

# 20 QUESTIONS

*... about your life with Arabian horses ... with JACQUIE GANTON OF STRIDE EQUINE ARABIANS*

**1** What is your current involvement with Arabian horses?

*I am a horse trainer and instructor/coach. I train horses and coach amateur riders and Arabian owners to the National level. I own a farm where we also board Arabian horses (some of ours and some client horses!)*

**2** How many years have you been around horses?

*My sister and I started riding when my parents moved out to our family acreage around 25 years ago.*



**3** They say, “the Arabian horse finds you”. How did the Arabian horse find you?

*It’s very true! We quickly discovered our acreage was across the road from a riding stable. Mom and dad could only keep us out of there so long before they caved and signed us up for riding lessons! It just happened to be an Arabian barn. We didn’t really know any different at first but in the years to follow we became immersed in the Arabian horse world and now I couldn’t imagine working with another breed as my focus.*

**4** Who is or has been your favorite horse companion?

*My “kid” horse growing up, Ghiakhon (a grey, purebred Arabian gelding). Although it wasn’t always smooth sailing I did everything with that horse (trail riding, showing, jumping, cattle penning, etc). I learned so much from him. He was one of my first “projects” and we spent his entire lifetime teaching each other.*

**5** Who has been your (horse) mentor?

*I have been so fortunate to work with some AMAZING horse people from whom I have learned so much about these beautiful animals. Brian and Joanne Grossman played a huge role in sparking my passion for Arabian competition and in teaching me about quality horses and maintenance of the breed standard. Carla Jackson has also been a wonderful teacher and trainer that I will always look up to.*

*I have also been so fortunate to have worked alongside Michelle Hansen of Spiritwood Farms. I know of no other individual that works harder and has more integrity than Michelle. She turns out beautiful horses and has a wonderful group of clients. I feel very blessed to have worked with her.*

**6** What is your favorite horse book?

*Black Beauty (at the risk of sounding cliché!!)*

**7** What is your favorite horse movie?

*I don't watch nearly as many movies as I'd like to but my favorites are probably still the "Man from Snowy River" series!*

**8** What are some 'Arabian horse activities' in which you participate?

*Generally, training, lessons and competing on the Arabian circuit! Most of our vacations and summers are spent travelling on the horse show circuit (whether showing or spectating!).*

**9** What would be your most memorable experience or moment with an Arabian horse?

*It should probably be something horse-show related but I think it might actually be taking our Arabians out cattle-penning when I was in high school. All the cowboys out there laughed when we first arrived but we showed them very quickly that we could look pretty and get-er-done!! I'll never forget when one of our greatest skeptics said "Those little Arabs, they did a kick butt job out there tonight"!!!*

**10** What has been your greatest achievement with your Arabian horse(s) so far?

*We have had some great victories that ended with prizes and some great victories that were simply for the satisfaction of the ride/accomplishment! One of my proudest moments was when one of my Junior riders took home the National Championship in Sport Horse JTR on a horse I've trained. Also, when my mom successfully navigated the Region 17 Adult Equitation class (with a pattern!!) on one of our more challenging horses, I couldn't have been more proud!*

**11** Which horse do you consider to be your "dream" horse, either past or present?

*Well, I am probably the most drawn to the big, "rolly" hunter performance horses (maybe a Half Arab, crossed with one of the big-moving breeds!). I believe the Hunter division has grown by leaps and bounds in the last 15 years in regards to quality and integrity of the standard and I would love to one day turn out a national champion in this division!*

**12** Horses are amazing teachers. What has your horse taught you that has helped you become a better person?

*Patience and humility. You learn very quickly that trying to rush things or having an inflated ego don't get you very far in this industry. I try to be constantly learning and changing things up. Every new horse brings a new challenge and a new opportunity to grow. Never say you've seen it all!*

**13** What is the best thing about working and playing with your Arabian horse?

*Without a doubt their personalities and beautiful nature. There are few things more satisfying and pleasurable than a gorgeous horse with as much character as the Arabians seem to possess!*

**14** What would you say to a person considering buying a horse to encourage them to purchase an

Arabian?

*I would definitely point them towards riding some well-trained Arabians, and possibly even coming out to a horse show and checking it out! Many people don't realize how versatile an Arabian can be (i.e. Western/Hunter/Saddleseat/ Working Hunter/Dressage/Sport Horse/Working Western, etc) and many of our horse shows are a great showcase of the breeds talents and abilities!*

**15** What is your advice to someone, "brand new," considering becoming involved with horses?

*Find a good, reputable trainer and coach, and don't rush into buying a horse. There are many options (such as lessons, leasing, horse sharing, etc) that are available before making a purchase. Get some exposure and education, ride LOTS, and get a bigger picture of where in the industry you'd like to focus before you make the commitment to a horse!*

**16** Is there a favorite reference book you'd like to share?

*I'm an avid reader but a great book for those looking to learn more about the Arabian (especially in relation to competition/showing) is "Flight Without Wings" by Patti Schofler. It was published in 2006 and gives amateurs/newcomers a great, comprehensive look into the world of Arabian Showing.*

**17** What is the one thing you'd like to do that you haven't done yet?

*Train and show a country pleasure horse! Although I've ridden them, I've never trained one from the ground up and have never shown one. It has nothing to do with getting another, new outfit either (just in case my husband asks!).*

**18** What about 'kids' and an Arabian horse?

*Although some believe that Arabians can be too high-spirited for kids I've never found a kid who didn't love our Arabians as much as any other horse. It might just be because that's what I grew up with, but I've worked with many Arabians throughout the years that have been smart, reliable and safe for riders of all levels and ages. That, and their endearing personalities are unbeatable for kids!!*

**19** Why do you think you get such a "rush" being around or riding your Arabian horse(s)?

*There is something about the grace and honor that is present when working with these amazing animals. It's really quite crazy when you think about what they do for us. There are few other activities in this world that involve the trust and relationship with an animal that we find with horses. Getting to train and show such a beautiful breed is truly wonderful.*

**20** What are your words to live by?

*Never stop learning. Never stop growing. Never be afraid to admit you are learning and growing. There are so many amazing people in this industry and we can always take something away from everyone we work with.*

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

*I truly appreciate everything that is happening to bolster and support the Arabian breed. As someone who deals with a lot of newcomers to the industry, I appreciate the value in encouraging people to get involved with Arabians!! ■*