

# GREIN Í ICELANDIC REVIEW

Dalur horse breeding farm is a tranquil paradise just outside the city limits in the heart of a peaceful, green lowland, lies Dalland, surrounded by trees and vegetation. Dalland is the beautiful residence of Gunnar B. Dungal and his wife Thordis Alda Sigurdardottir, who together established Dalur horse farm in 1978. Dalur is only a 15 minute drive from Reykjavik, and the stables lie across from a picturesque, trout-filled pond. The spotless stables are surrounded by over 300 hectares of land, making it the ideal breeding grounds. The couple's aim is to breed and rear a small number of only the finest of Icelandic horses, their slogan being, "quality before quantity". Their modest success has been outstanding, with nine first prize mares in their breeding group, medal winners in tournaments in Iceland and abroad, and last year Dalur born Ormur won the A class medal at the acclaimed landsmot National Tournament.

Horse breeding at Dalur was established in the early eighties. "We are not doing this only for commercial gain, but out of pure passion. We spend a great amount of time over each individual horse," explains Gunnar. Special emphasis is put on carefully selecting the stallions and mares to produce the best possible offspring. In spring, eight to ten foals are born and in winter they are taken into the stables where they become acquainted with humans. When they are a year old, they are taken to fields where they can roam wild with an open stable for shelter. After three years of freedom, the young horses are brought back to the Dalur stables, where they are broken in and trained. Hasty training is not in practice at Dalur; much time and effort goes into bringing out the best in each horse. Dalur never sells foals and only sells horses that have gone through their training programme.

'We are particular about who we sell the horses to,' says Gunnar. "We get to know the horses very well, and therefore, we want them in good hands.'

Dalur was in the finals for 'Horse Breeder of the Year' last year, where the judges declared, 'Although Dalland does not breed a large quantity of horses, it has produced extremely interesting individuals over the past years.' The current herd of foals at Dalur is a promising one. With their mothers all raised at the farm, their fathers count the famous Orri, Thorri and Nagli from Thufa, Kolfinnur from Kjarnholt and the renowned stallions from Kirkjubaer, south Iceland.

Dalur's location and its immaculate premises have resulted in the Icelandic authorities choosing Dalur to exhibit the Icelandic horse to foreign dignitaries. Among them are Queen Elizabeth 11th of England, King Juan Carlos and Queen Sophia of Spain and Italian president M. Scalfaro. The trainers at Dalur are happy to show visitors around. Prospective buyers will be readily assisted in selecting a horse and in preparing the documentation required for exporting this four footed Icelandic native.

AMB, "Icelandic Review".