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By Sonja Haller

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SSHAMELESS++ KICKS OFF

Arabian Horse Farms Tours

When planning your goals for 2011, consider a Scottsdale Stallion named Sshameless++ before thinking you're limited by age.

Sshameless++ performed a surprising feat when at 18, well past his prime, he and amateur handler/owner Lisa Shover of Scottsdale garnered two 2010 U.S. National Reserve Championship honors in Tulsa, OK during the U.S. National Arabian and Half-Arabian Championship Show.

That is the equivalent of two gold medals. Sshameless++ was competing against horses age 3 to 10.

The public can meet Sshameless++ during the fourth-annual Arabian farm tours, which begin Wednesday. He will kick the tour at Culbreth Equine Training in Scottsdale with a champagne toast for a 3-foot bottle.

The free tours of 13 Northeast Valley farms continue through Jan. 2 and allow visitors to see the world's most decorated horses. International buyers fill out the crowds, some 600 spectators deep, looking for the next winner to buy.

Scott Bailey, event organizer at Arabian Horse Network, or ArabHorse.com, said the five days are increasingly drawing out-of-state people and more folks new to the breed.

We've sold horses during the farm tours to people who have no experience with the breed," Bailey said. "So it's definitely been serving its purpose of exposing more people to Arabians."

The farm tours preview the equine talents that will be performing at the Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show on Feb. 17 – 27. Sshameless++ was chosen to present the U.S. flag during championship ceremonies the final days of the show.

Shover's husband, Jerry Kackley, bought Sshameless++ as a present for her two years ago.

She liked his temperament. He was friendly to animals and children without the haughty attitude of some Arabians. But Shover learned that inside his gentle heart he was a fierce competitor.

She recalled when the pair were getting ready to compete in the Western Pleasure class in Oklahoma.

"I leaned down and petted him," she recalled, choking up, "and I said, 'Come on buddy, let's go make history'. We went through the gate and it was like he owned the division.

"And, Sshameless++ made history."