



Stina and daughter Janette with the AZIZ Salukis at home.

AZIZ SALUKIS

A TRUE FAMILY AFFAIR

STINA COMMENCED IN SALUKIS some 25 years ago and her passion is as strong as the day she started in the breed. Her daughter Janette is the next generation, this mother, daughter team are true dog breeders having bred several generations. The kennel name AZIZ as earned a world wide reputation as a kennel of consistency and functional, show and working Salukis.

By Stephen Wheeler Assisted by Sanja Ekblad

Please think back and tell us the very first time that you encountered a saluki and do you recall who it was and what impact it had on you?

At the beginning of the 1960's, when I was still a little girl, I lived in Helsinki in a block of flats. I used to stand on the balcony to watch dogs passing by in the street with their owners. My most vivid memory from this time is two stunningly beautiful salukis that were frequently taken out for walks in

this area. I guess they must have had a very strong impact on me, since I decided that salukis were what I wanted to focus on.

Let's start with the early years in dogs. Did you come from a doggy family? We would like for you to share with us a little about your family, how you live and where you live?



Stina with her first dog in 1986.

My first dog (or rather my parents' dog) was a black male cocker spaniel called Timi. If I remember correctly, Hans Lehtinen, the famous all-rounder judge, had a cocker spaniel from the same litter. After this we had yet another black male cocker spaniel whose real name was Peritan Black Knacky who lived to the ripe old age of 15. We called him 'Näki' and he was an adorable little dog, the first one I truly connected with.

At the end of the 1970's when my older sisters had already moved out, my parents and I moved to the countryside to a beautiful little village called Venekoski 50 kilometers east of Jyväskylä. Apparently I was destined for a life in this area since I still live in a house located by the river in this village

with my husband Eko and daughter Janette. Our adult son Juuso lives in Jyväskylä with his own saluki Daxlore Baksheesh.

In 1979, after 'Näki' had died, we bought our first sight hound, a whippet from kennel Taikatytön. Since I had moved out and lived on my own, I decided that it was time to get a saluki...

In 1981 I finally got my first Saluki Goldman. Soon after this my oldest sister Anneli also bought a Saluki, Sfinksin Onerva, bred by Säde Hohteri who is a sight hound judge. Anneli later focused on bichon frisés and bred one litter. My other sister Pia had German Shepherds and bred some litters under the prefix Haus Casti. Nowadays Pia is totally into cats and successfully breeds cats under the prefix Choose Cattery.

My husband Eko and I used to have horses and I have bred one horse under the prefix Aziz many years ago. His name was Aziz Ahmed and he even won a race once!

What was it that attracted you to the saluki over other breeds and what made you decide to start breeding?

I was mainly fascinated with Salukis as they were so incredibly beautiful and attractive, so I never even considered any other breed when I was allowed to make my own choices. Soon after I had bought Goldman (bred by Tina Ekblad who is one of my closest friends and together with her adult daughter Sanja owns several Aziz Salukis) Tina advised me to buy a Saluki from kennel Aramika's. The sire of this litter was the famous BIS winner Kirman Khayal and the male puppy I chose was Azimut. He had a remarkable impact on my breeding and can be found in every pedigree of Aziz Salukis. From Azimut's first litter at Simo Ojajärvi's kennel I happened to get a really sound and well built tiny little bitch whose name was Maleke. She was so excellent in every way, in my opinion, represented the flawless Saluki, I wanted to retain her characteristics for the future. Thus, I started my career as a breeder.

What year did you breed your first litter? Tell us about the breeding and did this first litter produce well for you and has it had any impact on your dogs of today?

The year was 1988 and I chose to mate Maleke to Int CH Kirman Qhaddam, a very sound and beautiful Saluki, and the result was the beginning of kennel Aziz... at the time when the Aziz A litter was born I was pregnant with my first child Juuso. I remember it well since it was a very hot summer and I was sweating with my huge stomach trying to fit into something, mostly just wearing my husband's old T-shirts.

The A-litter was very even (4 champions out of 5). I continued my breeding with two of them: Ayande was the dam of the D and E litters. Ayande's son Divinus might even have had the greatest impact on my further breeding and he was very influential in many other Scandinavian kennels as well. Anjam was the dam of the I litter and now I might get a



Stina with her Salukis Fin CH Aziz Anjam, Fin, Swe CH Goldman, Fin CH Maleke, INT CH Aziz Cashmandaz & INT CH Aramika's Azim.



Stina with Aziz Anjam, BOB at Varkaus in 1991.

litter directly descended from her, since Aziz Vajahat who will hopefully produce my next litter, F2, has Anjam in her pedigree. Anjam is the great grandmother of Vajahat.

Please tell us a little about your early foundation, the dogs themselves, their breeding and where they came from?

I suppose the easiest way to give some information about my earliest salukis is to list them:

1. Goldman (Kirman Exotic/ Chanel) breeder Tina Ekblad
2. Aramika's Azimut (Kirman Khayal/ Kirman Aramika) breeder Monica Bäck
3. Maleke (Aramika's Azimut/ Omani Tamenna) breeder Simo Ojajärvi

I started my breeding with Maleke who produced the A, B,



Int CH Aziz Cashmandaz at the 1995 saluki Show in Finland.

C and F litters. Goldman was the sire of the C litter and has thus also had a strong impact on my breeding.

Have you imported any dogs to help with your breeding program? Please tell us your reasons for your selection of the dogs you imported.

Daxlore Baksheesh, whose dam is Aziz Odeion at Fernlark, was imported from Helen and David Graham. He has not been shown that much as he has the bad habit of chewing on his ear fringes and his ears thus look ridiculous. At a very young age, Baksheesh got two CCs in a row and now, in May 2009, he got his third CC and completed his CH title. He has not been used in my breeding yet but I might have plans for him in 2010 or 2011.

Instead of importing salukis, we have imported semen, among others from Int CH Khalils Dahabi Dahaqin (T litter) and some months ago we acquired semen from kennel Khiva's, from the USA. Now two litters are expected: Vajahat and Uma have been inseminated with the semen of Am CH Khiva's Hot Stuff.

Two of our bitches have also travelled to Sweden for mating: Lezzat was mated to Nord CH Khalils Faudawi Fiddi Farih (V litter) and Shalil was mated to Int CH Al-Shên Naar El Shaitaan (C2 litter). The results have been very beneficial indeed!

As a breeder you are aware of the value in quality breeding bitches. Is there one special bitch from your kennel that has proved her worth as a producer of consistent, quality offspring?

Quality bitches are naturally vital to any breeding! I suppose I could even say that this kennel is known for its quality bitches.



Stina with Aziz Anjam, BOB at Varkaus in 1991.



Stina with Fin, Swed Ch Goldman.



Int Ch Aramikas Azimut winning BOB at Skellefteå KC1985.

It is very difficult to choose just one, but if I have to mention just one then I guess Aziz Jalil should be mentioned (Q litter and S litter). She has so far produced eleven international champions (three in the Q litter and eight in the S litter) which is quite an achievement in just two litters since the total number of Aziz INT CH's is now 42. There are also other very famous champions in these two litters; four working champions and naturally some national champions as well. Jalil was top dam of the year in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2008 all four times beating the top sire of the year.

Of all the stud dogs that you have used over the years is there one that stands out from the rest that has proved to be a valuable influence to your breeding and tell us why?



Int Ch Aziz Jalil.

Again it is very difficult to mention just one. I will mention two: Jalil's brother Jadugar (M litter, O litter, P litter and U litter) and Divinus (F litter and Q litter). Both Jadugar and Divinus sired numerous international champions and national champions and Divinus sired working champions, too. Both of them have won sire of the year titles, Jadugar in 2001 and 2006 and Divinus in 1995, 1999, 2000 and 2002.



Int Ch Aziz Fazilat in Helsinki 1998.

How many litters have you bred to date? Which of your litters has been the most successful and please tell us about the breeding and the results and success of this litter?

I have bred 30 litters and quite a number of them have been very successful. If winning the title International Champion is a criterion I guess the S litter could be the one. There were 10 of them. One of them (Samavi, exported to Germany) was run over by a car at a very young age. Before this she won best bitch at the Saluki specialty from 70 bitches. The remaining nine include eight international champions and one national champion with two CACIBs.

Health is always a matter of concern when breeding dogs. Do you test for anything specific with your dogs? Have you encountered any major or minor problems in the breed and do you think that most breeders have an open mind when it comes to health and health testing?

Health has always been very important to me. Generally speaking salukis are quite healthy but it must be remembered that there are problems with autoimmune diseases in the breed. Unfortunately it is not yet possible to test for autoimmune problems but I hope that the relatively new genetic diversity test (genetic studies for dogs by Dr Hannes Lohi) will prove to be more and more helpful in the future. I absolutely intend to use this possibility at some point but I still need more information about this new way of testing.



Int Ch Jalil's full litter brother Jadugar.

I guess I can say that we have been lucky: out of 30 litters one Aziz Saluki has died of AIHA from my second litter born in 1990. This was a litter I chose not to breed from myself and I must say that I find it really surprising that we can see this dog in so many pedigrees despite the fact that I have openly mentioned his disease repeatedly! In addition, one Aziz Saluki has been diagnosed with thrombocytopenia. This dog is, however, still alive and in relatively good condi-



Top producer Int Ch Aziz Jalil with her daughter, Int Ch Aziz Shalil.

tion. I suppose these two diseases are the most widely spread autoimmune problems in salukis nowadays. Thus, when I plan cross out breeding I have a strategy to ask straight out about the occurrence of autoimmune diseases and other problems such as e.g. heart diseases in the lines I am planning to use. I have noticed that some breeders for one reason or another simply write no reply... In other cases the breeders have been very open and told me everything about the problems in their lines. They are the ones I have then consulted for cross out breeding. Even though most breeders are honestly doing everything possible to avoid diseases, we still have to remember that it is a utopian thought that we could have a breed without any health problems, salukis must also eventually die at some point. Nevertheless, I truly hope that all kinds of newly developed genetic testing will provide us with the necessary tools to avoid as many hereditary diseases as possible in the future.

Of all the dogs that you have bred is there one dog that stands out from the others and please explain why?

I prefer to skip this question since there have been so many favorites.

You have exported a few dogs over the years, tell us about some of your most successful or important exports?

Over the years I have exported several puppies to both European countries and to the USA. Many are champions but if I mention only a few they could be INT CH Mahtab at kennel Al Khabara in Estonia. This absolutely stunning bitch has had a great career in many countries and despite her age (11 in January 2009) she is still in excellent condition. Then there is of course the legendary Qesas at Daxlore who has won both BOS and BOB at Crufts. Moreover Biaban (from B2 litter) at kennel Fan-Fell in Hungary just completed her INT CH title and she turned two in February 2009.



Export Multi Ch Aziz Mahtab at 10 years of age.

two CACIB:s and five CC:s. Didar has enormous potential so it is not surprising that a number of people have shown interest in her and wanted to have her... but of course our lovely 'Didi' is not for sale.

All six of them live in the house with us, sleeping on the best beds and sofas! We have a big garden surrounded by a fence, so they get all the exercise they need running around freely in our garden. Since I work from home, I am here to take care of them all the time and have the opportunity to enjoy their company every day.

We would be interested to hear how and what you feed your dogs?

There are many feeding trends nowadays but I am old-fashioned and maybe a bit lazy too, so I rely on top quality dog food and there have been absolutely no complaints. Of course our dear salukis get special treats such as meatballs and cheese once in a while.

How many dogs do you currently have? How your dogs are housed and please tell us your day to day routine with the dogs?

At the moment we have one male, INT CH Ushnisha owned by Janette and then the litter mates CH Namayande and INT CH Nehayat, who turned 10 in April. Nehayat successfully returned to the show ring a few weeks ago after many years at home. Then we have 9-year-old INT CH Omani who has also recently returned to the show rings with excellent BB placements. Then the younger ones: INT CH Xanom, one of the most successful Aziz Salukis ever. She was BIS-4 a few days ago. Even though Xanom is only four years old, she has been the most winning Saluki bitch in Finland for three successive years. The youngest one is Didar whose career is just beginning, despite this she has been BOB twice, she has

How often do you attend shows? Please tell us some of your most memorable wins?

We attend shows regularly about 20-30 shows per year, since it is a hobby for the whole family and we all enjoy going to shows together when possible. There have been many memorable wins including many of our dogs. Janette thinks that the most memorable win from recent years is Xanom's BIS-2 placement at Jyvaskyla International Show (more than 5000 entries) in 2006. Xanom had just turned two and had gained her CH title a couple of weeks before this. In this context, I also want to mention the year 2005 when kennel Aziz won the Finnish Kennel Club's 'Breeder of the Year' award, which of course is a competition including all breeds.



Aziz Group from Left to right, Stina's daughter Janette with INT CH Zenedegi, Tina's daughter Sanja Ekblad with INT CH Umar. Tina Ekblad with INT CH Shalil and Stina with INT CH Xanom.

What are your views on the quality of judges? Do you think that most have a good understanding of the breed?

Mostly judges do a very good job. Even all-rounder frequently seems to have a fairly good understanding of the breed. However, I would really appreciate it if they paid more attention to the special details of the breed such as dark eyes, long toes, not straight pasterns etc.

Looking ahead, what are your future plans as a breeder?

Kennel Aziz is to a great extent a family project. It will be most rewarding to see in what directions Janette will steer the kennel. She is now 17 and an absolutely fantastic handler. I am so much looking forward to handing over more and more responsibility to her also with the breeding plans.

Furthermore, I think that active and cooperative owners of Aziz Salukis are a very important asset to the kennel. Therefore I wish to express my gratitude to all the owners of Aziz Salukis who have done a great deal to contribute to our success at both shows and races.

Please mention a few of the best salukis you have seen over the years and tell us what is was about them that impressed you?

I think I might have mentioned this saluki in an earlier interview. I am referring to Bel S'mbran Promise of Atallah. For one reason or another the image of this truly beautiful and elegant saluki sticks in my mind. I have only seen him on video and yet he made a lasting impression on me.

And finally, the last question. If you could have changed just one thing you have done in past years what would it be and why would you change it?

We tried to collect semen from Divinus when he was old but unfortunately he was too old and the quality of the semen was not good enough for deep freezing. This should have been done much earlier. What a pity!



Janette with Aziz Ejare as a puppy.



Aziz babies from the Z litter.



The Aziz I litter, Stina's horses in the background.



Janette winning BOS with Int Ch Aziz Zendegi and Stina winning BOB with Int Ch Aziz Xanom. Judge Per Iverson at Kuopio Int Show 2008.



**Int Multi CH Aziz Shalil.
Photo by Pasi Soininen**

AZIZ SALUKIS



Int CH Aziz Jalil

TOP Dam of the Year 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008
dam of 2 litters: 11 Int CHs, 17 CHs, 4 work. CHs
owned by Tina Ekblad



Int CH Aziz Jadugar

TOP Sire of the Year 2001, 2006
sire of 8 litters: 10 Int CHs, 19 CHs
owned by Aziz Salukis



Int CH Aziz Fazilat

Divinus's daughter
grandmother & great-grandmother
of almost all the present-day Aziz achievers
owned by Aziz Salukis



Int CH Aziz Divinus

TOP Sire of the Year 1995, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2005
sire of 6 litters: 6 Int CHs, 20 CHs, 6 work. CHs
owned by Aziz Salukis

The majority of
modern-day
Aziz Salukis are
descended from
these TOP producers.

The past

ed by sanja & pas

KENNEL AZIZ - SINCE 1988
TOP SALUKI BREEDER IN FINLAND

BREEDER OF THE YEAR
2000 2001 2002 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008



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