

# Breed of the Month: Shagya Arabian

*Centuries of breeding for performance*

In the late 1700s, the Austro-Hungarian military realized that it needed to improve the quality of its mounts, and officials set out to breed the ideal cavalry horse. Their goal was to preserve the Arabian's soundness, hardiness, endurance, and elegance while producing a larger horse with more bone, powerful hind-quarters, a more rounded topline, and a calm and workmanlike disposition.

In 1789, a desert-bred Arabian stallion named Shagya was imported from Syria to Babolna, the Hungarian state stud. Shagya Arabians or Shagyas, as the resulting breed was called, are bred there to this day. Shagya's sons were crossed with local mares of Thoroughbred, Lipizzaner, and Oriental ancestry. Eventually, Shagyas also improved the local Hungarian farmers' breeding stock as well as that of other warmblood and pony breeds.

Predominantly gray in color, Shagyas can also be bay, chestnut, or black. The breed standard recommends a height of 15.1-16.1 hands, with a cannon not less than eighteen cm. Shagyas should be beautiful and harmonious with expressive heads; well-formed necks; good toplines; long croups; well-carried tails; and strong, correct legs. Free, elastic, ground-covering, correct action in all three gaits is preferred.

In dressage competition, the Shagya and the Shagya crossbred are forces to be reckoned with. The breed's desire to please and trainability makes it a great mount for youth, amateur, and even professional riders.

## **Shagyas you might know:**

Here in the United States, fully one-third of all Trakehner stallions carry Shagya bloodlines, mainly through

**Lapis**, the grandsire of **Habicht**. Habicht has given the world **Windfall**, **Cocktail**, and **Sixtus**.

Shagyas have also had a great influence on other breeds. **Gazal VII**, a purebred Shagya, is often referred to in warmblood pedigree as **Gazal ox**. The stallion **Ramses**, the offspring of a Thoroughbred sire and a Shagya dam, is another leading progenitor of both dressage and jumping winners.

**The organization:** The Performance Shagya Registry (PShR) was founded in 2008. The goal of the PShR is to ensure the continued integrity and legacy of the Shagya and Shagya-bred horse in North America. The PShR strongly believes in the development of a purpose-bred riding animal through performance-riding criteria, and in using these criteria when choosing breeding stock and planning future generations. Many of the major riding disciplines are



PROUD TRADITION: Dr. Rachel Boyce (IL) and her 2004 Shagya gelding, WineGlass Victory (\*Budapest – Faith), bred by WineGlass Farm (IL)

represented in our performance-testing processes.

**All-Breeds awards offered:** All performance and DSHB categories.

**How to participate:** The horse must be registered with the PShR, and the owner and the rider must be PShR members in good standing.

**Organization contact info:**  
Performance Shagya Registry:  
performanceshagyaregistry.org. ▲

## For the Breeds, by the Breeds

Each month, "All-Breeds Connection" spotlights a USDF All-Breeds awards program participating organization and the breed it represents. Information and photos that appear in this column are furnished by the breed registries. USDF does not endorse or promote any breed or registry over another.

The All-Breeds program is designed to recognize the accomplishments of specific breeds in dressage. All participating organizations offer "open" year-end awards from Training Level through Grand Prix, and some offer awards in additional categories, such as adult amateur, junior/young rider, and dressage sport-horse breeding. Registry representatives are usually on hand to help bestow awards at the banquet held during each year's USDF convention.

All-Breeds award eligibility requirements include memberships and horse registrations with both USDF and the participating organization. For details and a list of current participating organizations, visit [usdf.org](http://usdf.org). For more information about All-Breeds awards program participation, send e-mail to [allbreeds@usdf.org](mailto:allbreeds@usdf.org).