finals. He's always looking to please and do things right. We've gone from Top Ten in the English Jr Horse (with trainer Jim Lowe) to Country and to Show Hack. We have lots of room to grow as a team!"

Like potato chips, it seems as though once you have one horse from the ROL family you simply have to have another. Dr. Robert Kelly is a prime example. He has three. All are Cytosk daughters bred by the Lervicks, and all three are national winners. He initially acquired ROL Timeaftertime and then, two years later, ROL Lyte My Fyre. Most recently he has been riding ROL Skys The Limit+. Multi-Top Ten winners in Country English Amateur under saddle and driving, Robert and ROL Skys The Limit+ were the 2014 Canadian Country English AAO 40+ Reserve National Champions.

"I am proud of these horses," says Kelly. "Easy to train and smart, ROL Lyte My Fyre is also the dam of RS Afire Inside (Afires Heir), the best horse I have bred. He was a 2014 U.S. National Top Ten in the Country English Futurity. Rick and Laura Gault own him and are so excited about his future."

The very diversity of the Lervick Arabian horses is part of what makes them so popular with horse owners. Their universal appeal has found enthusiastic support among breeders, professional trainers, amateurs, and junior riders. Breeder and horsewoman Nancy Delisi of Delsan Arabians has three R O Lervick horses, including ROL Divine Style, two-time national reserve champion English Pleasure.

"We have a very special horse in ROL Divine Style," Nancy says. "Cedar Ridge Arabian's trainer, John Golladay called him a 'True Arabian' and said that he would '... go through fire for you!' We agree. Roger and Linda have bred a mare to him and the mare that keeps beating him [Karlton Jackson's Heirs Noble Love (Afires Heir)] is bred to him as well. His first foals are due this spring." Nancy also has two Lervick-bred fillies, full siblings to national champion Black Daniels.

Certainly considerable credit must go to Roger and Linda's foundation bloodstock choices. "The Cytosk horses have been great foundation horses in all ways," Roger says. "They have been beautiful Halter horses and talented, trainable performance horses. They are smart, gentle and have great big hearts. When people would come to visit the horses you could take anyone into Cytosk's stall, including small children. They would feed him carrots and he was so careful with them. There is a sense among their handlers and owners that these horses give everything to the job at hand, making a sincere effort for their human partners."

What Roger and Linda Lervick have achieved over four decades is a rare accomplishment by anyone's standards. Many people breed Arabian horses; some for years and they produce horses with national awards. But very few can point to 40 years of **consistent** success, culminating in an impressive group of horses now at the height of their abilities and popularity. Their success stories have redefined their lineage, as well as their breeder. With fewer than 400 registered Arabian and Half-Arabian horses to their name, the Lervicks have produced 222 champions, of which 104 are National winners with 117 National and Reserve National Championships. Together, they have been honored with over 495 National Top Ten awards. In 2014 alone, 24 R O Lervick-bred Arabians and Half-Arabians won National awards at the Youth, Canadian, Sport Horse and U.S. National Championship Shows. They took 60 Top Ten awards, five National Championships and nine Reserve National Championships. The diversity of these horses is almost as stunning as their sheer numbers. They won honors in everything from Walk/Trot to Halter. However, the largest percentage of Lervick-bred horses achieved their 2014 National ribbons in Country English and English Pleasure and Driving competition, with Hunter Pleasure and Show Hack the next strongest category.

If you ask Roger, Linda or their farm manager-trainer, Dennis Lervick, they are quick to give lots of credit to their staff, assistants and Lervick's outstanding team of amateur and youth riders.

Dennis Wigren, part of the Lervick team since he was fifteen, sums it up well. "It's true. Initially I rode the school bus to work at the Lervicks," Dennis laughs, "got married while working here and am raising my family. I know I have the perfect job, and lots of credit goes to the staff that Roger has assembled. Breeding manager Tague Johnson keeps our broodmare band and babies in optimum condition and he's recently added outside broodmare care and foaling to Lervick's services. As breeders, Lervicks know what works and Roger listens to and works closely with his staff. Our Arabians are raised to sell and with luck, our young horses, full siblings to national winners, are even better than their famous relatives. People buy them and we train them, or the next trainer polishes them, enjoys the kudos and we cheer them on! We are known for our breeding program but our marketing success is considered among the top farms. We build and support our nationally respected training and amateur program, a great success story with owners of Lervick and non-Lervick Arabians for several decades. A full service, state-of-the-art facility and team, Lervick Arabians functions like a fine watch. Roger's personal motto has always been that 'honesty and integrity is the key to life and to business', closely followed by 'keep your customers happy!' You can say Lervick's have had good luck with Arabian horses and they have ... but they've also lived life well and decently. Sometimes Karma comes around."

SIDE BAR

Cygn OftheZodiac+// (Cytosk+++/ x Matalove by Zodiac Matador+), a 1996 chestnut purebred gelding, is still the leading winning show horse bred by R O Lervick Arabians. To date, the horse that owners Kristi and her mother Sigrid Guyton refer to as "JR" (a nod to his sire), has won 29 national Top Ten awards; five national and eight reserve national championships. Guytons have owned "JR" since he was a long three-year-old. Kristi has ridden him English, Side Saddle and Native Costume.

"He's been out in the pasture the last few years," says Sigrid affectionately. "He baby sits and 'trains' young horses, weanlings and yearlings. He always has a pair of them with him from the herd in the summer. People ask me about the chestnut 'mare' in the pasture raising multiple babies and I laugh. He's retired right now, but he is always ready to return to the show ring for another turn."

The Guytons had the wonderful Half-Arabian show horse Jam Master Jay+//, seven-times National and Reserve National Champion in English and Costume. Their mare, Victorias Express (a full sister to Black Daniels), is a National Top Ten in Country English and the dam of a two-year-old filly by Undulata's Nutcracker and a yearling filly by World Champion Nutcrackers Nirvana.

When Sigrid comes into the barn and calls out to "JR", he never fails to nicker back. Sigrid says that she could easily go into his stall and peacefully fall asleep in a corner, trusting that he would carefully watch over her. Now *that's* a Classic Arabian!