

Diamond Hill Arabians
Hucks Connection V+/- Foundation Sire

When Lisa Giovannello arrived at Varian Arabians in 2006 she was simply looking for a top quality Arabian show horse. What she found was quite a bit more complex.

“While I was there I realized that Hucks Connection V+/- was the show horse I wanted,” she says, “because I immediately knew that he was going to be the perfect match for my family as well as our plans for the future.”

This “perfect match” is actually a very tall order. Lisa and her father and mother, Jacques and Ann Marie Lapointe, had been looking for a national quality show horse that could also be a great Arabian foundation sire for Diamond Hill Arabians.

Foaled in 1999, Hucks Connection V is a black-bay son of three-time Regional English Pleasure Champion Hucks Premier V and a grandson of Varian’s great sire Huckleberry Bey. Pavane V, dam of Hucks Premier V is a daughter of 4-time national champion and a leading all-time sire, Khemosabi and a product of one of the great Varian broodmare lines, the imported Polish mare *Bachantka. *Bachantka is a half-sister to *Bask. All great sires have great dams and “HCV’s” is the multi-Top Ten and Canadian National Champion English Pleasure Amateur horse, Crystal Lace. Her sire, Serinask, is a three-time national champion in pleasure driving and informal combination and the sire of 27 national winners. In truth, Hucks Connection V has a pedigree rife with Arabian Living Legends, and he began his own march to fame in the show ring when he was just three.

By the time Hucks Connection V made his first trip to the national shows he was a well-known winner on the Arabian show circuit. Multiple regional championships in English pleasure junior horse, English pleasure open and Park positioned him for top honors in late summer and fall of 2007 when he was the Canadian Reserve National Champion English Pleasure and a U.S. National Top Ten in the same division. By spring of 2008 he was just about unbeatable. Beginning with a sweep at Region 12 in May, where Lisa and trainer Vicki Humphrey teamed HCV to unanimous championships in English pleasure open, amateur and informal combination, the group paused to pick up some additional trophies at Region 15 before hitting the Canadian National Championships in Regina. There, HCV and his “girls” took roses in *both* the open Canadian National English Pleasure Championship and the AAO 18-39. Later that fall the U.S. Nationals in Tulsa brought more excitement and Reserve National Championship honors for the trio in Informal Combination and English Pleasure AAO 18-39.

Following a 2009 year long breeding hiatus, it was decided that Hucks Connection V would make his return to the show ring at the 2010 Scottsdale show. In addition to success in amateur English competition with Lisa, the highlight of Scottsdale week turned out to be HCV’s appearance and subsequent victory in the Liberty class, climaxing at the evening session on the final Saturday night.

“At Varian Arabian’s open houses a great moment was always when Sheila would turn HCV loose and let him prance around for the crowd,” says Lisa. “He had a great Liberty routine so we thought what a great promotion for him to show it off at Scottsdale!”

It went exactly as planned, and not only was HCV’s turn in Liberty one of the show’s best moments, it played to a packed crowd on Saturday night *and* he won with the highest points in a decade!

“The video of that Liberty class has been generating company at the farm and mare bookings for weeks now,” laughs Jacques Lapointe. “It’s a very nice side effect!”

In Search of an Arabian Sire ...

Hucks Connection V+/- ~ The Testimonials

Initially bred to just a few mares at Varian’s in 2003, Hucks Connection V+/-’s grown-up offspring have been making blue ribbon appearances in the show ring since 2008.

From HCV’s second foal crop Eros Americconnection (x Halstead’s American Tradition) was the first of these to win a championship. At a Class A show in May, 2008 he trotted off with the tri-color in HA Country English Pleasure Junior Horse. A month later, HC Boisterous (x Balquenette V) was Region 6 Champion Country English Pleasure Junior Horse. One of HCV’s best young show horses to date, HC Boisterous was the 2009 Region 9 Champion and Region 8 Reserve Champion in *both* the Country English Pleasure Amateur and the Junior Horse. At the 2010 Scottsdale Show, owner Dean Stankovic proudly teamed HC Boisterous to reserve champion honors in the fiercely competitive Country English Pleasure Amateur Championship.

“I bought HC Boisterous as a 2-year-old,” says Dean. “He’s easily the best horse I’ve ever owned and he’s great to be around. Over the last year, and especially at the 2010 Scottsdale show, he’s developed this cocky show horse attitude that is a blast. He just turns it on at the in-gate. His ears sharpen up and he has this energy and brilliance, all audience inspired, that I don’t see in our everyday works.”

Arabian horse trainers thoroughly enjoy working with HCV sons and daughters. It seems their attitudes and work ethic often mirror that of their sire, called “... the nicest horse there ever was to ride,” by his current trainer Vicki Humphrey.

“Every person riding a difficult Arabian should step up on a horse like Hucks Connection V just one time,” laughs Vicki. “He has an amazing disposition and is the perfect open and amateur horse combo. You ask him to try and he tries. You ask him to try harder and he just keeps on giving. He spoils you for other horses. He has a perfect work ethic and is a wonderful show horse, but I also think he is showing himself to be a great sire of Half-Arabians as well as purebreds. I’ve personally bred my best Saddlebred mare (an Only Man In Town daughter) to him. She’s had great foals by Baske Afire, Afire Bey V and Mamage. I can’t wait to see what she does with Hucks Connection V.”

Missouri trainer Liz Bentley has Bit Of Connection V (full brother to HC Boisterous) in her barn from HCV’s first foal crop. Purchased last year by Vicki McFerran and Bill Lynotte, Bit Of Connection V is showing in 2010 as an amateur horse with Vicki.

“I feel 100% safe on Bit of Connection,” says Vicki McFerran. “You can fluff him up and trot big and bring him right down to a relaxed, flat-footed walk. I am looking forward to qualifying him for Region 8 this spring and showing him off in my home region! Then, hopefully, it’s on to Nationals in the 55 & Over English Pleasure!”

National winning trainer Tish Kondas is currently riding the similarly bred 6-year-old Connected To Huck (x Infatuation LTD), a bay gelding who racked up four championships in five shows in English pleasure open and junior horse last summer.

Leading American English Pleasure trainer Joel Kiesner also has a good HCV horse in training – High Speed Connection - and was equally enthused about him.

“He’s a beautiful black-bay with a lot of the same traits and character as his sire,” says Joel. “A pleasant horse to work with, High Speed Connection is a good moving, square-off-all-four-corners horse. He’ll show this season in the country English pleasure junior horse and in 2011 with owner Candace Avery in country English amateur competition.”

In Search of an Arabian Sire ...
Hucks Connection V ~ The Foals

It’s a well known “secret” among Arabian horse owners, trainers and breeders that some note worthy Arabian show horses are not of the best temperament. This is sad and unfortunate, as the Arabian horse was originally bred to be the ultimate companion and family horse with a level of intelligence, patience, and sheer people-loving friendliness that has no equal among equines. A great Arabian disposition is often the key to training, and the right blend of trainability, talent and the will to win is a formula for the ultimate show horse. Perhaps the only thing better is the ultimate show horse able to produce these qualities down through future generations.

“We have two foal crops by Hucks Connection V on the ground here at the farm and 2010 will be our third and largest to date,” says Lisa. “There are wonderful youngsters in both crops, especially from the 2009 group. Among the yearlings are some special sons and daughters out of Afire Bey V, Mamage and *El Ghazi daughters, as well as Half-Arabians out of Saddlebred and Dutch Harness mares that are magnificent.”

“I have two great stories about the HCV foals,” says Lisa. “The first one is from my visit to Varian Arabians. We were out in the field meeting the babies. All of them were in one pasture, regardless of the sire. None of them were being handled at that time. They were very young and still with their mothers. When I asked Sheila how I would know which of them were Hucks Connection V babies she looked around, and seemed surprised when she said, ‘All of these that are surrounding us are “Connection” babies.’ They were so brave and curious and just so friendly! Now that we have our own HCV babies, I can confirm this story with my own. The other day when I was riding I noticed that the guys that work at our farm were out in the foal pasture. I asked my mother why they were leading all of the babies around the field and she started to laugh. They were not leading the babies anywhere ... the babies were just following them around!”

This is great for visitors who really enjoy the friendly HCV foals crowding around, nuzzling and interested. Diamond Hill Arabians, located just 20 minutes from the Charlotte, North Carolina airport, has been seeing more than its fair share of company, especially since the 2010 Scottsdale show appearance of Hucks Connection V. The highlight of Scottsdale week turned out to be HCV’s appearance and subsequent victory in the Liberty class, climaxing at the evening session on the final Saturday night.

“At Varian Arabian’s annual open houses one of the great moments was always when Sheila would turn HCV loose and let him prance and play for the crowd,” says Lisa. “We knew he already had a great Liberty routine worked out all on his own and we thought it would be great promotion for us to show it off at Scottsdale.”

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Not that people need a reminder to check out HCV. His breeder Sheila Varian still breeds to him, four years after he left California, and noted Arabian English performance breeder, Irwin Schimmel has a good mare due to foal in 2010. Breeders in South Africa have been breeding to Hucks Connection V for several years, claiming that his offspring are beautiful, trainable and perfect for their amateur-owners that want to train their own horses at home. That sort of horse is rare, as it has to be a perfect combination of talent, beauty, winning attitude, work ethic and trainability.

Brother, did they come to the right place.