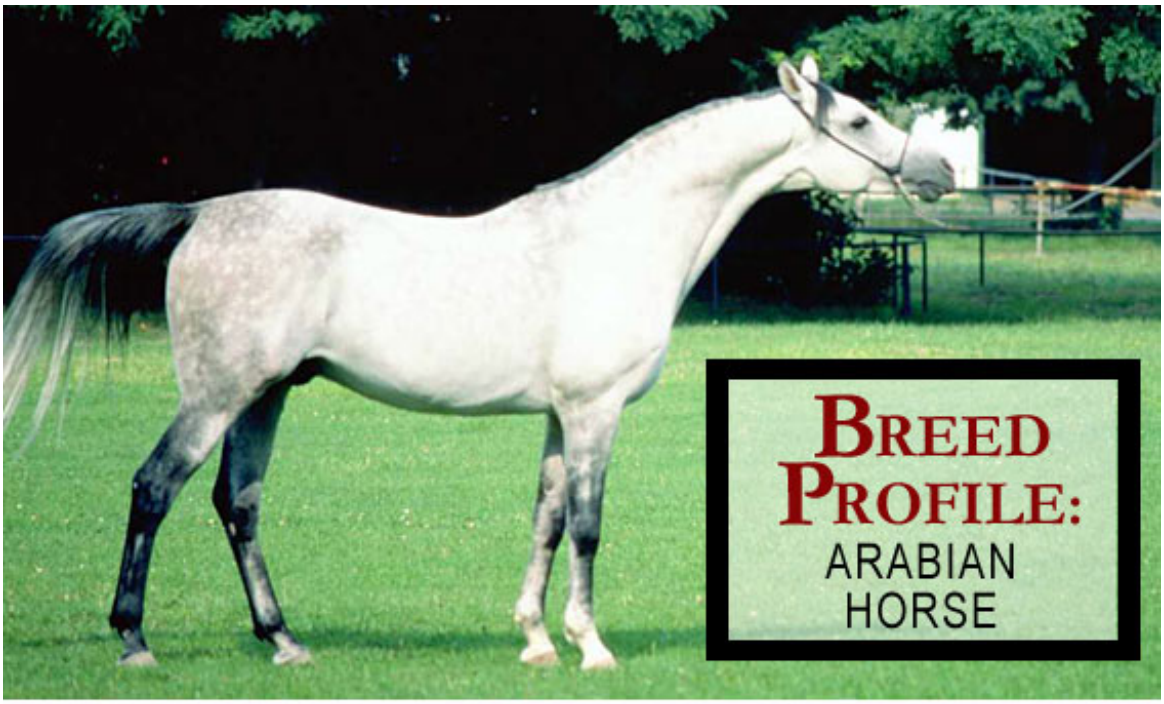
Arabian Horse

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



A picture of physical perfection with unparalleled endurance and strength, Arabian horses are uniquely tied to the history of humankind. In fact, these hearty horses have been a human companion for close to 5,000 years. Once the favored mount of historical figures such as Genghis Kahn, Napoleon, and George Washington, modern Arabians continually gain the favor of horse enthusiasts the world over. Despite their widespread popularity, however, Arabians remain sleek, well-muscled, and intelligent with a gentle disposition that keeps them poised to remain our trusted companion well into the future.

Interesting Facts:

History & Origins:

Arabians are believed to be the oldest breed of riding horse. It is thought that early desert nomads first domesticated these horses from the wilds of the Middle East as early as 2500 B.C. History indicates these athletic and strong horses were used as companion, war mount, and travel aid in the harsh deserts of the region. In fact, it has even been suggested that the domestication of

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the breed quickly surpassed that of the desert camel. From this purposed lineage, Arabians became the favored mounts of Egyptian pharaohs, royal families, influential philosophers, heads of religion, and eventually, horse enthusiasts the world over. Today, the strength, agility, and intelligence of Arabians are harnessed for pleasure, competitions and shows, and all aspects of domestic life.

Size: The breed standard lists 14.1 to 15.1 hands (57" to 61") high with allowances for horses over or under this height. Many modern Arabians, however, have been bred to stand between 15 and 16 hands (60" to 64") high due to breeder and personal preferences.

Color & Markings: The Arabian Horse Association recognizes five purebred horse coat colors. The most prominent is bay. Other colors include gray, chestnut, black, and roan. Half-Arabians, derived from the crossing of a purebred with other breeds, may have additional coat colors. Purebreds may exhibit a sabino spotting pattern, in which white markings dress the upper legs, belly, or face. All Arabians, regardless of coat color, have black skin except under any white markings. This dark skin historically helped protect the breed from the hot desert sun.

Physical Appearance: Traditionally classified as a smaller horse, Arabians are built for endurance in the most inhospitable environments. Their strength and balance stem from compact bodies with short backs, dense bones, and sound hooves. Their refined appearance is derived from a dished body, wedge-shaped head, large eyes and nostrils set against a small muzzle, arched neck, high tail carriage, and long, level croup. Interestingly, some Arabians have seventeen rather than eighteen pairs of ribs and five as opposed to six lumbar vertebrae.

Temperament: Arabian horses are traditionally bred for speed and spirit. Hence they are classified as "hot-blooded." However, these intelligent horses also have a history of living in close quarters with human families and have carried their disposition and sensitivities with them over the centuries. As a result, Arabians learn quickly and are responsive to well-trained riders. It is little surprise that Arabian stallions are one of the few breeds allowed to be shown by children under the age of 18 in most shows endorsed by the United

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	States Equestrian Federation.
Unique Characteristics:	The popularity of Arabians stretches around the world and throughout time for a reason. Their versatility, speed, courage, endurance, intelligence, and responsiveness suits them for pleasure, competitions, film work, law enforcement, ranch life, and more. Similarly, their sleek lines and majestic beauty attracts the eye of any horse enthusiast. However, it is their friendly disposition and continual companionship over centuries of human existence that helps add familiarity to the mystique and romance of horses.

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