

# A History Reclaimed

*How Bastion BF Became a Living Remnant of Two and a Half Centuries of War, Political Collapse, and Indifference*

There are stories in horse breeding that are impressive, and there are stories that are almost unbearable. This is the latter kind.

For more than two and a half centuries, the Bairactar sire line endured through war, political collapse, forced dispersal, shifting breeding fashions, and the ordinary indifference that so often finishes what catastrophe begins. It survived because generation after generation of horsemen valued something more than immediate fashion. They guarded a line, a type, a memory, and a set of inherited qualities that could not easily be replaced once lost. Yet in the end, one of the oldest and most meaningful threads in Arabian breeding history came down not to a royal stud, not to a celebrated state program, and not to some carefully protected institutional treasure, but to two horses the world had more or less thrown away.

That is what makes the story of Safari CAHR and his son, Bastion BF, so powerful. It is not only a story of pedigree. It is a story of how a living inheritance can survive almost by accident, through neglect, luck, recognition, and the refusal of one person to accept that the discarded are without value.

The line itself begins, in its European chapter, with Bairactar OA, foaled in 1813 in Syria and imported to Weil in 1817 by Wilhelm I, King of Württemberg. Bairactar became a foundation sire of Weil and the source of what would become the oldest active Polish sire line in existence today.

He was described as a horse of large eyes, dryness, and refinement, and the remarkable thing is not just that his name survives in pedigrees, but that something of his physiological character appears to echo through later descendants. However individual breeders in the current era may have used such terms as “desert type,” formed from the individuals’ own perspective, the older sire lines often showed a remarkable continuity of inherited phenotype. In the case of Bairactar and his descendants, one can trace not merely pedigree, but a recurring visual and structural identity - a resemblance so persistent that it suggests more than fashion or imagination. It suggests a type carried forward with unusual fidelity.

Like so many of the old Arabian sire lines, the Bairactar line always seemed to live under a kind of biological austerity. Its great stallions often left many important daughters, but only one or two sons able to carry the male line forward. Again and again, the line narrowed. Again and again, it survived through a very small number of sons. Longevity, too, seems to have marked it: Bairactar himself lived to twenty-six, and later descendants such as Amurath 1881 Weil lived even longer. But endurance is not the same thing as security. A line can persist for almost three centuries and still remain perilously close to vanishing.

In Poland, that inheritance took on a special significance. Through horses such as Amurath Sahib, the Bairactar line became part of the living fabric of the Polish Arabian, contributing not only to beauty, but to athleticism, riding quality, strength, and the kind of functional nobility that made the Polish horse something more than an ornamental creature of beauty. These were not accidental horses. They were the result of generations of breeders who wanted a complete Arabian: beautiful, yes, but also useful, honest, strong, and enduring.

From Amurath Sahib, the line passed forward through his two crucial sons, Gwarny and Arax. That fact alone would matter enough. But history made it even more consequential. Those two sons - three-quarter brothers out of Ofir granddaughters - became the surviving channels through which the direct male line of Bairactar continued. The line that had crossed continents, dynasties, wars, and political systems now narrowed once more, this time through just two surviving branches.

And even those branches did not remain united. One moved westward through the Polish-bred world. The other was drawn eastward into the Soviet sphere. Through Arax, admired in Moscow and transferred under conditions shaped by the political and economic pressures of the Iron Curtain, the Bairactar inheritance flowed into Russian-bred Arabians influenced by horses either purchased or seized during World War II. Through Gwarny, it persisted more narrowly on the western side of the divided postwar breeding world. This line - one that had already survived two world wars and a staggering revolution in Russia -- was split again by history.

By the time the story reaches Safari CAHR, sire of Bastion BF, it had narrowed to something almost impossible to believe.

Safari was foaled in 1994 in Canada, by Falat, a son of Gwarny, and out of Ceeva. His pedigree was old-world in the deepest sense: not merely "Pure Polish" in the registry sense, but saturated with the older architecture of Polish breeding that preservationists now struggle to keep from disappearing. Through Falat, Safari represented the dwindling Gwarny branch of the Bairactar line.

Yet history did not grant him the nobility he deserved. Imported into the United States as a young stallion, Safari began with promise. He raced successfully, winning and breaking his maiden on his first attempt. Then came injury. Raced again too soon, he sustained tendon damage, and after further efforts to keep him going, he developed a severe bowed tendon. His racing future was over. By the age of five, he had been donated and remanded to a stall at a Southern California equine rescue organization, where he remained for the next fifteen years. Fifteen years. A horse from one of the oldest and rarest sire-line branches in the world stood there in obscurity, not used for breeding, not recognized for what he represented, and apparently destined to disappear without issue.

If that had happened, the loss would not merely have been personal. It would have been historical.

When Safari was finally examined after his rescue and adoption, the verdict was dismal. He was around twenty years old. He had no libido. He showed no interest in mares. A semen sample, once obtained, was essentially nonviable. The recommendation was practical and unromantic: geld him and use him as a riding horse. In ordinary terms, it was sensible advice. In historical terms, it might have extinguished a line that had survived since 1813. His adopter never once even considered it.

Safari was taken instead to a small Texas farm near Houston, not to be discarded, but to be given one final chance to be a horse. There was no institutional campaign money behind him. No state program. No royal preservation order. Only recognition, patience, and the stubborn refusal to believe that an Amurath Sahib great-grandson should end as an anonymous gelding because the world had, so far, failed him. Turned out with a couple of friendly, older Quarter Horse mares, allowed room, sunlight, companionship, time and the best of nutrition and supplements, Safari changed. Nature, denied for years, reasserted itself. Within several weeks, the horse who had supposedly no breeding future at all had proven otherwise. That reversal

alone would have been astonishing enough, however, history had not yet finished speaking.

The mare who would help complete the next chapter was herself another throwaway.

She was a young Polish Arabian mare, the last daughter of the celebrated Emanor, found in appalling condition in a kill-pen pipeline, emaciated, frightened, and close to a fate that would have erased not only her life, but her genetic significance. Through her sire, she carried the Arax branch of the same Bairactar inheritance Safari carried through Gwarny. In other words, the two surviving sons of Amurath Sahib - the two branches through which this ancient male line had continued - stood, generations later, on opposite sides of a historical divide, and then, by extraordinary chance and recognition, came back together through two horses nobody wanted.

It is difficult not to overstate the irony. After all the wars and destruction, the dedication and care in the rebuilding, the luck that somehow had kept this inheritance alive for close to three centuries had finally come to rest in a stallion left in solitary obscurity and a mare nearly lost to slaughter. Both were Polish Arabians. Both were valuable in the deepest sense yet had been treated as expendable, standing on the edge of oblivion. And from them came Bastion BF.

The name is almost too fitting. A bastion is a stronghold, a defensive work, the last fortified point against loss. Bastion BF, foaled in 2021, is not merely a handsome young stallion with a champion-level show record. He is, in a real sense, a genetic recovery point. A genetic ark. Through his sire, he descends from Bairactar and through his dam, Evangelion AD, he carries the other Amurath Sahib branch through Arax, flowing through Nabeg, Tallin, Wojsław, and Emanor. He is therefore one of the last stallions in the world tracing directly to Bairactar through Gwarny, and the only one identified as carrying both surviving Amurath Sahib branches - Gwarny and Arax - through sire and dam. That alone would make him historically interesting. But Bastion carries still more.

His dam line traces to Ukrainka, founder of Polish Female Family #6, itself one of the rarest of the old Polish female families. By recent count, only a handful of breeding-age mares remain in that branch, including Bastion's dam. In him, then, one finds not only the convergence of two surviving Bairactar channels, but the support of one of

the scarce old mare families as well. He represents not simply a rare stallion line, but an unusual concentration of endangered heritage architecture.

And unlike so many historical horses whose importance lies wholly in the past, Bastion has already shown visible promise in the present by being awarded several in-hand Regional Championships. He is symmetrical, fluid, intelligent, curious, and purposeful in motion. His character is flawless. He is evidence that these older lines are not just relics to be admired in old pedigrees. They remain capable of producing a horse that is beautiful, balanced, athletic, and functional in the way the older Polish breeders prized. This is where Bastion's meaning becomes larger than his own individual career.

Much of modern Arabian breeding has drifted toward international fashion, exaggerated halter traits, and the kinds of visual extremes that can win short-term attention while weakening the older harmonies of body, mind, and use. Bastion stands for something else. He stands for a version of the Polish Arabian that is rapidly vanishing: elegant without fragility, beautiful without distortion, strong-boned, balanced, mentally steady, rideable, and kind. These are not nostalgic fantasies. They are the visible results of generations of selective judgment now at risk of being diluted beyond recognition.

That is why Bastion BF can reasonably be described as conservation genetics in action. Through careful use with thoughtfully chosen purebred Arabian mares, he has the potential to reintroduce elements of the classic Polish athletic type into modern pedigrees, stabilize bloodlines that are nearly gone, and provide future breeders access to heritage genetics that might otherwise disappear forever. He is not important merely because he is rare. He is important because rarity alone is not enough; what matters is whether a rare line still carries usable and desirable qualities worth preserving.

And here the story becomes almost painfully instructive, because Bastion is, in the bluntest emotional sense, the son of two throwaway horses.

That phrase is harsh, but history sometimes demands harsh language. He is the son of a stallion considered fit only to wither in a stall for fifteen years, and of a mare considered close enough to worthless to enter the brutal current that leads toward slaughter. Both were Polish Arabians. Both carried blood of enormous consequence.

Both were nearly lost because the culture around them no longer recognized what they were. That is not merely a rescue story, but rather an indictment of forgetfulness.

It is also a warning that a bloodline can survive war and still be killed by indifference. A type can persist for centuries and still be erased by fashion. A horse can carry the concentrated work of generations and still be dismissed because the eye of the moment no longer knows what it is seeing. Safari and Bastion's dam were not saved because the world had a functioning system for recognizing rare historical value. They were saved because one person knew enough, cared enough, and acted in time.

The first article in this series explains how the philosophy of Polish breeding was shaped, narrowed, redirected, and rebuilt.

The second tells of the wartime stallions whose survival carried the old blood through catastrophe.

And this third story brings the whole long history to its narrowest and most haunting point: after all the royal imports, all the war, all the rebuilding, all the state studs, all the breeders and their careful decisions, one of the oldest living inheritances in Arabian history came down to two discarded horses and the colt born from their rescue.

Safari CAHR was not supposed to matter anymore. Bastion's dam was not supposed to survive in any meaningful way. Bastion himself was never guaranteed to exist, but he does.

Once in a great while, history refuses to end where indifference intends for it to finish. It waits in obscurity, it survives in damaged bodies, it hides in pedigrees no one bothers to read anymore. And then, one day, the stars align just right and it returns, triumphant.

That is what Bastion BF represents. Not merely the continuation of a sire line. Not merely the reunion of two branches divided by war and politics. Not merely the success of an unusually thoughtful breeding. He represents the fact that a living inheritance can still be pulled back from the edge, even at the last hour. He is a reminder that preservation is not abstract. It is personal, difficult, and often improbable. Sometimes it depends not on institutions, but on one person refusing to let the world discard what it no longer understands.

And perhaps the deepest truth of all is that the Bairactar line did not survive into the present because history was kind. It survived because enough fragments remained, and because now and then someone recognizes inside a neglected horse, something special and important to the world.

Read the web edition: [/articles/article\\_history\\_reclaimed.html](/articles/article_history_reclaimed.html)

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