

The outstanding  
2021 Colt  
NESSUN DORMA  
(Puccini J x Bakhita J)



## Jerland Arabians'

# Next Steps

by THERESA CARDAMONE

## A Conversation with Larry Jerome

For over 50 years, the Jerland Arabians horses have emerged as stellar representatives of the storied diversity of the Arabian breed. With innumerable national championships in halter and nearly every discipline of performance, they are sought after by enthusiasts across the spectrum of horse ownership. Larry Jerome's passion for the Arabian horse defines his philosophy as a breeder, which includes taking responsibility for the horses that are the results of his Jerland program.

"I have an extremely beautiful and intelligent wife, and I want those same qualities in my horses," Larry quips. "I also have seven pretty talented and good-looking kids, too. It's all about the genetics! Seriously, I strive to create an animal that is extremely correct and beautiful, but I'm not looking to make a mantlepiece statue. They must also have a great temperament and be athletic and functional. I appreciate halter and have shown and won national championships, but I strongly believe that every foal needs to have a value and a purpose beyond that of a short-lived halter horse; they need other activities in their life."

The results of the recently held 2021 Youth and Mid Summer Nationals underline the fact that the Jerland influence is as strong now as it has ever been. In an incredible demonstration of top-class versatility, Jerland-bred horses earned National Champion honors in both Arabian Western Pleasure Junior Horse (Verdict J) and Arabian English Pleasure Junior Horse (Notably Divine J, bred w/Joni Hyrick), as well as Half-Arabian Ladies Side Saddle Western (Blue J) and Arabian Hunter Pleasure AATR Elite (Acclaim J, bred w/Bond Show Horses). In addition, Reserve National Champion titles went to Eclipse J (Half-Arabian Western Pleasure Junior Horse), Elusive J (Arabian Western Pleasure AATR Choice), and Promise Me J, who scored big in the prestigious and lucrative AWPA Arabian Horse Times \$15,000 Western Pleasure AAOTR Maturity.



2021 Mid Summer National Champion  
 Arabian Western Pleasure Jr.  
 Horse, VERDICT J (Versace x  
 Alishahmaal, by Ali Jamaal) with  
 Liz Bentley, bred and owned by  
 Larry Jerome; and 2021 Mid  
 Summer National Champion  
 Arabian English Pleasure Jr.  
 Horse, NOTABLY DIVINE J (ROL  
 Divine Style+ x Notability, by MHR  
 Nobility) with Matt Siemon, bred and  
 owned by Joni Hyrick and Larry Jerome.

Larry Jerome was named Leading  
 Western Breeder of the 2021 Youth &  
 Mid Summer Nationals.



Larry is constantly looking through the lens of a farsighted breeder eager to improve his output. “When I go to a horse show, I pretty much sit in the stands and watch every class,” he states. “I still need to learn; I need to know what genetics have contributed to the greatness of each animal and what trainers have contributed to allow the horse to achieve these accolades. I’ve been in this industry a long time, but there are a lot of things I still want to accomplish.” Larry continues, “When you are breeding, you must recognize the strengths and the weaknesses of every animal. Without being overly critical, you must ask yourself, if you could change something about them, what would you change? How could this be a more functional or

purposeful animal? Our breeding program is basically founded on two stallions: Khadraj NA (Ponomarev x Khatreena NA, by Padron) and MPA Giovanni (Da Vinci FM x Glitzy, by FS Ritz). They worked very well together to create outstanding halter and performance horses. But you always have to be thinking about the next generation and what you are going to do.”

That attitude led Larry to embark on a fact-finding mission to make him aware of what options were available globally. “I was in Europe to promote MPA Giovanni and to see mares that I thought he would work well with,” Larry reminisces. “I was looking for the next step in my program and Karl-Heinz Stoeckle’s was one of the stops I made. He was standing WH Justice, who I was extremely excited about, although he was still a young horse at the time.” Larry’s desire to add Justice to the Jerland pedigrees was realized when he acquired two breedings to the horse from his good friend, Bart van Buggenhout, who was standing the stallion at Aljassimya Farm. Finally able to fulfill his dream of adding WH Justice to his program, Larry chose two Giovanni daughters to make the cross.

“I thought that was the ideal mating,” recalls Larry. “Genetically, they were very compatible, not closely linebred. Giovanni brought the size, the hip, and a strong back; Justice brought a beautiful face and bend of the neck. Giovanni horses are level-headed and mellow, Justice gives a show-ring attitude; plenty of snort and blow. I thought that if I could take these traits from each horse and blend them together, I would be closer to my ideal. I also maintain that a stallion cannot ‘fix’ everything, neither can a mare ‘fix’ everything. But when you get the right blend, magic can happen. I was fortunate and it worked in both cases. I ended up with both an extremely





beautiful filly, Galaxie J, and an extremely exotic colt, Puccini J, that I felt could be the next step in my genetic program.”

Puccini’s dam is one of Jerland’s elite mares, U.S. and Canadian National Futurity Champion, Miss Giovanna. “The one thing that I wanted to change about her was that she was very comfortable in her own skin, like Giovanni,” Larry explains. “She was not the hot, fire-breathing dragon who exudes



enthusiasm. But Puccini was another story. James Swanepoel, from Belgium, said he was the most perfect Justice foal he had seen in the United States, if not the world. Andy Sellman fell in love with him as a foal and was the first person to take him into the show ring, where he did very well as a yearling. He continued to win as a two-year-old and into his three-year-old year with Michael Byatt.”



Knowing he had something very special on his hands, Larry let the horse indicate the tempo of his career. “When I show a horse, I do it in steps,” he continues. “After going to a few of the big shows, we thought it would be best for Puccini to mature both physically and mentally. He had a juvenile attitude, and his color also needed to mature to its eventual white to complete the total package. We decided to bring him home and let him grow up before adding another part to his career. We put him in western training with Roxanne Schall, while at the same time we bred him to a few select mares.

“Roxanne was the trainer of choice because she has a soft, quiet hand and would bring the horse along slowly. I didn’t want too much intensity, but

we knew that the horse was bored living in a stall. He wanted to do something. Too many halter horses just come out to get lunged and be set up; they have no spice in their lives. They need variety. I like to take my stallions and give them another job. In doing so, we realized that Puccini, like many of the Giovanni relatives, had the ability to become an incredible performance horse.”

Larry bred several mares to him, with exceptional results among the five or six foals on the ground now. Some have already been snatched up by savvy breeders, including Smile J, who has found a new home in the Middle East. “We are still at the beginning, but I am looking at Puccini as having a dual career,” Larry avers. “We’ve kept him in training now for the last year as a performance horse, with Jeff Schall monitoring his physical condition. Our plan is to bring him back out into the world as a halter horse at Scottsdale in February 2022, with Michael Byatt. We think Puccini could be the unique individual who succeeds in



*Puccini’s earliest foals: 2019 full sibling fillies SMILE J (top) and LOVE J (middle), out of Unforgettable J, by MPA Giovanni, and 2019 colt TOREADOR J, out of Kharmen J, by Khadraj NA+++/.*

*Shelley Day*  
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**PUCCINI J**  
*(WH Justice x Miss Giovanna)*

that atmosphere. At the same time, we are creating foals with functionality that can be used in the western arena. Do I think Puccini will produce an English horse? Probably not. But he produces an athletic western horse with all the qualities that you want to see in that discipline.

“One of his first foals was out of Promisa J, the full sister to Broken Promises PGA and Khaja J, who is the father of our multiple-Scottsdale and U.S. National Champion Western horse, Kola J. I am quite thrilled with the outcome. The oldest Puccini daughters will probably be bred in the next year or so, and we intend to try them with Verdict J, who just won his



LA BOHEME J | 2021 Colt  
(Puccini J x Khenya PGA, by Khadraj NA+++)



FORTE J | 2021 Colt  
(Puccini J x Amety B)

first national championship in Oklahoma City. He has phenomenal genetics, being a full brother to Virtuosa MLR, the dam of FA El Rasheem, who sold for over \$4 million to the Dubai Stud as a halter horse. This will be the next genetic cross for the Jerland program.”

Larry continues to look to the future with a clear gaze. “You must have a vision,” he declares. “Too many people who get into this industry want instant gratification. I have had many, many wins. I have all kinds of trophies and ribbons, but I display very few of them in my home. I feel my greatest accomplishments in life are my family, my friends, the relationships that I have cultivated. Don’t get me wrong, I like to win as much as the next person...maybe more so. I play to win. But you need to *prepare* to win. Things do not happen to you overnight. When I sent Verdict to Liz Bentley I said, ‘This horse is not



VOULEZ-VOUS J  
(Puccini J x Porshah J, by Khadraj NA+++)  
2021 Colt





*"...you always have to be thinking about the next generation and what you are going to do." ~Larry Jerome*



going to be ready until he is five or six years old, but I need these genetics in my bloodlines. I do believe this is going to happen, but we need to take the time to let it happen.' It happened with Verdict, it happened with Kola—you can't throw in the towel.

"I wanted to feature Puccini on the cover because, whereas Khadraj and Giovanni have made their marks, and Khaja and Kola are now making theirs, I think Puccini is going to be the next horse coming up. And Verdict is the horse coming up right behind him. I'm very grateful to all the people who support my breeding program and to all the trainers that support our program and do phenomenal work with our horses. It is well-known in the industry that I have a lot of great trainers that I support because they support me." In addition, Larry is grateful to the many people who have mentored him over the years, freely sharing their knowledge and insights.

He continues to keep his fingers on the pulse of the Arabian horse industry. "We live in a world now where halter horses have a place," he says. "But the group of people who are most active are people 50 years and

older, many of them women who have waited a lifetime to raise their kids and have careers, but who have always dreamed of being in horses. Now they are riding. The amateur area has grown tremendously. I am honored to be serving on the AHA Board and I can tell you, our industry has changed, trends have changed, COVID changed us. But we are always thinking how we can keep the industry vibrant and exciting. That's what it's all about." ■

*Puccini J (left), and one of Larry's favorite foals of 2021, ELATION J (Puccini J x Fascination J, by FA El Rasheem).*

**PUCCINI<sup>J</sup>**  
THE NEXT GENERATION

*FA El Rasheem*  
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