

A Great Champion

by Cynthia Desmond Nutter



AL-MARAH COUNTESS MAE (*Count Dorsaz x Al-Marah Rose Mae). Stacy Holmes Photo.

AL-MARAH COUNTESS MAE (*Count Dorsaz x Al-Marah Rose Mae) was purchased by Mrs. Frank Kilburn, Wayland, Mass., for her daughter Andrea in 1968 on the advice of Bazy Tankersley. Bazy recommended the *RAFFLES-RISSALIX mare in the event that if later the Kilburns decided to breed Arabians, MAE had the bloodlines of a great foundation mare. She was left at Al-Marah, bred to *SILVER VANITY, then shipped to Massachusetts in April. Andrea, then 12, began her training and in no time they showed evidence of the great team they were to become.

In February, 1969, MAE produced a beautiful gray colt by *SILVER VANITY. Andrea continued to school MAE over fences, often with her colt following. By early summer the colt was left at home while MAE started her show career. In her first year of showing in recognized shows against the best hunter pony competition the East Coast has to offer, she compiled these end-of-year awards: Reserve Champion New England Horsemen's Council; Reserve Champion Massachusetts Horsemen's Council; Reserve Champion North Shore Horsemen's Council.

These awards were the result of 44 blues over fences, and 11 firsts in

model (pony hunter). In addition, she won ribbons in the occasional All-Arabian competition she had the opportunity to enter and won innumerable hunt seat equitation classes for Andrea.

1970 was even bigger and better for MAE and Andrea: 12 championships over fences, five reserves, 24 firsts over fences, plus many other firsts in under-saddle classes and of course, model and equitation for Andrea again. Her 1970 end-of-year awards were as follows: Champion New England Horsemen's Council; Champion Massachusetts Horsemen's Council; Reserve Champion Rhode Island Horsemen's Council; Champion North Shore Horsemen's Council (Fences); Champion Model Pony Hunter North Shore Horsemen's Council; Champion Apache Ranch Horsemen's Council.

All of this with the toughest competition and with the best hunter judges anywhere. She had competed and won in such quality shows as Devon — and of course, with that prejudice against Arabs as hunters to contend with.

The biggest thrill of all, however, was MAE's last show, the Royal Agricultural Fair in Toronto, Canada at which she won the Queen's Trophy. In Mrs. Kilburn's own words, "It was

hard to keep the tears back watching the small girl and her beautiful Arabian alone in the huge coliseum. MAE won two classes and was second in the other. Before the Queen's Trophy was presented, the orchestra played our national anthem. Our mare had reached the very top."

There were many offers for MAE that day, but she returned to Massachusetts with Andrea for a well-deserved rest. Her rest, however, was short-lived, for only weeks after her victory, AL-MARAH COUNTESS MAE was hit by a car. Her hind leg was hopelessly damaged — the flesh torn away — so ghastly, most people would have put her to sleep. At this point, MAE's life was in the hands of Dr. James Wright, at that time well-

EDITOR'S NOTE: Remember, old readers of *WORLD*, many long years ago when Bazy Tankersley gave away a half-Arabian filly at an Al-Marah Auction, and we reported that a nice little girl of 11, Cindy Desmond, had won it? And then it was hit by a car shortly thereafter, bringing an abrupt end to the young girl's dream of "owning an Arabian"? This same Cindy, now married and an Arabian breeder ("Donnybrook", Topsfield, Mass.), wrote this article for us, and ironically it too concerns a horse of Al-Marah breeding injured in its prime by an automobile. But fortunately this story has not quite as tragic an ending as the earlier one.

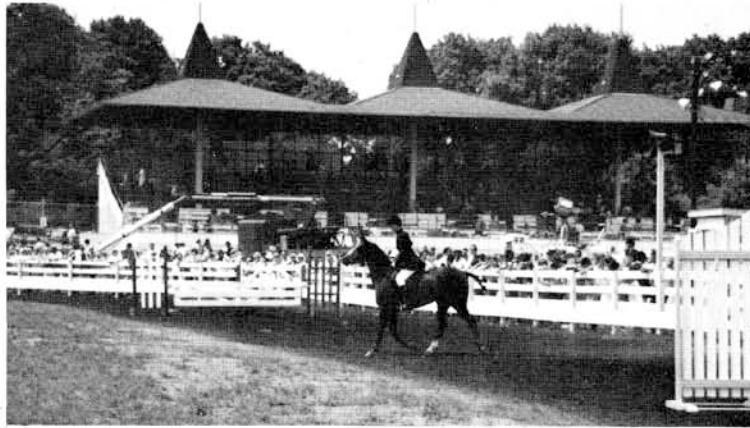


Proud moments at the 1970 Devon, Pa., show for AL-MARAH COUNTESS MAE and Andrea Kilburn.

known veterinarian in Massachusetts, now of Raffingle Arabians in Florida. If not for his love and devotion to the Arabian horse, MAE might not have lived. He labored all night over the mare and his impossible task. MAE managed to tear the main seam open and prolong the long healing process, so she spent her summer in Nantucket, where the salt water helped heal her leg (pictures enclosed).

MAE could never be shown again, yet she wasn't the type to sit idly by. She had given so much, the Kilburns decided that if they could find the right place for her, she would be happier elsewhere. This is how she came to us at Donnybrook.

We had long admired the little mare. If she could pass on her superior conformation and great courage to her foals, we would really have something. The Kilburns were too involved with showing hunters, so we made arrangements and brought MAE to her new home in Topsfield, Massachusetts. She is presently in foal and due any minute by our *NABORR son GAZABORR.



Running free with other mares, she sometimes comes up to the fence where the horses are being schooled to jump, and you can see a spark in her eye of fond memories. But MAE is young and her foals will inherit her great courage which gave her the will to live and made her a great champion.

MAE's story is far from over. We fully expect her to be a champion again — as a producer this time. She seems happy in her new role — we hope so. She did her best for the Arabian breed — people still recall that gorgeous little Arabian mare flying over fences.

The "R and R" treatment — rest and recuperation — for COUNTESS MAE at Nantucket.

