

**A WEALTH OF CRABBET BLOODLINES
IN TASMANIA TO FEAST ON
AND UPDATE ON STUDS IN SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA
AND ON THE OUTBREAK OF EQUINE INFLUENZA**

Two years after the Crabbet Convention in Queensland and the tours to NSW and Victoria, I was lucky enough to find myself back in Australia amongst my friends and visiting some studs I had been to before but fortunately managing to get to some other studs and for the first time visiting the beautiful land of Van Diemens Land (Tasmania).

It wasn't the best time to visit as whilst planning my trip, Equine Influenza struck Australia and more or less brought the horse world to a standstill. At the request of breeders, I arranged my trip to visit Victoria first, leaving New South Wales and Queensland out of the equation. Fear of the Equine Flu passing into new states was high as the Melbourne Cup went ahead. However, fortunately people's fears were unfounded as no new cases were reported after the Cup day and my visit continued unaffected. For the purposes of this article, I will only be recording the 100% Crabbet horses but many of the studs also breed high percentage Crabbet.

Appropriately my trip started at the new location of the Arfaja Stud, near Ballarat. It was the Arfaja horses that had influenced me to revisit Australia in 2003 and to find out more about Crabbet breeding on the other side of the world. It is thrilling that the breeding programme of Ron Ryan is being continued jointly with Stephen Pearson and Joanne Costigan. The stud will remain small but select. Stephen kindly met me off the plane and it was great to start my trip with their generous hospitality. Stephen is keen to keep the Arfaja stud going with Joanne who has been interested in horses all her life, riding for many years. She hopes to ride some of the horses at the stud.

Arfaja have purchased a lovely scopey yearling filly from Fenwick, Fenwick Silver Lea (Fenwick Silver Spur x Fenwick Roselea. The stud has been fortunate to have obtained the lovely refined mare, Heste Arabique Liani by the little used Lionel out of Veridan Risani. Tragically this mare had just lost a foal by Arfaja Robard but amazingly, just one hour after this tragedy, Arfaja Laurina with no sign of foaling quietly popped out a grey colt also by Arfaja Robard. This young foal was doing well whilst I was at Arfaja and has excellent movement and style reminiscent of the Wellworth horses.

On my first day, we took off to see Leigh Jamieson's Seven Oaks Stud where we met by Leigh and Ron Ryan. Leigh has both Egyptian and Crabbet horses and likes both for different qualities. He has been lucky to have purchased some excellent lines from the Arfaja Stud including the exciting young stallion, Arfaja Rococo (Arfaja Robard x Arfaja Estella). Rococo is a full brother to the beautiful Arfaja Evangeline and has matured considerably from the young yearling I had seen on my last trip. He has big eyes, excellent movement, and good conformation. His first foals have been born since my visit and Leigh is thrilled with them. Rococo resembles his sire but also carries the qualities of a favourite line in Australia, that of Persareh (Sardonyx x Perfection).

One of the first mares we saw was Pevensey Baybe (Sarafire x Dandaloo Baylanie) who was visiting Rococo and if her Harlan filly at foot is anything to go by, this cross should be very exciting.

The full brother in blood to Rococo, Lord Hyde of Seven Oaks, by Arfaja Harlan out of Arfaja Estella is an attractive young colt and the yearling, Lord Matthew of Seven Oaks looks is also promising. Lord Matthew is out of the lovely mare Arfaja Madelena (Rasham x Arfaja Mariella) who has a wonderful colt foal at foot now by Rococo. This mare oozes presence and style and you can but dream of the future of this colt. With so many outstanding colts to choose from, Leigh is in an enviable position for his future sires. As well as purchasing from Arfaja, Leigh has also obtained from Fenwick, the mare Fenwick Briar Rose out of one of my favourite mares, Fenwick Brilliance and by Riamus. Briar Rose is a powerful mare and should prove to be a good broodmare for the future. Leigh also has Fenwick Fiona, the last daughter of Fenwick Rendezvous. She is out of the lovely mare, Fenwick Starlight tail female to the outstanding Nejmet Es Subh line.

Leigh has also added to his Crabbet band, the mares Inshallah Silver Sonnet (Crenel x Fenwick Sascha) who has produced a foal by the young Inshallah stallion, Inshallah Silver Guardian, one of the last offspring of Dandaloo Kadet in Australia and Inshallah Bay Lady (Inshallah Silver Salute x Inshallah Signature), a double Crenel. Crenel was just 5 generations from Skowronek on the tail male line and goes to the mare Barada II on tail female. The crossing of these lines with the Arfaja ones will be very interesting.

We left and set off for Roxanne Pidoto's Ebjarah Stud. Her main star is of course Arfaja Harlan, the lovely chestnut son of Rasham out of Wellworth Leilani. If you are a regular Crabbet Journal reader, you will see many references to him and his full brother Arfaja Robard. Harlan looked even better than when I was last in Australia, oozing type, presence and quality. He has been a very successful and consistent sire. The youngstock by Harlan were Mill Park Bella Mia (ex Dandaloo Baylina) who was just stunning with movement to die for. The young yearling Mill Park Peregrine out of Shirley Douglas-Grieg's Petrice was very pretty but a little small. However he was a first foal so may grow in size later on. He certainly carries many characteristics of the Wellworth horses and is one to watch on how he progresses.

It was the really stunning two year old chestnut Ebjarah Moolah who really captivated me. He is out of the mare Arfaja Moonflower who is double Shafreyn. His wonderful easy going stride and sweet temperament make him a very valuable future stallion and an excellent ridden prospect. He is very valuable as his mother, Arfaja Moonflower has now died and Roxanne should be given a medal for managing to get this foal out alive, let alone keep it going after the drama the mare had. Moonflower is by Rasham out of Arfaja Moonfire and again this line goes back to Nejmet Es Subh in tail female, this time through Sparkle.

Roxanne has added the valuable bloodlines of Volcano to her stud and it was very pleasing to see the vivacious and lovely filly foal that Arfaja Mariella had produced. This striking moving filly continues to develop well so I hear and will be a wonderful cross to go back to the Harlan stock. Roxanne has some beautiful and exotic mares at her place and this has resulted in some excellent young stock. Recently she has added

the bay filly, Ebjarah Rhapsody out of Arfaja Alicia. I cannot name all the horses in this article but if you visit Australia this stud is a must on any itinerary.

The next day we set off to pick up Ron Ryan and then went to Glenda Shrimpton's Glendarra Park Stud. Don't ever complain anyone about drought until you see the effect in Australia. Glenda lives near Bendigo and the drought has really destroyed any pasture that she has. As a result Glenda is selling her Crabbet horses, although I think she may end up with one or two mares who she can't part with. We first saw the young stallion Glendarra Park Vivaldi (Arfaja Harlan x Adbarina Pasha). Glenda names all her horses after composers! Vivaldi is a stunning mover, covering the ground with his immense stride and dancing to his name. Pasha is a full sister to Persarah, mentioned above and tail female to Carlina. Glenda feels this colt is excellent quality and should be sold to someone who wants to use him as a stallion, as well as ride and show him. He is a very interesting prospect for someone to take on.

I had seen Arfaja Rawdon, the last son of Rasham, as a foal and I had always admired this horse, there was something positive about him. He would do brilliantly in endurance with his easy stride and purposeful action. Not quite as flamboyant as Vivaldi, but perhaps more workmanlike. His first foals are very good and he bodes well for the future as a sire. He is currently on lease to Rob and Yvonne Day at Moonlite Stud in NSW. His first son, the bay, GP Strauss, has been sold to a young and keen supporter of the older bloodlines, Jennie Sheal who I was to meet later. This is Jennie's first 100% Crabbet horse and she certainly is keen to preserve these bloodlines having already used the lovely bay stallion Ghazari.

The other Rawdon filly was Glendarra Park Silver Diva out of the substantial mare, Fenwick Silver Dawn (Fenwick Phantom x Fenwick Silver Charm). This pretty yearling filly certainly stole the show but the smaller but pretty three year old, Glendarra Park Allegra (Arfaja Nassif x Moonlight Ice) continues to look very promising. Glenda also has a kind two year old gelding for sale by Arfaja Nassif x Silvadawn who would make a lovely riding horse.

The afternoon was spent mulling over photographs of early imported horses and chatting to Ron. There is always so much to learn, and Ron never fails in his ability to enlighten you with new information and ways of looking at horses. He knows and remembers so many of the horses of the past which is so very interesting.

The next morning was spent enjoying the Arfaja horses before heading to Fenwick. Vicky Johnson (McLean) is always so welcoming and generous with her time and hospitality. My first visit to Fenwick was in 1988 when I was fortunate to first meet Vicky and see the famous Greylight. Since my second visit in 2000, Vicky has moved the stud along and retained some interesting and valuable lines. She has got the bug of line breeding and the first filly we saw, who had hurt her leg but was the outstanding ? by Silver Spur out of Starlight. Silver Spur runs out with his mares, who at present are the famous mare Rare Magic together with Rose Marie and her daughter.

The foals at Fenwick I found first class with the outstanding filly Fenwick Brilliant Gold (Fenwick Silver Spur x Fenwick Brilliance) my favourite. Fenwick Briella, Rhapsody and Paschana all had very good Phantom babies. Fenwick Phantom, now

22 years old is being used by Vicky on many mares and he continues to produce high quality stock. Vicky's other young stallion Fenwick Orion (Renasar x Ennerdale Galaxy) continues to grow into a lovely stallion and is very impressive. The older mares, Starlight and Silver Dream are being bred again this year.

After visiting Fenwick, Stephen kindly dropped me back at the airport where I was to fly to Perth to judge the halter classes at the West Coast Championships. Judging in Australia is busy work; there is no time to hang about and worry, you just make decisions and get on with it. The quality was high with excellent legs and feet on most horses. Some of the Derivatives were outstanding but I had no knowledge of pedigrees so will not report the winners here. Suffice to say that I was watching my co judge, Kerry Rodgers doing the ridden Pure Breds on the Sunday and an outstanding gelding kept winning his classes. I was later to find out that this horse carried 98% Crabbet blood and was bred by Leith Rhodes-Smith who has been a visitor to England on many occasions.

Back to Victoria on Monday and at Melbourne Airport I met up again with Joanne Costigan and Roxanne Pidoto who were coming with me to Tasmania. I was very grateful for the company and left the driving to my friends whilst I enjoyed the Tasmanian countryside. Our timetable was packed with going to see as many studs as we could. Fortunately the flight was on time and we were able to find our first stud before darkness. This was Kasdell Arabians owned by Kathy.

Kathy had bred a foal by Arfaja Harlan and we all felt we were looking at a photocopy of his sire. Kasdell Eliah had been orphaned but was in excellent condition, extremely friendly and full of exuberance! He had outstanding action with the wonderful white splashed legs and style of his dad. He was exceptionally good and will be a very interesting sire of the future. Kathy just has a small number of horses and one or two of her mares were away at studs we were to visit later. However, of great interest was Kasdell Khadee with her foal Kasdell Kadere by Erin Park Thor. This pretty bay filly was very young and her mother was not keen that we got too close but we did see the movement and this filly will be good for the future.

The next morning we set off north towards Launceston. Although distances in Tasmania do not look big, it is more like England in that it takes longer than you think to get anywhere. However driving along, Roxanne was trying to locate where Debbie West lived when we past the turning for her house! We phoned and fortunately Debbie was around so five minutes later we were at her property! Debbie had purchased quite a few horses from Shirley Douglas-Greig's Mill Park Stud including the lovely Roberto daughter, Mill Park Vesper out of Mill Park Zarifa who was due to foal very shortly. The other Roberto mare at Debbie's was Mill Park Strictly Ballroom out of Fenwick Cabaret. Debbie's prefix is Orabanda and she had two interesting and beautiful moving Volcano offspring, Dancing Phenise (ex Fenwick Cabaret) and Dancing Jessica (ex Mill Park Strictly Ballroom). Two lovely bay mares were by Mill Park Falconer, one of out Vesper and the other out of Mill Park Baylina, currently living with Roxanne. The other mare was Mill Park Shaltara by Senussi. These horses are very good quality and Debbie shows them in Tasmania with much success and sometimes in Victoria.

We headed on down to Longford as we were looking for the National Trust Property of Woolmers which had been owned by the Archer family in the past. Here was a beautiful old house open to the public with a National Rose Garden with the most stunning collection of roses I have ever seen. We did not have the time here that we would have liked but this is well worth a visit on any trip to Tasmania.

We arrived at Neil and Carolyn Colbeck's Awarran Park Stud but unfortunately as we arrived the mist became drizzle and then rain! Neil works closely with Trevor Jacobson of the Elphyn Stud and has some of his horses. He breeds both 100% Crabbets and high percentage Crabbet.

The young stallion, Inshallah Royal Escort (Tommie x Royal Desire) was shown to us first. This precocious but beautiful colt took to showing off so we could see his wonderful action and this colt impressed me immensely. Neil had purchased from Roxanne the young outstanding colt, Ebjarah Aladin (Arfaja Harlan x Mira Monte Tamyn) who I had seen as a foal in 2003. He was promising then and has turned into a lovely horse who is already showing potential as a sire.

Fenwick Silver Shadow (Fenwick Rendevous x Fenwick Silver Charm) had been purchased from Vicky Johnson and was a full brother to Fenwick Silver Spur so having just seen Spur the previous week, it was fascinating to see the full brother who was just as good with lovely movement. I liked this stallion very much and would have thought he had a promising future looking at the foals by him on the ground.

Neil has two mares, Elphyn Sarfina and Elphyn Sarbrina both by the stallion Sarfyre (Sarafire x Sarachet). It would be interesting to see what they produced with Silver Shadow. Inshallah Silver Echo had been leased to Tasmania and Neil has the daughter Elphyn Jane out of Elphyn Sarbrina retained with his breeding herd.

Next we saw the outstanding grey mare, Elphyn Genevieve (Crenel x Inshallah Tranquility). Genevieve had great quality and presence. It is hoped that she should breed something exceptional for the Awarran Stud. Rather damp we all went inside and were brilliantly entertained for a memorable evening with Tiger Ranch wine and more films of these wonderful horses.

The next morning in bright sunshine we headed just down the road to Folly Down Arabians, owned by Jennie and Tony Thompson. In a beautiful setting with the fields surrounding the house, Jennie and Tony have certainly found a beautiful spot to retire to. We were fortunate to see a newly born foal by the stallion Arfaja Starfire who we were to see at the next stud. This filly, out of the mare Charlotte Gray (Volcano x Rejoice) was really pretty and very typey. We were certainly looking forward to seeing more of Starfire's stock.

We were then shown the colts, a chestnut Rafiq FA (Arfaja Danyon x Veridan Risani) and then the young stallion, Ebjarah Silver Aataan (Arfaja Harlan x Mira Monte Silver Glitter). This young horse was exceptionally good and showed great movement I was especially interested in this foal as I had been very keen on Aataan on my 2003 trip but at the time felt I could not take on another colt. Jennie has been very fortunate in the purchase of this special colt who I think will mature into a lovely stallion. Her plans are to show him under saddle which he should excel in.

Jennie has put together an interesting group of pure Crabbet mares. Amongst them are Ybissa (Sarafire x Boomori Vogue) who contains bloodlines from the famous Boomori mare, Touch of Class and Volcano, the interesting pedigree of Warren Park Rojeela (Rojan Jamaal x Rowena) who is a double Sindh but also contains Greylight and Shafreyn on the dam side and her daughter, Simin FA by Inshallah Silver Salute.

We moved on from Jennie and sought the wonderful countryside of Tasmania and the home of Ros Gladman of Shemali Arabians. This was an addition to my list and I am so thrilled that we were advised to visit this stud. Ros was such a wonderful hostess and we spent sometime enjoying the beautiful scenery, chatting and seeing her lovely horses but sadly there was not enough time. Ros established her stud in 1970 but only has a few horses and breeds for endurance. We saw first the truly beautiful and typey stallion Arfaja Starfire. This lovely horse I had first seen in 2003 in New South Wales and I had not realised that he was now here in Tasmania. He was just a young colt in 2003 but what I saw on this day was a stunning, kind and beautiful stallion. He is by Arfaja Robard out of Arfaja Moonlight who goes back to one tail female line I have found in many of my favourite horses in Australia, that of Nejmet Es Subh, through the famous Sparkle. This stallion has a superb pedigree and I would recommend that breeders in Tasmania incorporate him somehow in their programmes with all the qualities he has to offer.

We saw two daughters by Starfire, Shemali Sparkling Fire and Shemali Sparkling Star out of Fenwick Rulani and another daughter of Rulani's by Liquid Gold, Shemali Amber Rose. Ros had some other lovely Arabians including a good son of Starfire.

This trip was all rather action packed and it would have been so good to have spent more time with people but we had to head back to Hobart where we were to visit Kalody Stud, owned by Katrina Phillips.

Despite the late hour with falling darkness, Katrina showed us her interesting band of horses including over 20 100% Crabbet horses. Katrina purchased the chestnut stallion Indian Blaze by Bakos out of the imported mare Indian Dove (from the Moulton Stud in the UK). Indian Blaze was a lovely looking stallion and his stock were exceptionally good. However the first horse we saw was the bay Boomori Kahlua who I had last seen up in Queensland in 2005. He is a full brother to Dandaloo Kadet who went to America. Katrina believes in saving the Crabbet lines and has done an amazing job working all hours to pay for her horses who she clearly enjoys very much.

Katrina has collected an interesting selection of bloodlines and it is hoped that people may help her in her rescue plan. She has a couple of mares by Magic Myth (Magic Carpet x Priscilla), (who I had seen in 2005) and had been impressed with his stock. Heste Arabique Exuberance has produced an exceptional chestnut colt since our departure by Boomori Kahlua which is very exciting. The mare Orabanda Della Demon (Volcano x Mill Park Shaltara) was one of the best Volcano daughters that we had all seen and we admired her very much with her chestnut colt foal by Indian Blaze. Also Blue Bead Pia, (Arabian Park Phaeton x Blue Bead Ingrid) a beautiful mare with huge eyes.

Near to dark we went to see Indian Blaze and his mares, one in particular very beautiful, Shantiah Grey Mist (Braheem x Meadow View Royal Rose). Sadly we did not have time to see her other Crabbet horses all bred by Katrina from a variety of stallions, not just her own. I admire what Katrina is doing and hope that others in Tasmania might make use of this important collection of horses.

The next morning was more leisurely, just a short trip to the home of Trevor Jacobsen. Neil Colbeck had business in the south of Tasmania so joined us. Trevor had been very ill but was coping well and it was good to meet him as I had heard much about him and how hard he had worked on his breeding programme. Now with many fewer horses I was excited to see at last the lovely stallion Arfaja Silver Aura (Silver Somerio x Arfaja Rasham). This powerful and tall stallion, exuded presence and style. We were all so impressed with him and particularly his stock at Trevor's and Neil Colbeck's. Trevor had crossed him with his Manfred (Silver Flame x Mifaria) mares and the cross was exceptionally good and much admired by us all. Although none of the horses apart from Aura were pure Crabbet, Trevor's programme is very successful and it is fascinating to see the combination of English Crabbet with Australian Crabbet working so successfully.

Sadly this was the end of our trip to Tasmania. I am very grateful to Joanne and Roxanne for coming with me and making it such an entertaining and exhausting trip! Full of wonderful horses, kind and hospitable people as always but above all, I feel that perhaps the breeders in Tasmania do not fully appreciate what a truly wide variety and wonderful selection of Crabbet Arabians they have on that small island. Who needs the rest of Australia when they have these lovely horses to choose from but if they do wish to go to the mainland, it is just a ferry crossing away to all the wonderful studs in Victoria!

Back on mainland Australia the next stud I visited was Pevensey Stud owned by Leon Bennett. Since the tour in 2005 prior to the Crabbet Convention, the Pevensey Stud has moved to a lovely new property near Wangaratta. Despite the drought conditions, there was plenty of grass for the horses, in fact so much that some of them were on restricted grazing. I first visited the stud in 2003 and now in 2007, the quality of horses was so high that it was impossible to not want to take at least half a dozen home. First on the list would be Pevensey Baybe (Sarafire x Dandaloo Baylanie), who I actually saw at Leigh Jamieson's, and at least one of her Harlan daughters.

This mare is an exceptional broodmare and has produced top quality foals. The exciting thing is she is now in foal to Arfaja Rococo and the cross with the Arfaja horses has been so successful with the strength and power of the Sarafire offspring combined with the slightly more flamboyant style and beauty of the Arfaja breeding. Baybe is of course full sister to Pevensey Safari, the bay stallion who was so striking at the Convention. His length of neck and strong back end together with superb action which he is passing on to his stock make him a very useful and important sire. So far he has just produced bays and one has already found its way to England.

However, mention should be made of the incredible mare, Veridan Za'aria. She is already creating a dynasty in Australia and would surely win a Princess Muna Group in the UK. She herself is an enormous striding mare, with a very lovely head and much strength. Her two daughters Pevensey Ghia and Pevensey Zariffia both by the

bay stallion Ghazarii (Greylight x Georgette) are outstanding. Ghazari has sadly not been used by any other Crabbet breeder so these two fillies are very valuable to the Crabbet pool especially as Ghazari has at the age of 30 been retired from stud.

One of my favourite mares at Pevensey is Nadaji (Sarafire x Bint Sahn) who had a good moving colt foal by Arfaja Harlan. Sarah Benay (Sarafire x Starr Faithful) had been bred to Safari and produced a very pretty bay filly. She is the first double Sarafire foal which was very interesting. The other youngstock were fillies out of Baybe and Nadaji by the leased stallion, Royalund Silver Miracle (Al Borg Jarim x Rossonet) and they had turned into good broodmares. Outstanding action was seen throughout the stud.

Portia Benay continues to produce top class stock and her beautiful daughter, Pieta Benay by Arfaja Robard is outstanding with exceptional movement and enormous eyes. She is apparently a lovely riding mare and would take some beating under saddle I would imagine. Portia had another lovely filly by Fenwick Phantom, Pevensey Phantomia, and this filly is surely another superb foal from the Pevensey Stud for the future. It must be hard knowing which of these gorgeous fillies should be sold!

During the visit I was honoured to go and visit the aforementioned Ghazari who at the age of 30 looked so well with his rich bay colour glistening in the sun. It is possible that his owner, Linda was unable to take many visiting mares but I see this as a shame for the quality of stock by him that I saw.

Next I went to Mill Park Stud home of Shirley and Don Douglas-Greig. With the Equine Flu situation, some studs had closed their doors to visitors so I was very honoured to be able to go there and see Shirley's lovely horses. Mill Park Zarifa has been retired from stud but the younger mares, Zee, Judillie and the lovely Mill Park Water Sylph were there. Sylph had an outstanding foal by Senussi at foot who was very impressive. The famous Roberto mare Mill Park Pertrice out of Pernelle was pregnant and recently gave birth to a lovely filly foal which will be the property of Roxanne Pidoto. It has taken some years to get this mare to produce but it has been worth the wait. The young fillies by Arfaja Haluj who I had seen as yearlings were now grown up and look to be excellent mares as the legacy for Haluj. The daughter of the famous mare Talieah Mill Park Athena was especially pretty and it will be interesting to see how she produces in the fullness of time.

At last Shirley was using her young stallion, Mill Park Amastar (Mill Park Falconer x Amareece). This lovely stallion who I had admired on each visit to Shirley's should make a good sire and his first foals will no doubt be eagerly awaited in 2008. The yearling colt, ? with outstanding action and style should be an excellent sire in the future.

I had tried to visit the stud of Greg Prowse on previous trips to Australia and was very pleased and grateful to Leon Bennett for organising a visit at last. I was very impressed with the stallion Riamus (Nicodemus x Ria). Riamus has an amazing pedigree taking you back fast to the Crabbet horses. His sire Nicodemus is by Indian Jewel (Raktha x Indian Pride) and he is out of Riffalani (Riffal x Rissani). His dam is Bronzestone (Sindh x Badiyan) such an important stallion in Australia and out of

Ractria (Sharrak x Electria) and so back to Electric Silver. Riamus is a powerful but kind and beautiful white stallion with wonderful movement and we saw some excellent stock by him including a grey mare out of Elysium Fantasia and a grey colt out of Tannenbaum Seraphina. Elysium Fantasia is by Wellworth Tangiers out of Falene so the valuable bloodlines of the Wellworth horses are available from this stud too. The lovely mare Meadow View Nicholette was absolutely stunning, such style and type. She is running with Riamus so it would be good if she produced a foal by him. There are some excellent horses at this stud and I was grateful that Greg allowed me to go and see them.

The next day was a visit to Ken and Sean Johnson's Kendra Park Stud. Ken is looking after the horses at the family home just outside Euchuca whilst Sean is enjoying the delights of the UK teaching scene and countryside! This Stud is the continuation of the Veridan Za'aria family. The Johnsons were extremely fortunate to lease this mare from Rob and Yvonne Day and Leon Bennett to start them up with such outstanding broodmares. Zeta Benay (Silver Somerio) has just produced her second foal, an upstanding colt of good quality by Arfaja Naasif (Wellworth Tangiers x Persareh).

It was the filly Kendra Park Zamia (Arfaja Haluj x Zeta Benay) who I wanted to take home with me! Born in 2005, this very tall and beautiful mare with movement to take your breath away, would win under saddle in any ridden ring in England. She has outstanding style despite her height. The other Za'aria daughter, Silvaria (by Rasham) now 5 years old was growing into a really beautiful mare, also quite tall. The stud had recently obtained in partnership with Seven Oaks Stud, the stallion Bolshoi (Boyar x Windsor Park Bay Magic), who I had first seen at Dawn Suter's stud in 2003. This lovely chestnut stallion with excellent conformation and very kind temperament should go really well with the mares at Kendra Park and Seven Oaks to bring in the different bloodlines.

The Johnsons also have the mare Creswick Makeda (Fenwick Regal Glow x Nemone) who sadly had lost her foal the previous year with just 6 weeks to go. The dam of Makeda is English bred, being by Fancy Shadow out of Misery of the Harwood Stud. Through this line, comes the valuable lines of Queen of Sheba which was the reason for the purchase. The stallion Arfaja Naasif who has such an amazing temperament and the most lovely big eyes, was quite happily turned out with his two year old son, Kendra Park Artex (ex Mill Park Zarifa). This colt is very like his father and it will be very interesting to see how he grows on.

Next stop was the first time that I ventured into an Equine Flu Area as Moonlite Stud, home of Rob and Yvonne Day had just been designated an amber zone. To make the point we were all sprayed down, car, luggage and people on arrival and then they said hello!!! This was the start of a real insight into just how badly this flu virus had upset the whole workings of the Australian horse scene. People had stopped visiting each other's studs and spraying down, showering and washing all items of clothing, shoes etc., cars etc. now became the order of the day. However, today a group of friends had gathered with Helen Garland and ? coming out for a lovely lunch and horsey visit!

It is always a joy to visit Rob and Yvonne Day and their Moonlite Stud. I admire what they have done for the Crabbet horse, and the breed. For their commitment they received a special award at the Australian Nationals in 2007. The lovely stallion, Silver Somerio (Somerled x Silver Doura) continued to impress as did his son, Rush out of the outstanding mare Pendita. This mare is one of the most lovely mares in Australia and I do hope that she will produce some more foals in the future with her valuable bloodlines and exceptional qualities.

The Veridan Za'aria story continues at Moonlite with her daughter Zaraida and the two sons, Snow N'Fire (Reserve National Champion Stockhorse 2007) and Prince Benay all by Sarafire. Sadly they are little used to date but have been working with their trainers and been shown so they have not stood at public stud. The Days want their horses out there in the open show scene doing things and they have proved that Crabbet still wins in Australia too. Since leaving, a lovely filly foal has been born by Silver Somerio out of Zoe Benay. The rain then came down and we had to abandon the viewing but were able to see some more of the horses the next morning.

My final stop was to spend a few days with Astra Temple and her partner Randall MacArthur at the Star Park International Stud south of Sydney. They were right in the thick of the flu area, a red zone. A yard just 2 kms away had had the flu but fortunately the wind had been kind and blown the other way and Astra had so far kept clear of flu. She had made great effort to ensure that every precaution was taken and no one was allowed to enter her place unless they were clean.

Biosecurity is now part of my horse vocabulary. Nothing was left to chance on the cleaning stakes but I was prepared to do anything to ensure that no flu entered Astra's property. Just before I arrived all the horses had been vaccinated as part of a buffer zone exercise. This meant ALL the horses had to be done. A team of government officials and vets came in and microchipped, injected and branded all the horses, nothing missed out and Astra has around 40 horses. Even the 12 hour foal was done. It is such good news to report that at the time of writing, Astra is now a green zone, the horses have had 2 inoculations and she escaped the flu. Many were not so lucky.

The ethereal and beautiful stallion, Arfaja Robard is standing at stud. Robard is still owned by Fiona Seymore of the Wentworth Estate Stud. This lovely stallion who just oozes so much presence and style had captured me on my first visit to Australia and I always love seeing him as he never fails to make you look at him. There were two foals on the ground by him, a grey colt out of Arfaja Silver Mist (Silver Somerio x Arfaja Rashma – thus a full sister to Arfaja Silver Aura in Tasmania) and a bay going grey filly out of Meadow View Virginnia (Sarafire x Meadow View Silver Flower).

These two foals were different but good. The filly exceptional quality and beauty whilst the colt was ready for the race track, with exceptional movement that swept him along. He had been very small and had a difficult to start to his young life but he had so much going for him with good limbs and body. He showed at moments the presence required of colts but since it rained for much of the time that I was there, it was not the best weather to show off! Also at Astra is the mare Natasha and ? on lease from Fiona. Sadly we did not venture to other studs in NSW on this trip. It was too risky to pass on flu and many of them had had the virus so studs were closed.

The Australian Crabbet horses are now moving around into new hands, and it was good to see a few new breeders entering the Crabbet fray. We need them all, to show that Crabbets do best and can be best. You just need to go out there and prove it. Unfortunately the results of no events in 2007/8 could have the same kind of effect that the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001 had here in the UK. The interest definitely dropped, young people have taken to another sport as they are unable to go out and have fun with their horses and this will have the knock on effect in the market place with prices dropping and fewer riding horses being sought. I hope that the worst fears in Australia are unfounded but inevitably things will be affected. Thank you to everyone for such a wonderful trip again and I hope that it is not too many years before I am able to visit this wonderful country and people again.

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