

“Changing Breeds – We’re ALL Getting Older”

Getting out to my first local dog show this year in January there were several interesting conversations that I have been reflecting on.

A long time mentor, friend and professional all breed handler mentioned that as he has gotten older it is harder to show the large breed dogs and do all that running in the show ring. And that he is going to focus his client base on dogs that are small enough for him to be able to pick up and carry around at ringside. There comes a time when our screaming joints control the decisions we make about our passion in life. So we make “concessions” so we can still stay competitive.

Other show people, breeder/owners of larger breeds are tapering off and not adding young dogs to their large breed family, content to let their seniors live out their retirement on the couch, as they convert to smaller breeds that do not require as much physical stamina from their human handlers. Let’s face it, everything is smaller, from crate size to waste management. Our Miniature Pinschers are looking very attractive as a “change over” breed due to their low maintenance and portability. But remember, they are “attitude” in a small package.

I have always only shown Miniature Pinschers, and my body screams louder than the fans at a European Soccer Match. What is going to be left for me to do? Maybe I could show Hamsters. How fast could they possibly move in the ring?

All kidding aside, I am floored by conversations I have had with “show” people of other breeds who purchased a Miniature Pinscher as their toy breed of choice, and they did NOT take the time to look at our Breed Standard! Two people ended up with “show” puppies that had significant white on their chests. Now they call me “after” the fact and want to digress about their purchase. I told them both the same thing. You should have called me BEFORE you made your purchase. That is why ALL breed clubs have official websites!

It is a 50/50 blame on the both parties equally. On the buyer who did not take the time to research their new breed of choice before they made their purchase, and on the seller/breeder who is not standing behind the dog that they sold as “show” quality. As this person exited the ring with her dog in her arms after not getting a placement, she wanted to know what we thought about her new show prospect. We all commented on what pretty head she had, and beautiful ear crop, such a pretty girl. Until the owner moved her hand away from the dog’s chest and there it was. A long solid bright white stripe on the chest and we all stopped talking and looked at each other, taking a step back from that dreaded white as if it were something contagious and our dogs could catch it. Sad for this woman who paid a chunk of money for her “show” puppy.

Want a Miniature Pinscher? Do your homework first. Not just on the breed specifics, but on any potential person who is selling you a dog. Shame on you if you get all dewy eyed because someone waved a bunch of win ribbons in your face. Just because someone is blowing their own horn, look around to see if there is anyone else in “their” band. The highest compliment a breeder can get is a referral of a potential show home by one of their “peers”.

I questioned a trusted friend in another toy breed about why she sold the best puppy in that litter to a person who had never shown a dog and was what we call a “newbie” to shows. She replied that “it was her responsibility as a breeder to make sure that a show home got show quality”. It is still her breeding, her kennel name on the dog, her name listed as the breeder. That little gal finished quickly and her owner looks forward continued showing in the ring and having her name listed as: Breeder/Owner Handler. While responsible breeders support the integrity of their breed, this drives home even deeper that we ALL need to encourage, support and mentor our Junior Handlers, and “newbies” to the show ring, as they are the future of our sport.

I cannot let this column end without congratulating and acknowledging the recent success of our Westminster 2009 Miniature Pinscher Best of Breed Winner: Ch Kimro’s Soldier Boy “Sarge”. A red male shown by: Kimberly Pastella Calvacca. **Breeder:** Kim & Anthony Calvacca & R Greenslade & H Schwell. **Owner:** Linda Stark & Richard J Stark & Kimberly Pastella Calvacca. Congratulations on your consistent successes!!

Good luck to everyone at the Miniature Pinscher National Specialty in May 2009 in Massachusetts!!

For all the information you need on Miniature Pinschers visit the MPCA web site at: www.minpin.org. Faith K. Gordon, 15 Elkhart St., Lackawanna, NY 14218 maudminpin@aol.com