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Arabian Horses:
Cutting Loose

Navid Kharrazi is a mild-mannered engineer in Scottsdale, Ariz. He breeds and sells Arabian horses, including Shahrazad, last year's national champion Arabian cutting horse.

What? A cutting horse that's not a Quarter horse? That's right. Kharrazi's heard it before, time and time again:

"I didn't know Arabs could cut!?!?!"

But boy, can they. Arabian horses "aren't just a pretty face," Kharrazi smiled. "They're quite athletic and they're quite versatile."

Arabs are coming on strong in the cutting world, he said, using the lightning speed, stamina and smarts bred into them in thousands of years on the Arabian desert. They were just the right horses for the Bedouins in *ghazu* – quick, mounted forays into enemy camps – so no wonder they're shining now in the exciting sport of cutting.

Kharrazi, a board member of the Arabian Cutting Horse Association, said that group has experienced explosive growth, though Arab horses have a long way to go to catch up with the numbers of Quarter horses engaged in cutting. However, there's a lot of interest in breeding half-Quarter horse, half-Arab cutters to combine the powerful hindquarters and heart of the former with the agility and intelligence of the latter.

Kharrazi said Arab horses are suited for cutting since they learn quickly and enjoy new things. "In cutting, no two runs are the same," he said. In addition, in the team concept of cutting, the rider is responsible for cutting the cow out of the herd, but the horse takes over in the process of keeping the cow out of the herd. As smart horses, Arabs respond well to that challenge, he said.

Kharrazi said two key events to attend if you want to see Arabs as cutting horses in action are the Nationals, planned in October in Tulsa, Okla., or the annual Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show, set for Feb. 13-22, 2009.

See also:
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