

## "Shagyas Are Finding Their Way to the Southeast"

By Nancy R. Skakel

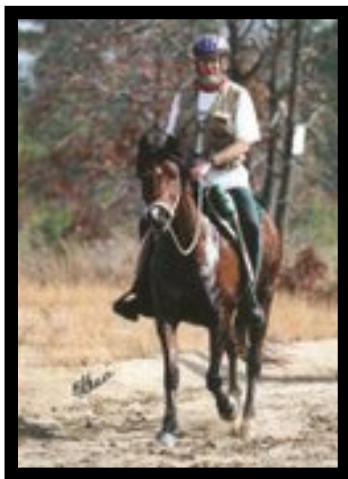
The Shagya-Araber has found its way to the southeastern United States. General George Patton brought the first Shagyas to the USA Cavalry Remount as prizes of war in the 1940's. Like so many knowledgeable horsemen before him, Gen. Patton recognized the superior quality of this Arabian-based breed. Today's discriminating equestrian sportsman equally values the nobility of the Shagya, along with their intelligence, soundness, hardiness, and balance. Shagyas are particularly successful in endurance competition. However, their steady temperaments and versatile athleticism make them suitable to many fields of competition, from dressage and driving to eventing and fox hunting, and pleasure. The Shagya sportlos (half Shagya and half other sport horse breed) have even been successful in show jumping up to the Olympic level.

Two long time Shagya breeders in Kentucky are Daunna Sellers and Darlene Stevens. Daunna Sellers competes on SA Ferr Rona's Vega, with their first win at a novice CTR event. Brian Coss, in Virginia, is also starting his Shagya breeding program. This year Brian started long distance rides with his Shagya, *LC Stetson*, and plans to compete in 50's next season. Holly Grimes has been riding her Shagya, *Blixten*, in upper level dressage competition during the winter show season in Florida.

*SA Ta Jet* and Marty Powers have completed over 2,170 miles in endurance and CTR competitions. Among their many wins are the Arabian Horse Distance Riding Association Versatility Champion and AHDRA Top Ten Endurance Part bred, and the 2005 Arabian Horse Association Region 11 Half -Arab Competitive Trail Championship. They also won the Upper Midwest Endurance and Competitive Rides Association Top Ten Lightweight and 2,000-Mile Horse awards. *Te Jat* has been named the AERC Reserve High Point and High Mileage Shagya and the ASAV Champion High Mileage and High Point Distance Horse.

Their many distinguished accomplishments in a relatively short time, are a tribute to the soundness and willingness of this rare breed, the Shagya-Araber, and their own individual skill and determination. Marty has this to say about *Te Jat*: "I can't say enough good things about Te. He is my friend, my companion, my partner. When we began this adventure together we were both very green. He was only five years old and I was new to both owning horses and distance riding. Now five years later, every morning when I go out to feed he welcomes me with a nicker and then "bows" and looks expectantly for his treat. Two special memories are completing the third day and 95 miles of competitive trail at the Brighton ride in Michigan. The first two days were 35-mile rides and the third day was 25 miles. Each day he was stronger and by the end of the weekend we went over the 1000-mile mark. The second memory is completing the 60-mile endurance at the Northern Highland ride in Boulder Junction, Wisconsin where I was having a hard time holding him back as we crossed the finish line. There is nothing as exhilarating as finishing a long hard ride with a strong and healthy horse." Now, that's a Shagya!

Becky McCarty and *Piatti* are accomplishing great things together. Among their many impressive awards are Region 14 Endurance Top 5 three times, Region 14 Endurance Reserve Champion twice, Region 14 Endurance Champion, Region 13 Top 5, and in 2006 *Piatti* was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> for the year in the AERC Northeast Featherweight Division. Becky's other Shagya, *Wineglass Dominus*, has been named the 2008 National Reserve CTR Half-Arab Champion. He was Endurance Region 14 Top 5 and Grand Champion this year. *Dominus* had 4 open Competitive ride starts this year. He was Grand Champion at all of them, and he was Top Ten at Nationals and Reserve National Champion! What a future this pair has together.



Roger and Omni

Roger Rittenhouse of Pikeville, TN, rode his Shagya, *Wineglass Omni*, over 635 Limited Distance miles and 705 Endurance miles. He had 41 starts and 3 pulls. Roger says, "I never really raced him. Most of his rides were mid-pack with 50-mile times of around 7 to 9 hours. He completed the AERC National Championship at Ft. Station NM, in 2001. This was his best and most difficult ride. I have over 9500 miles; I think this was the most difficult I have done." Roger also has this to say about *Omni*: "I think he was about the best horse I ever rode. His personality and desire to work were the best. He always wanted to go to the rides. I think he liked doing the sport. I think that trait is part of the breed." Roger rode in the Heavyweight Division. Both he and *Omni* are now retired from endurance competition, but still enjoy pleasure trail rides together.

So what is the Shagya-Araber? It is a 200-year old Arabian-based breed that originated in the Imperial studs of Hungary. Rigorous performance testing and strict, consistent selection criteria resulted in the development of an Arab type horse with more modern riding characteristics. A larger, very balanced frame, bigger bone, longer more sloping croup, and steady, willing mind are the qualities that distinguish a Shagya from a purebred Arabian. The Shagya is not a strain of Arabian, but is a separate, unique breed. Because of the strict selection process, the Shagya is genetically prepotent, and Shagya type can be identified generations after introducing Shagya blood into a breeding program. Many European warmblood breeds have Shagyas in their background. Even today, Shagyas h(ARE) being approved as outcross improvers in Trakehners, Hannoverians, Dutch warmbloods, ISR/Oldenburs, and other sport horse breeds.

The International Shagya Society (ISG) was formed in 1976, and they set the guidelines for Shagya breeding. It has been traditional that every few generations selected purebred Arabians were added to the Shagya breeding program to refresh and introduce new bloodlines. Due to the scarcity of Shagyas, (there are only about 2,000 purebreds in the world), the ISG has determined that a certain percentage of Arabian blood will be accepted in Shagya pedigrees, the 7/16 rule. When looking at the fourth generation of a pedigree, there are 16 ancestors. Of those 16, at least 7 must be registered purebred Shagyas and all others purebred registered Arabians for that horse to be considered a purebred Shagya. (An "ox" following the name indicates purebred Arabian.) If there are fewer than 7 Shagyas in the fourth generation, but all other ancestors are registered purebred Arabians, the horse can be registered as an Appendix Shagya. Thus, a purebred Arabian bred to a Shagya with a high percentage of pure Shagya ancestors may produce a foal eligible for purebred Shagya registration. All foals with a registered Arabian parent are eligible for half-Arabian papers from the AHA.

The American Shagya Arabian Verband (ASAV) is dedicated to preserving and promoting the Shagya bred horse. ASAV is sponsoring the 2009 Project: Jump Start! Several stallion owners have agreed to offer breedings to ASAV members for the reduced price of \$200, proceeds to be split with ASAV. This is a great opportunity to breed your mare to some really high quality stallions at a very affordable price. Watch for more information on our web site.

ASAV sponsors an annual Shagya Distance Challenge perpetual trophy. Any Shagya-bred horse is eligible for this prize. This year the Challenge was held in conjunction with the Lincoln Trails Ride in Illinois; next year it will be at a western US ride. The 2008 winner was *SA Belshazaar*, (\*Bayram(BAYRAM) x Jayel Tonga Farah ox), ridden by Jeremy Olson and owned by Daunna Sellers. Junior rider Mckinzey Flanagan on *SA Ireesh Tenor* (\*Bayram(NO \*) x SA Ireesh LullabyOX) placed as Reserve Champion in the Shagya Challenge, initiating THE ASAV Junior Rider Awards program.

The newly updated ASAV website, [www.shagyaregistry.com](http://www.shagyaregistry.com), has a wealth of information, photos, and articles, and we now have a youth chat group at mspace.com. Please take some time to visit our web site. We will be happy to answer any questions you have about the Shagya breed, eligibility for registration, or to refer you to Shagya owners and horses for sale in your region