



# 2010 U.S. Nationals

Another Year  
Of Celebrating  
Arabian Horses

*by Colleen Scott*

division because it gives amateurs a way to try a new discipline. "This was my first year competing in hunter pleasure," Fortun says. "I think the select classes are a great way to get people to try different divisions as a test to see if they like them. I do think they encourage more participation, since select is ATR and the U.S. Nationals only offers AOTR instead of AOTR and ATR like Canada does. It gives people a chance to try the division without having to buy a horse."

Besides the select classes, another addition to the show was the Half-Arabian/Anglo-Arabian \$5,000 Novice Cutting class, won by Greg Mayfield aboard Kisatchie Belle.

## Triumphant Return

In 1995, a stunning grey colt claimed the title of U.S. National Reserve Champion Arabian Futurity Breeding Colt, captivating one Lisa Shover. "I remember being mesmerized by this beauty and completely captured by his incredible presence," she says. Little did she know that their futures would intertwine 13 years later. Sshameless went on to enjoy a career in western pleasure, but disappeared from the show scene in 2005. Shover went on to own and ride many different horses, but never forgot about him. As fate would have it, the two would eventually meet.

"I met Sshameless when he lived next door to my mares that were in training with Chris Culbreth," she recalls. "I always share carrots and apples with the horses in the barn, especially those in stalls on the same aisle. I was mesmerized the first time Sshameless' soulful eye caught mine.

"We were not looking for a horse, let alone a stallion, but from the first day, Sshameless and I bonded. I'll never forget the first time Chris came around the corner at his training barn and caught me in Sshameless' stall, grooming and talking to him. Chris cautioned me to keep my distance because Sshameless was a stallion and I needed to be careful. I told Chris that Sshameless was gentle, that you just had to look into his eye and see what a gentleman he was."

Then one day in 2008 Culbreth delivered some bad news. Sshameless was to be sold. "Chris said he knew I'd be heartbroken, but that Sshameless was leaving the barn; his owners were selling him.

"Unbeknownst to me, my husband, Jerry, had called Chris and made an offer to purchase Sshameless as a breeding stallion for our small operation. When Jerry told me Sshameless was mine, I was absolutely speechless—an abnormal state for me. Jerry's favorite part of the story about his Sshameless surprise is that I was speechless for the first time ever because of Sshameless. (It is true, I could not talk for a couple of hours, I was so shocked.)"



*Lisa Shover and Sshameless.*

The rapport between Shover and Sshameless was clear to anyone watching either the Arabian Western Pleasure Select AATR, where the pair captured the U.S. National Reserve Championship in a field of 27 competitors, or the Stallion Breeding AAOTH class, where they captured yet another U.S. National Reserve Championship. In the halter class, he was a full five years older than the next oldest competitor.

"To say Sshameless beat the odds with his return to Nationals, 15

years after his reserve championship as a 3-year-old colt and packing an amateur to boot, is an understatement," says Shover. "Sshameless' story is so much more than 'against all odds.' Sshameless did something no other horse has ever accomplished—but that is the amazing temperament, beauty and talent of my incredible, once-in-a-lifetime Sshameless."

His user-friendly temperament was on display for the 35 youngsters from the Tulsa area who participated in the T.A.I.L. (Total Arabian Interaction and Learning) program; surrounded by kids, Sshameless stood patiently and allowed them all to pet him. "He loves children and this was the perfect event for us all," says Shover.

Back home, Sshameless is preparing for the Sshameless' Cowboy Christmas, a party for families who have experienced crisis in their lives. A not-for-profit in Phoenix that Shover has been involved with for years, Homeward Bound creates better lives for women and their children who have fallen on hard times. "Children who have had difficulties in their lives respond to Sshameless, and he responds to them," she says. "It is magical."

## From Lot 47 To The Winner's Circle

In September 2008, when Andi and Mike Millard bought Lot 47 at an Addis Auction conducted on behalf of the Bank of Illinois, little did they know their journey would lead from Bloomington, Ill., to the winner's circle in Tulsa, Okla. In fact, they weren't sure Lot 47, as skinny, skittish and weak as she was, would even survive the trailer ride to trainer Mike Neal's farm in Wisconsin.

As Andi recalls, before attending the sale, she, her husband and Neal had identified a few horses of interest based on their catalog descriptions. But when Andi saw

47, those selections really didn't matter. "I'm convinced I was looking at her through my heart. All I could see was how beautiful she was. It was like the reality of how bad she looked was only in front of the true beauty she really was. I know her ribs were far too visible and her hip bones protruded, and her withers were high and boney, but all I could see was a beautiful chestnut mare with a flaxen mane and tail. She had the most beautiful big brown eyes that told the story of her life to me in just one glance. I would buy her. There was no doubt, never a question in my mind. As my husband walked toward me, I simply turned to him and said, 'I'm buying this one.' He asked who she was and said there were still others to look at. That didn't matter. I knew she was meant to be mine, and somehow I felt that she knew it too."

When the bidding commenced and the young mare approached a price close to the couple's pre-determined cap, Andi became apprehensive. But she wasn't backing down, and as fate would have it, other bidders dropped out. The Millards became the owners of 47, whom they would name R Essence Of Fame.

R Essence Of Fame ("Essie") had not been handled until preparations were made for the sale. Left to her own devices when her mother was sold in a previous dispersal sale, Essie fought for food, water and shelter all of her young life. When taken over by the bank, the herd included stallions, colts, mares and foals, all in various stages of neglect.

Because Essie had not been handled and was accustomed to a "survival of the fittest" mentality, helping her acclimate to her new life was something Mike Neal and Andi and Mike Millard knew would take an inordinate amount of time and patience, and there would be no guarantee of success.

With time, patience and a lot of tender, loving care from Andi, her husband, Mike Neal, and Katie Beck,