

25 July 2008

Stop-it-All in the News...proudly supporting this unique 'team'

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WESTERN MORNING NEWS WEDNESDAY JULY 23 2008

Hantu the Arab is a real star at eventing



The competition circuit sees its fair share of unusual horse breeds these days but it is still rare to meet a pure bred Arab on the eventing track, as **Annabel Groom** finds out



Sandra Betts and her purebred Arabian Hantu out eventing

HANTU the purebred Arabian is regularly in the eventing ribbons and causing quite a stir for his amateur owner.

Unusually tall for an Arab, the 16.2hh grey rarely goes unnoticed as he puts in a solid dressage test before clocking up a clear cross country.

"People can't believe he's an Arab. They stop me all the time and ask if he's Andalusian and when I tell them he's an Arab they ask - does it jump?" smiles his owner Sandra Betts who is enjoying eventing a second time around after a 20 year break.

Sandra met Harry, as he is known at home, while taking her BHS&I at Bicton college.

"I had never ridden an Arab and admit to being a bit taken aback when told to jump on board during my training - but after the third ride, that was it and there was no getting me off," explains Sandra who later found out he was for sale.

"Everyone kept telling me I had to buy him as he had chosen me. He would pick me out and whinny at me - it was like it was meant to be."

For two years Sandra resisted the temptation. She had been there before and knew what it was like trying to balance riding with a full time job.

"I then heard he wasn't coming back to the college so I knew I had to buy him," adds Sandra who works full time as a teacher and initially bought him to hack around the lanes before progressing to British Eventing fixtures.

"We only compete at Intro level because that's as far as we want to be, but we absolutely adore it," she beams.

"I'm just an ordinary person with one horse that lives on a farm and we couldn't be happier."

The ghost-like grey is by the stallion Imad who carries four crosses to the sought after Blue Domino line.

"Harry's an absolute star cross country and seems to get his spring from nowhere. We have an amazing partnership and he'll always try and get me out of trouble."

Sandra adds: "People say Arabs don't like water but he does not bat an eyelid at anything."

When it comes to dressage a regular comment at the bottom of the score sheet reads: "Enjoy him, he's lovely."

"The judges tend to like him as he has lovely paces but he can get a bit cheeky and show off," says Sandra who is sponsored by Stop It All.

"It was purely by chance. Karen Ruggles (Stop It All) had been giving me dressage lessons and she heard of Harry's plight when riding out with flies. He gets bitten so badly I had to dress him in fly rugs and mask but since he has been using the Stop It All range he can bare all. I was so impressed I asked Karen to sponsor me and she

did - hopefully this will give hope to more amateur riders that you don't have to be a professional to get sponsorship."

At home, 16-year-old Harry shares a paddock with some bullocks at Richard and Sally Wilton's farm in South Devon.

"He used to get bullied by other horses so I moved him and he is so much happier now. His best mate is Teddy, a black and white bullock but since one of the cow's has had her calf he now dotes on them too."

She adds: "We just loving having a ball at Intro level. We don't need to up the anti as I would never forgive myself if he got hurt and in any case he's revelling in all the attention - everybody stops me and says how nice it is to see an Arab out. I don't think there are any others eventing this side of Bristol, but he better enjoy it while it lasts."

Many thanks to **Western Morning News, Sandra and 'Harry'**. www.thiswesternmorningnews.co.uk

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