

The exciting sport of reining is certainly not new but it's starting to become incredibly popular with Arabian owners across North America. As well, Arabians are showing up more and more to make their mark on the open circuit in an arena where Quarter Horses have reigned supreme. Ron & Gillian Lubinski of Y-Not Farms in Ontario and Ron & Darlene Brouwer of Brouwer Performance Horses in Alberta are not only actively promoting reining within the Arabian community, they are also dedicated to proving the ability of the Arabian and Half-Arabian to the open world as well.



Above: Sillver (Sillversabi x WF Khoquette), owned by Ron & Gillian Lubinski, at the '04 York Slide competition. He was the only Arabian in the class & won it. Ridden by Wendy Hoeltzel. Right: Y-Not Farms' breeding program is based on the belief that the ultimate horse for reining is the Arab/QH cross. To accomplish this, their focus is to use quality Arabian mares with their proven QH reining stallion, Dun It You Won It

Y-Not Farms

by Melissa Kosowan

When Ron and Gillian Lubinski of Y-Not Farms first laid eyes on Y Not Dunny (Dun It You Won It x Traverston Gizell) they knew the Half-Arabian colt was something special. "I felt he would be a good reiner because he was a sensible little horse," Ron says. "Within days he was out in the arena moving around and it became obvious at that time. He would do a few great stops, sliding in and being able to cross over in the front end really quickly to come over." To the Lubinskis, the dun colt born in August 2004 at their stables in Meaford, Ontario is not only the future of Y-Not Farms, but also the future of the reining industry.

While the Lubinskis are relatively new to horses, they've set some serious goals for



For Ron & Gillian Lubinski, Y-Not Dunny, a Half-Arabian / Quarter Horse colt born at their farm in 2004 (pic left at 2 weeks old & above at just under a year) represents the future of both their breeding program and the reining industry itself.



Y-Not Farms, primarily to establish their Half-Arabians in open reining competitions and to prove they are a force to be reckoned with. To some it might sound like they have bitten off more than they can chew, but the Lubinskis have engineered a plan. It will include a very selective breeding program, which they will then strategically promote on both the Arabian and open circuits. Despite the fact that their Half-Arabian breeding program only began with the birth of Y Not Dunny, the Lubinskis are positive that this young colt will go places. They have already nominated him in the National Reining Horse Association Futurity, the Ontario Reining Horse Association Sired Stakes Futurity, and the Ontario Bred, Born or Owned Futurity.

But they are confident in their plans for this unproven Half-Arabian and with just reason. Before focusing on his breeding program, Ron demonstrated with his Arabian gelding, Sillver (Sillversabi x WF Khoquette), that Arabians are not only capable of reining, but that they are capable of performing reining patterns with a "silky light" finesse. While Sillver proved himself in reining competitions against some tough Quarter Horses, Ron says he considers Sillver's reining demonstration at the 2004 Royal Winter Fair to be one of his greatest accomplishments. What made the demonstration particularly special was that Sillver not only held his own against the Quarter Horses, but he was also the first Arabian to do a reining demonstration at the prestigious show. Although Sillver was a capable reining horse, Ron decided to switch the gelding over to hunter-jumper after only one

season of showing. "I made a strategic decision with Sillver. Just looking at his structure, and height, it would ruin his hocks," Ron says. "And what would I accomplish? He wouldn't be able to beat the top Quarter Horses. He looked really nice out there, but he wouldn't be able to beat them." Ron is quick to point out though, that Sillver's reining background has made him a "civilized" hunter-jumper and that the similarities between the two disciplines have allowed the gelding to excel at his new sport. Sillver is currently being trained by Cheryl Ehrlick and is ridden by Allan Ehrlick.

Since Ron was so impressed with the athleticism and beauty of the Arabian breed, he decided to combine that with the stopping power and sturdy structure of the Quarter Horse. "I don't want a pretty lawn ornament, I want that horse to be gorgeous and to truly accomplish things as an athlete," he says. To breed horses that are athletic and strong, with a perfect combination of mind, heart and beauty, Ron established his Quarter Horse stallion, Dun It You Won It (Hollywood Dun It x Stages Melody), as the foundation of his breeding program. Dun It You Won It's striking dun colour, white socks, dorsal and leg bar markings give him eye catching looks, which is something extremely important to Ron. Even though reining is points based, and judged on how certain movements are performed, he says a horse needs to be attractive to catch the judge's eye and stand out in his mind. This is particularly important, he says, when trying to market the Arabian breed to others, which is why he says it's important

that his stallion be able to compliment Arabian mares.

But beauty alone won't win reining titles. Horses must also be able to perform, which is why Ron also praises his stallion's solid mind and body, and his determination to please. Dun It You Won It is 13-years-old and still winning reining competitions when most competitors have burnt out both mentally and physically long before then. Over the years he's amassed several championship standings with the Ontario Reining Horse Association, including being named Open Champion, Intermediate Open Champion, Non-Pro Champion, and Intermediate Non-Pro Champion. Currently he is leading in the Open and Intermediate Open divisions. Dun It You Won It also recently earned his Category 1 Platinum Certificate with the National Reining Horse Association, making him one of a select few who have obtained the prestigious award. (This involves over 60 Championships). He is also a Lawson, multiple Morrison, and Pewter winner.

To ensure only quality reining horses are produced, Ron says he breeds Dun It You Won It to only the best, hand selected mares. "We're not into doing numbers. I've selected what I felt was really good and we're going to run the gambit," he says. Before breeding his stallion to an Arabian mare, Ron says he first considers her conformation, which must be suitable for a career in reining. In particular he says he looks for powerful shoulders and haunches, as well as strong, thick pasterns. "If they are too slim, they aren't going to last in reining," Ron says. He says he finds these



Silver, ridden by Bill Thomas, performing in a reining demonstration at the Royal Winter Fair, Toronto, 2004

traits in Crabbett mares, which tend to have a stronger build than other Arabians. But he says a strong body is nothing without a good mind and disposition, as well as beauty to draw attention to the horse.

Even if an outside mare meets all of these requirements, Ron says he will only breed his stallion to her if the owners plan to use the subsequent foal for reining. "The whole objective is to get breedings to good Arab mares, I'm not doing just indiscriminate breedings. Before anyone . . . gets a breeding from Dunny, I want to know what the program is," he says. Ron feels that the quality of the

horses bred at his farm will not only keep respect for the breed high, but will also add more Half-Arabians to reining and will allow them to become recognized as serious competitors.

While Ron has not ruled out the possibility of some day introducing an Arabian stallion to Y-Not's breeding program, he says he thinks he has a better chance at winning over Quarter Horse people with a stallion they admire and are familiar with. "The reining stallion for an Arab won't have the recognition in the NRHA side, and if I want to be able to provide real strength, I'm going to get better recognition with a Quarter Horse stud," Ron says. Once his breeding program has gained recognition, Ron says he plans on building credibility for his Half-Arabians by showing them in Sport Horse In-Hand classes. He says this will demonstrate that they have the potential to be strong reining contenders. "If you have a top sport horse in line, your chances should be better that you're going to win in the sport competitions," he says. Once they are old enough to begin reining he says he will compete at Arabian shows until they have "achieved excellence" at that level. They will then move on to the open NHRA shows, which Ron says are more challenging because of the large number of competitors.

Although his Half-Arabian colt won't be hitting the ring as a reiner for at least a couple of years, the growing popularity of reining has already led people to his farm. Sylvia Loyens of Elemar Arabians attended a reining clinic in 2003 at Y-Not Farms with her Arabian mare Scandalus Bey (Afire Bey V x HL Scanda) and discovered what the Lubinskis' breeding program had to offer. "My first inclination was to buy a reining horse, and then when the mare did well at the clinic . . . I thought perhaps that was the answer, to breed a horse. With the breeding he's got, I thought it was a good fit," she says. Despite the fact that Dun It You Won It hadn't proven himself yet as a sire of Half-Arabians, Sylvia says she had no doubt in her mind that the foal would be outstanding. "The Hollywood Dun It line is doing well on the Arabian show circuit. If you go to the U.S. Nationals, a lot of the Half-Arab reiners will have Dun It somewhere in their name, so that was my thinking," she says. "And his horse has done very well in competitions, so I was looking at that factor as well as his bloodlines." Sylvia also had confidence in her Crabbet bred mare, Scandalus Bey. "I know my mare and I know the bloodlines on my mare . . . and I know what she can produce," she says.

Although it is too early to tell at this point whether her colt, which was born on June 8, will be a future reining contender, she says he is already displaying the quiet attitude that is paramount in a reining horse. She says he is also nicely proportioned, with good conformation and has Dun It You Won It's eye-catching dorsal stripe. Even if the colt does have what it takes to be a reiner, Sylvia says only time will tell as to whether she will show him at



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Arabian shows only, or whether she will also take him to open reining competitions.

While Sylvia waits for the day her colt can do spins and rollbacks, the Lubinskis will continue on in their quest to try to get their Half-Arabian breeding program recognized. They will also continue promoting the sport of reining by holding prestigious shows at Y-Not Farms. In 2004, the Lubinskis held the Canada Cup Eastern Finals, which is a Reining Canada competition allowing Canada's best reiners to vie for a spot on the National Reining Team. The team then represents Canada at International competitions, such as the World Equestrian Games. Y-Not also held Canada's first CRI (Concours de Reining Internationale), an FEI sanctioned event, which allowed riders to compete for two positions to represent Canada at the FEI World Reining Masters, an annual international event, the first held in Oklahoma City last year. The Masters Program is the only Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) administered event for reining. The International body of the FEI only recently recognized reining and it is the only Western discipline recognized at this point. Their efforts to promote the sport earned the Lubinskis the 2004 Corporate Sport Citation Award given out each year by the Sport Alliance of Ontario. The award acknowledges the contributions of athletes, coaches, volunteers and corporate supporters to sport opportunity and development in Ontario.

In the future Ron says he wants to hold the first Nation's Cup in Canada for reining, but the plan has taken a backseat for the time being. "This year I need some breathing space because I'm focusing on my horses. I'm focusing on getting them trained with the best trainers," Ron says. But even while taking some "breathing space" the Lubinskis still managed to host the largest reining event in Ontario at Y-Not Farms in July. In the meantime, Ron and Gillian have bred Traverston Gizell, Y Not Dunny's dam, to Dun It You Won It for one final breeding. "We're not in this for the flavour of the month or we wouldn't have done what we've done at our facility," Ron says. "My objective is to obtain excellence in reining with my Arabs . . . and declare that the perfect horse is an Arab-Quarter Horse."

~ Read about Ron and Darlene Brouwer, Brouwer Performance Horses, in Part 2 of our Reining Feature coming up in the next issue