

Europejczyk 1982 – 2005

by Jeffrey Wintersteen

The name of Europejczyk to Polish enthusiasts conjures up a host of emotions. Certainly Europejczyk's individual accomplishments alone are sufficient to earn him legendary status and his success as a breeding stallion was certainly exemplary. But he was always something more to those that knew him, an intangible quality that was difficult to put ones finger on. It could be the unblemished race record which will always stand as testament to his ability. But perhaps, it was the quiet gentle dignity that is most memorable, the soft and expressive eyes that made such a lasting impact. Regardless of what made Europejczyk stand apart, all will agree he was the brush with perfection that is so rare.

Foaled at Janów Podlaski in 1982, he was the son of the horse that "money could not buy", El Paso. A moniker that eventually proved false as Armand Hammer finally secured him for one million US dollars in 1981. Before his purchase, El Paso was named US National Champion in 1976 during his four-year lease to Lasma. What led the Poles to change their minds will only be known by a rare few, but certainly the birth of a quality El Paso son in 1982, his last foal crop in Poland, must have produced a collective sigh of relief from the Polish breeders. Out of Europa, full sister to legend Eukalipthus and Polish National Champion Mare in her own right, Europejczyk was the Kuhailan/ Saklawi cross, that, when successful, is nothing short of magical.

As all Polish three years old must do, Europejczyk arrived at Służewiec track in Warsaw the spring 1985. This came against a background of unprecedented Polish nationalism, which was initially sparked in 1979 by the selection of the first Pole, Jan Pawel (John Paul), as Pope, and the Gdansk strikes which gave rise to Lech Wałęsa and the Solidarity movement. Gorbachev announced his policy of *Glasnost* and *Perestrojka* in 1985, which added fuel to this fire of dissent. The Polish communists found themselves without the backing of the Soviets for the first time, and this, along with pressure from the Solidarity movement, prompted them to lift Marshall law, ushering in the sweet winds of freedom not felt in Poland since 1939.

As if responding to a national need to believe in things all Polish, the bay Europejczyk reeled off win after win that summer, including the classic Criterium against older horses, particularly those of Soviet Tersk stud. This left his unblemished record intact coming into his four-year-old year, making him the overwhelming Derby favorite. In 1986 he fulfilled his breeders hopes in winning the Derby, Produce and 3 other stakes races, keeping his perfect record and easy choice for Race Horse of the Year. Europejczyk remains only one of 3 horses to retire undefeated (of 5 or more races) in Polish breeding. Europejczyk was described in 1986 as "Poland's greatest favorite" (AHW 1986) and his two year run of perfection endeared him to an entire generation.

But Europejczyk was not just a national phenomenon. His exploits at the Warsaw track prompted Tim Kelly, racing trainer for Alec Courtelis' Town and Country Farm in the US as saying, "I'd give Mr. Courtelis' right arm and both of my arms for that horse. He could

go anywhere and be competitive. He is pretty too. The Poles want to use him as a sire, and I can't blame them."

Following his triumphant return from the racetrack, the next test was the show ring of Polish Nationals. Earning Reserve National Championship in 1987, it marked the only blemish – if one could call it that – of his show career. Europejczyk fulfilled his destiny with the coveted Polish National Champion Stallion title the next year – a win that included 10's for type and 9's for movement (out of 10) – an unprecedented score for a stallion with his racing credentials that has yet to be equaled to this day. He remains the only undefeated racehorse to ever achieve that honor. It was the crowning achievement that was so desired by not only the Poles, but also by breeders worldwide.

Arabian Horse World coverage of the 1988 Nationals described the stallion class succinctly enough: "The outcome, however, should have surprised no one... Europejczyk was champion."

Accolades aside, however, his success in the breeding shed was needed to fulfill his lasting legacy, and pragmatically what the Poles wanted most. Perhaps few stallions have entered stud in Poland with such lofty expectations as Europejczyk. At this point, his sire El Paso had long since departed to the United States. Ultimately that left Europejczyk heir apparent to the Wielki Szlem branch of the Kuhailan Haifi sire line in Poland. Europejczyk's legacy as sire was significant leaving, some of his highlights are as follows:

Polish foals:

- Anakara – Class winner European Championships
- Dekoracja -- Swedish National Champion Mare
- Edissa -- Orgia Stakes winner
- Edyk -- Criterium Stakes winner
- Eksport – Brazilian National Champion Stallion
- Exanadu -- Swedish National Junior Champion Filly
- Picola -- Jordanian Junior Champion Filly
- Pilaster -- Scottsdale Hunter Pleasure Champion, US & Canadian Top Ten Hunter Pleasure
- Subaru -- Karabaset Stakes winner

United States:

- Emigrant -- Reserve US National Champion Hunter Pleasure HA
- Etevka -- Canadian National Champion and US National Top Ten Hunter Pleasure
- Fizical -- Scottsdale Champion Show Hack & US National Champion Reserve Native Costume
- Euromelody – Reserve Champion Region 11 Country English Pleasure Jr. Horse
- Europa -- US National Top Ten Futurity Stallion & Scottsdale Champion Park Horse

- LL Celebrity – Champion Region VIII Country English Pleasure Jr. Horse
- Mesmeryz -- US National Top Ten Western Pleasure Futurity
- MWF Dimitri -- Reserve Region V Champion Yearling Colt
- OKW Maxwell – Reserve US National Champion HA Hunter Pleasure Jr. Horse
- Spiryt – US & Canadian National Champion Western Pleasure HA

For most stallions such siring accomplishments would be evidence enough to crown a stallion's career a success. However, with such high hopes for Europejczyk, what was noticeably absent from the list were a Polish National Champion son or daughter, and a Derby winning son or Oaks winning daughter. Certainly Europejczyk was an extremely successful sire, but in the same breath perhaps falling short of the exorbitant expectations placed on him. Still, expectations aside, ask any of the State Stud Directors in the 90' who were their favorite stallions in Poland (I did just that!), and always Europejczyk was included on the short list. An emotional response one could argue, but who would blame them? After all, this is a game of emotion under the pretense of business.

As proof, his services were used at all four studs in Poland including 3 seasons at his maternal stud of Janów and leased to the US twice. The second lease to the United States was to Meadow Wood Farms from which Janów had high hopes to gain a breeding son, preferably out of one of the farm's Bask or Probat daughters. Meadow Wood was soon dissolved and with it Janów's chance at a US bred successor to Europejczyk.

It might seem that at this point Europejczyk fate of would be sealed, being classified as "highly regarded" yet not quite "breed contributing" as most of his sire line had been. But there is the timeless argument made from countless horsemen over generations – the blood will tell. Indeed the great Thoroughbred breeder Frederico Tesio theorized that when nature achieves perfection, it must "rest" a generation. There is no better example in the Thoroughbred world of this than Secretariat. Initially considered a flop after being syndicated for a world record amount in 1974, his blood continues through the best sires in the world, his daughters became a priceless commodity (Bloodhorse, Feb. 11, 2006). Storm Cat, out of the Secretariat daughter Terlingua currently commands a stud fee of \$500,000 for the 2006-breeding season. Before you get your checkbook out, remember it is to approved mares only!

As for our "Polish Secretariat", consider this recent evidence -- the class winners in 2004 and 2005 of the two-year-old filly class at Polish Nationals were both out of the Europejczyk daughters Belladona and Etalanta respectively. (As a maternal grandsire, Europejczyk actually had 1st and 2nd in 2005.) During the "Decade of Monogramm" and now with the beginning of the "Decade of Gazal al Shaqab", Europejczyk blood has crossed exceedingly well with both of these sires. In fact, looking at the winning broodmare sires at the modern Polish Nationals, Europejczyk is placed firmly in the legendary company of Eukalptus, Probat and Monogramm. Else where in Europe, the Norwegian Champion Stallion Beduin is out of Bodanka, who along with her full sister Bogantyna, has long been considered two of his best daughters. The Europejczyk son Eskport and Brazilian National Champion is starting to enjoy considerable siring success in his adopted homeland. In North America, the Europejczyk son Europa, himself a US

National Top Ten and Scottsdale Champion Park horse, has sired of numerous National and Regional Champions – both in halter and under saddle. What about from a racing perspective, are his grand get making an impact? Well, the Europa Cup winner Esej, Europe's richest racing prize, is out of the stakes winning Europejczyk daughter Edissa. Closer to home the brilliant Ofiar, winning of the ARC Juvenile, Americas premier race for three year olds, is by the Europejczyk son Dakota – one of only a handful of foals by that sire before his exportation to Chile. Another of Dakota's get was a Regional Reserve Champion Hunter Pleasure.

History will bear witness to Europejczyk's ability as a broodmare sire or even as a sire of sires. Certainly there has been a revival in Poland with the use his daughters. Ultimately, however, his sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters will be cherished not for what they accomplished or produce but by the blood they represent. Europejczyk was, above all, a prepotent stallion passing on his hinged necks and superior conformation of his sire El Paso and perhaps most importantly the agreeable demeanor that had made Europejczyk so captivating. After all, it is the willing heart and gentle soul that is the epitome of Arabian horse. Europejczyk was, in the end, our rare brush with perfection.



Author with Europejczyk in June 1995, Kurozweki State Stud

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Authors Note:

Like most people who have seen Europejczyk, I have my own anecdotes and personal reasons for his appeal. Admittedly, this manifests itself in my own bias and was certainly apparent in the above article; try as I might to have it appear otherwise. I was first introduced to Europejczyk during the summer of 1995 on my first trip to Poland. I had read about him in the Korona sire line publication and he certainly lived up to expectations. He was an instant hit, not only with me but my parents as well. We traveled to Scottsdale the following winter to sign a breeding contract, as he had just arrived to the US on lease to Meadow Wood. It is not always easy to reach a family consensus when choosing stallions, but everyone could agree on him! The resulting colt was supposed to be a filly; we even had an appropriate girls name picked out. At one week old he was halter broke, easily lead around by my 5-year-old niece, patiently waiting as she untangled the lead. He was never rattled, and we clipped him for his first show as he lay down in his stall. Being a colt was forgiven when Pejczyk won his class at an All Breed show at 2 ½ months of age (the only weanling in the class of 2 and younger colts) and named Grand Champion Stallion. It was the first win of 14 for the farm that "Pj" gave us. My most memorable was when he was named Jr. Champion over a Bey Shah son who had beat him the previous year at Regionals. The dark bay colt was all snort and blow before the class, stark contrast to our laid back Pejczyk. Seeing the other colt, we tried to stir Pj up by rattling trash bags, brushes, and garbage cans. All of this had no effect; he just stared at us quizzically. Nor did it matter – Pj won anyway.

I was on Pejczyk when I earned my exercise license at the track; he was also the first horse I ever broke out of the gates. One morning as we were waiting at the gap for the track to re-open for training after the break, I was sitting legs dangling out of the irons and the reins draped down on his neck. Around us other horses were dancing and doing their best to ditch their riders, impatient for the delay in getting to their morning gallops. One of the riders called out tongue in cheek that I needed to get a broke horse. I didn't have the heart to tell him that my mount had been breeding a mare the day before.

Pejczyk was also the first racehorse I ever saddled as a trainer. He used to be so quiet before a race, the first time our jockey asked if something was wrong. Initially I had no idea what he was talking about, I mean Pj is a Europejczyk son – these are thoughtful, deliberate horses. We ran second that day, almost beating a big French horse, 8 lengths in front of the rest of the 12-horse field. It was so tight at the finish I am sure to this day Pj thinks he got the better of that gelding, not the other way around. We both got sent to the test barn, but what did we care, as Pj never ran on anything but hay and oats. He won the next go around, giving us our first win at the track.

As a sire, Pj is his sire's son. We are perhaps proudest of the trademark Europejczyk dispositions, neck sets and big expressive eyes all his foals seem to have -- a lasting legacy from his father. Like his father, I also think he is better with fillies. Who could ever blame a stallion for that? One of Pejczyk's best won the Diane Alderson Memorial Trophy, reserved for the best yearling in Colorado. Yes, I freely admit my bias towards Europejczyk, as I have come by it honestly.