




Bey Ambition

All roads lead home...

by BRADEN DAVIDSON

For Murray and Shirley Popplewell, their lives shared with Arabian horses has spanned some 25 years; a journey spent sharing kindness, humility, and immense passion with the rest of the Arabian horse community. It's been said that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and nothing could ring truer to describe the family and team behind Rae-Dawn Arabians and multi-National Champion Bey Ambition. "Twenty twenty-three marks Rae-Dawn Arabians' 25th year of loving the Arabian horse," says Murray, "which makes it 15 years that Bey Ambition has been part of our lives." It's hard to believe and as cliché as it may sound, time has gone by in the blink-of-an-eye.

Bey Ambition's story began in the hills of Northern California's El Dorado County in Pilot Hill, where the bay stallion was born in 2006 on Lucy Whittier's famed Las Colinas farm. "He was a tremendous young colt," exclaims Whittier, who lights up enthusiastically every time she's asked about the stallion she bred and foaled out and who now celebrates world-wide acclaim. "He had a special sparkle that immediately set him apart from Lady's previous



foals right from day one,” she says, “Lady” referring to Bey Ambition’s dam, the matriarch Bey Shahs Lady, who was aristocratic in every sense of the word and who gifted the breed with excellence. Bred by the Ames Family’s Cedar Ridge Farm, Bey Shahs Lady blended sire-supreme Bey Shah with a mother line to *Bask++, Tsatyr, and *Gwalior. Equally as important, of course, to the equation was Bey Ambition’s sire *Regal Actor JP, who was bred in Brazil by Haras Serradinho and imported to the United States by Lucy as a 2-year-old colt. A complete outcross pedigree “in a sense” to the United States, Regal Actor JP contributed immensely to befitting Bey Ambition with the siring prowess of consistency he would soon come to prove with his methodically layered pedigree generations deep.

The fairytale story that is the Bey Ambition we now know and love began in the Spring of 2008 when the young, electric 2-year-old colt danced onto the scene at the Arabian Breeders World Cup and into the Poppewell’s (and the world’s!) hearts. “We were in Las Vegas for the World Cup and the most extraordinary colt took us by complete surprise,” Murray reflects. Though the Poppewells were not intending to purchase a stallion (or a colt!) for their breeding program, the exquisite bay sparked a fire within Murray and Shirley, and the rest is history. “I think it was then and there that we made the leap to go all in,” says Murray. It was perhaps, the most significant step in the blossoming Rae-Dawn Arabians breeding and show program, to add a stallion of this caliber which ultimately put the farm “on the map”. “We are forever grateful to Bey Ambition’s breeder Lucy Whittier for allowing him to come into our lives,” notes Murray. “So many times, through the hustle and bustle of showing and promoting, we as an industry can sometimes lose sight of giving credit to where credit is due, and so our hats are off to Lucy for breeding such a phenomenal horse. Breeders are the absolute foundation of our industry; many people do not understand the incredible commitment—both emotionally and financially—it takes to breeding and raising horses. It takes courage and perseverance (and, of course, being in the right place at the right time),” reflects Murray.



Bey Ambition amassed an impressive repertoire as he quickly rose to the forefront of the breed, both in the show ring and in the breeding shed. “The crowd went wild when he was named National Champion Futurity Colt in 2009,” smiles Shirley. There was no question that the connection between Bey Ambition and then trainer Claudinei Machado was so electric that it brought the stands to their feet. “I’m not really sure I made out on top that night,” jokes Murray. “I told Claudinei that if he won the Futurity National Championship with Bey, that I’d buy him a red Mustang ... and well, a deal is a deal,” he laughs. The farm has celebrated and enjoyed many chapters of Bey Ambition’s show ring success, including his many Champion and Reserve wins at both the Canadian and U.S. Nationals, and perhaps one of his most memorable and special wins and Bey’s “last dance”, being named 2020 Scottsdale Unanimous Champion with Murray at the lead in the Amateur Stallions.

On his breeding side, Bey Ambition’s siring abilities are proven time and

time again—timeless beauty, class and sophistication. “It was imperative in the beginning that we find the absolute best mares for Bey,” notes Shirley, which led the Poppewells on a quest of acquiring some of the very best genetics the United States had to offer, including embryo rights to the prolific producing Padrons Psyche daughter NW Siena Psyche, National Champions HL Infatuation and Serenata Eljamaal, as well as iconic producing Veronica GA and the distinguished San Jose Javiera.

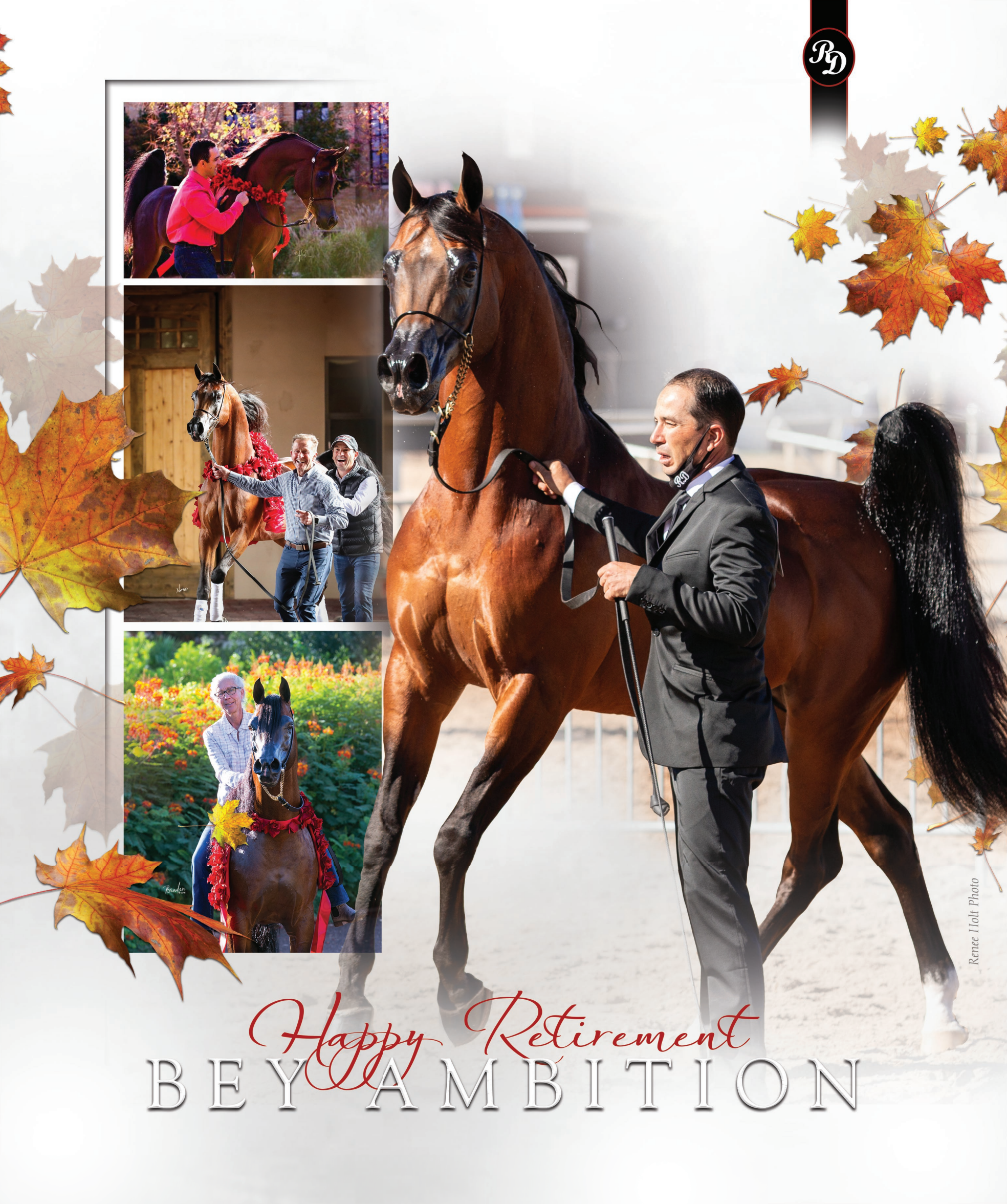
And 15 years later, as Bey Ambition settles into retirement from the show ring and who now stands privately at stud breeding only Rae-Dawn mares, he continues to be the cornerstone of the farm with his contributions continuously felt across the industry and the world, siring outstanding Arabian horses. In fact, it could be argued that Bey Ambition is one of very few stallions in our breed today who successfully sired both Halter and Performance horses winning championships at the highest levels in the breed. And now his sons and daughters are carrying the torch forward, producing a dynasty all themselves. Recently, the 2019 Unanimous Scottsdale International Gold Champion Senior Stallion Delacroixx (bred by Laura Koch and sired by the Bey Ambition son RD Dynamo) was exported on lease to South Africa. Bey’s youngest son RD Giuliano (out of Brazilian import Giulia AL) was this year’s 2023 Scottsdale Champion Breeders Club Two-Year-Old Gelding and Scottsdale Signature Reserve Champion Two-Year-Old Gelding ATH with Murray, and RD Safira (a daughter of famed RD Challs Angel) now makes her home at Al Zobair Stud in the United Arab Emirates. Of course, we can’t forget about one of his most special daughters and a second generation of Rae-Dawn breeding, the exceptional multi-National Champion winning RD Marciea Bey (ex. RD Marciena), 2022 Scottsdale Champion Senior Mare AAOTH, who brought home the red roses with Murray marking this the fourth win for a daughter of Bey Ambition to capture the coveted Scottsdale Mare AAOTH championship; as well as younger full sister RD Yazzna, 2022 National Champion Canadian Futurity Filly, who continues to dazzle us with her glowing beauty and elegance day in and day out, and who herself is making a statement as a breeding mare producing RD Farazz (by Ibn Farid), this year’s 2023 Scottsdale Unanimous Champion Yearling Gelding with Alcides Rodrigues.

Murray and Shirley have always been mindful of the importance of form to function and Bey Ambition has sired his fair share of top notch performance winners as well: RD Beyonni garnered two regional championships this year at the 2023 Region 12 show in Ocala, Florida bringing home the roses in both the Hunter Pleasure Select ATR and the AAOTR division, RCF Dracarys, bred by Jack and Elizabeth Milam, was 2023 Scottsdale Top Ten Hunter Pleasure AAOTR 55 & Over as well 2023 Region 7 Champion Gelding ATH, Big Ambition TRJ, bred by Ross and Terri Danielson, was 2022 Region 11 Champion Western Pleasure Open with Jody Strand; Four Seasons (bred by Cathy Stauffer) was 2022 Region 13 Champion Western Pleasure AATR with Joe Frizzell; and TRJ Classic Ambition, bred by Ross Danielson and owned by Mike and Kimberly Beehe, earned 2021 Mid Summer National Champion Western Pleasure AATR Elite.

While so much can be said about Bey Ambition’s accomplishments as a show horse, nothing can compare to the kind, gentle being that he is and that the farm gets to experience daily. He has genetically benefitted Rae-Dawn Arabians and the Arabian horse breed in general and injected an energy into the industry that most every breeder wishes for, but has come true for Murray and Shirley—an absolute realization of a stallion that wins top accolades, sires exceptionally well, and wins the hearts of people all around the world.

And so, what’s on the horizon for this horse who has literally made every dream come true? Well, that’s easy, time for some rest and relaxation and to enjoy the simpler things in life, breeding a few mares here and there, and enjoying the green pastures of Rae-Dawn in the Great White North!





Happy Retirement
BEY AMBITION

Renee Holt Photo