



email: [sturgeoncreekarabians@gmail.com](mailto:sturgeoncreekarabians@gmail.com); website: [www.sturgeoncreekarabians.com](http://www.sturgeoncreekarabians.com); Facebook: [SturgeonCreekArabians](https://www.facebook.com/SturgeonCreekArabians)

## Sturgeon Creek Arabians

### **The statistics.....**

Starting with the first foal crop in 1988, Sturgeon Creek Arabians has bred 111 horses. Of those, 27 have competed in Endurance in the US and Canada, winning:

- 1 US National Championship;
- 2 selected for World Championships;
- 2 Tevis Cup finishes;
- 6 Regional Championships;
- 5 Reserve Regional Championships;
- 2 AERC Decade Team members.

Out of 596 total competitions, there have been 206 Top Ten finishes (35%), 55 wins, 38 seconds and 30 Best Condition awards. There has been a remarkable 87% completion rate, covering 25,000 miles in competition – beyond the distance around the world! Five horses have over 2,000 miles in competition and four others have between 1,400 and 2,000 miles.

These 27 Endurance horses were produced by 7 different sires and 17 different dams. It is amazing to have these consistently excellent results when there were different owners, different environments, and unique training and conditioning programs. The only common factor has been the power of the gene pools SCA has used. While only 27 of 111 horses have done Endurance, others may have excelled in this sport as well, but their owners chose to showcase them in other venues. Some of the horses have done well in Open Dressage, Sport Horse competition and barrel racing, while most just became well-loved family members!

### **The journey.....**

#### ***in the very beginning.....***

As a young boy, Carl Fudge, the managing partner of SCA, frequented his local race track in Manitoba, and loved watching a horse gallop. At one point, Carl considered claiming a Thoroughbred, but a friend suggested he purchase a share in a young Arabian stallion named



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Pyatigorsk. Pyatigorsk looked like a racing Thoroughbred to Carl; he was convinced and became a member of the Pyatigorsk Syndicate – and the journey began.

In 1984 Carl asked friends, Marilyn and Helios Hernandez, if they were interested in buying a weanling filly to breed to Pyatigorsk – the very special Moment Of Mine – “dream big; start with the best”! And Sturgeon Creek Arabians was born.

Since Pyatigorsk came from exceptional racing bloodlines, and with their passion for racing, SCA started sending their horses into race training in the US. When a Pyatigorsk son won a Stakes race in California and was purchased by the United Arab Emirates, SCA also sold a Pyatigorsk-Moment Of Mine filly to the Sheikhs. Although SCA horses won at Los Alamitos in Los Angeles and at Delaware Park, SCA felt their overall results were disappointing.

### ***the turning point....***

SCA had sent Mistansza, a \*Sekstans-Moment Of Mine filly, to the race track in Los Angeles. Their trainer suggested they sell Mistansza to a girl looking for an Endurance horse. They agreed and, through her, sold about two dozen horses into the Endurance market in California

It became clear that the horses in the sport of Endurance were doing very well, and SCA began to focus primarily on that market. But, whether it's 5 furlongs or 50 miles, 'racing is racing' and the SCA breeding philosophy remained the same.

The first three horses involved in the sport did very well: Mistansza (\*Sekstans x Moment Of Mine) completed the Tevis the year after she was sold; SCA Dartagnan (\*El Kasaka x \*Dolly) won multiple IAHA Regional Endurance Championships; Seek The Moment (\*Sekstans x Moment Of Mine) came either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in 9 of his first 11 races in California against fields averaging over 50 horses, and he won the IAHA Region 1 Endurance Championship.

### **The Breeding Philosophy.....**

While Carl loved watching horses gallop, he had no hands-on experience with horses until he was in his mid-30s. After SCA purchased Moment Of Mine, Carl read every book on breeding theories and horse care he could find. Fortunately, the breeder of Pyatigorsk and Moment Of Mine, Dr. George Allen of Willomar Arabians, was most generous with his advice and expertise. After attending one of his breeding seminars and buying Dr. Allen's book: “*To Breed An Arabian Horse*”, Carl consumed this book, then read all the books found in its bibliography, and then the books listed in the bibliographies of those books. Eventually, he developed a reading list that was six type-



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written pages long! Thanks to Dr. Allen's book, Carl found two small publications written by H.D.C Hampton in New Zealand. These rare books, published in the early 1950s which he purchased from a bookseller in London, England, significantly influenced SCA breeding philosophy. Carl was also fortunate to receive a number of books from the library of Dr. Allen, authored by Bruce Lowe, Federico Tesio and others. He didn't want to read someone's INTERPRETATION of these Masters; he wanted to read their own words for himself. One of Carl's greatest assets was in recognizing just how little he knew, and to be willing to learn and to seek out those who DID know and who were willing to teach him.

### ***development of the gene pool.....***

What became obvious to Carl, while reading the books written by these breeding theorists, was that virtually all placed more emphasis on the dam than the sire. All of SCA mares trace their female tail line to mares that have won Stakes or other races. SCA stallions are from sire lines that nicked well with those families in Russia or Poland. When the opportunity to stand Pyatigorsk at stud at the farm occurred, Carl studied the pedigrees of ALL the mares that he had been bred to (about 250) and determined which of those mares had produced the very best. Then, SCA went about acquiring as many of those mares as possible. The breeding program was designed to maximize the genetics of Pyatigorsk.

Mares from the Mlecha dam line were most prevalent on that list, and today Mlecha horses are the largest group in the SCA herd. Interestingly, the great Italian Thoroughbred breeder, Federico Tesio, whose horses won 22 of 40 Italian Derbys and produced Nearco, grandsire of Northern Dancer, primarily used only three main dam lines. The SCA breeding program became very refined and focused. SCA produce has remained consistent; there may be some that are 'prettier' than others, but they are good, structurally sound, well-built horses with great minds and attitudes. (As described earlier, SCA endurance horses have been remarkably durable (87% completion rate) and athletic (35% Top Ten rate.)

Pyatigorsk appears in either the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of 21 of the 27 endurance horses. Pyatigorsk was line-bred to \*Pietuszok (Priboj x Taktika), a known source of racing blood in Poland. When planning their matings, SCA tries to maximize the number of infusions of Priboj and Taktika. Currently, Priboj x Taktika appear as many as eight times in the pedigrees of SCA offspring. Priboj won 6 of his 8 races, including the Russian Derby, and produced about 200 offspring in Russia, the ones out of Taktika being the very best. Their son Topol won the Russian Triple Crown of Racing and their daughters Ptashka, Platina and \*Potencja were all Stakes winners. Another son, \*Pietuszok, did not race in Russia, but was sold to Poland in order to restart the Koheilan Adjuze sire line in that country. During WW II, the Russians evacuated Priboj's sire, along with 200 other Arabians, moving



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them from Poland to Russia. In view of this, the Polish breeders chose to use \*Pietuszok for breeding purposes only. When he was dying, at age 18, they allowed Dr. Allen to purchase \*Pietuszok - how Pyatigorsk came to be. Pyatigorsk is one of the top Arabian sires of all-time in Canada. Carl believes that SCA success is entirely due to this stallion that started it all for them: 'Everything I did was because of him. The mares I bought were all ones that I knew had nicked with him.'

Today, SCA's senior stallion is Philosophy, out of a Pyatigorsk daughter. (Philosophy's full sister, Spirited Music, completed the gruelling 100-mile Tevis Cup.) Philosophy was sired by the \*Salon son, Pistaschio, who set a track record. Pistaschio's dam, \*Panntera, was a granddaughter of Platina. SCA also has a young stallion, Vested Legacy, whose paternal great granddam, \*Pustinia, was a daughter of Ptashka. \*Pustinia held a track record in Russia. Also, SCA is co-owner of the stallion Imagine That Ma, a former race winner in Texas, who stands in New Mexico. He is a son of Monarch AH, who was US National Champion Race Horse before being sold to the United Arab Emirates. Imagine That Ma carries the blood of two \*Pietuszok daughters, Wilma and \*Orla; both of these mares were excellent racehorses. SCA is extremely pleased with their Imagine That Ma offspring.

### **And the journey continues.....**

Carl has been the creative, driving force behind the breeding program of Sturgeon Creek Arabians. He is as passionate about the horses today as he was at the beginning of this amazing journey. SCA has just agreed to buy another stallion and two mares, basically an extension of their breeding program. "As much as we have done to date, I am very excited about the genetic potential of the horses we now have to breed with!"

At a recent competition in California there were 3 horses bred by Sturgeon Creek Arabians! SCA follows each of their horses entered in Endurance competitions, relishing each completion; Carl recites in detail their histories and pedigrees. The SCA Facebook page has a large, and growing, following - 'friends' from around the world. Carl has such a wealth of knowledge that he is enthusiastically willing to share; he continues to inspire... People still talk about his excellent clinic on conformation given a few years ago at a FEI Endurance event in British Columbia. Today Carl chairs the Breeds and Industry Sub-committee of Endurance Canada, imparting his wisdom and his vision relating to this aspect of the sport, encouraging other breeders to 'dream the dream'. The Committee's mandate is to develop a program to recognize Canadian breeders of Endurance horses.



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## Acknowledgements.....

Life has not always been kind and straightforward for Carl. He was in a terrible, life-threatening, accident 25 years ago but, with the same grit and determination with which he faces all else in his life, he met the struggles head on, repeating over and over again: “If I take care of my horses, my horses will take care of me.” Ever so slowly he regained his stamina and, while the brain injury still brings many challenges, Carl has created a world in which he can operate and excel. He has a wonderful partner, family and friends who nurture and support him. And he has taught us all so much – about perseverance, passion and perfection.

In recognition of his achievements and his positive influence, Endurance Canada, at the recent Equine Canada Annual Convention in Winnipeg, presented Carl with their new Award of Excellence - for his ‘Exceptional Contribution to the Sport of Endurance’. “This great honour that Endurance Canada has bestowed upon me is absolutely incredible and very humbling. It really does look like my horses have taken care of me! I have been truly blessed in my life and this is just more evidence of that.”

In Carl’s own words: “My dream has been shared by my family and my dear friends, Marilyn & Helios Hernandez, who have been my partners since the beginning nearly 30 years ago. They have stuck by me through thick and through thin. They are special people, as is Dr. George Allen, my friend and mentor. Whenever I have needed his advice and counsel, George has been just a phone call away.”

“It has truly been an incredible ride! We are now starting our second journey around the world!”

***Edited by Daphne Richard, Past Chair, Endurance Canada, February 2014***