

Reflections - The Ann Dutton (Sanbrook) Legacy

by Armando Angelbello (As published in the Pinscher Patter, Sept 2005)

We've lost another one of the greats in the Breed. Ann Dutton passed away on May 26, 2005, but her Sanbrook legacy will live on for many min pin generations. The names Ann Dutton and Sanbrook are interchangeable to describe one and the same, that is, one of the most successful breeders of Miniature Pinschers of our time. Her contributions to the Miniature Pinscher for 45 years were significant. Her dedication, knowledge and obsession were unsurpassed. The honors bestowed upon Ann and her Sanbrook dogs are legendary, with respect and admiration being on top of the list, even from those that did not click with her strong persona. In pursuit of perfection, she created a line, that Sanbrook look, which was highly recognized as quality throughout the min pin world and beyond. At the beginning of my showing adventures with Sanbrook dogs, I was surprised at how many judges would identify the dogs as being from the Sanbrook line. What a compliment to Ann's vision! That's not to imply she achieved perfection. Who has? She would have been the first to say that.

Sanbrook was founded in the latter part of the 1950's. Ann's primary mentor in min pins was Maisie Booher-Summers (Bel-Roc), whom Ann credited for bringing elegance to the Breed, and therefore contributing to the establishment of successful kennels for Sanbrook, Rebel-Roc, BoMar, Jay Mac, among many others. Maisie's legendary b/r dog Ch. Bel-Roc's Dobe Von Enztal played a prominent role with his prepotency for elegance. I recall Ann mentioning that when she saw Dobe's daughter "Sugar" (Ch. Bel-Roc's Sugar V Enztal), it was the beginning of her evolutionary vision of what a min pin should look like. She also recognized John McNamara (Jay-Mac) for his dedication to elegance and refinement, and admired Ch. Jay-Mac's Impossible Dream as an outstanding show girl.

Ann bred or co-bred over 200 Champions and she usually kept no more than four active breeding bitches at one time. Because she was foremost a breeder, she took great pride and joy in selling good stock to new owners who would go on to exhibit the dogs to their championships and beyond. Whenever she kept any for herself, she never lacked offers from handlers to show her dogs. See, one thing she was not good at was handling (she was the first to admit it). So, she was astute enough to be the creator of beautiful dogs and turn them over to others who could do them justice in the ring. When she felt that she needed the influence of a particular well-bred stud dog, regardless of who owned it, she bred to the dog. When she saw a dog that moved her, she would acknowledge it, regardless of who bred or owned it, and if it was something she wanted, she would go after it. Case in point was Ch. Jay-Mac's Silk Stockings. Ann saw "Silky" as a puppy and wanted to buy her but she was not available. Later on, her owner Gil Groover who lived in Florida was getting out of dogs and offered "Silky" for sale on the condition of a packaged deal of his entire stock. Ann partnered with Carol Garrison and bought the kennel, primarily on account of "Silky". The rest is history, as "Silky" became not only the Top Producing Min Pin dam, but the Top Producing Toy dam of all time with 25

champions.

One only needs to review the archives and MPCA award records to get a flavor for the mark Ann has left, as breeder, co-breeder, owner, or co-owner. Numerous top producing sires, among them Ch. Carlee Nubby Silk and Ch. Sandbrook Silk Electric, the Top 2 MPCA Hall of Fame Sires, plus Ch. Sandbrook Impossible Scheme, Ch. Sanbrook Smooth Operator, ch. Sanbrook Twiest & Shout and others, including her foundation do Ch. Mudhen Acres Red Snapper. Many top producing dams, including the TOP MPCA HOF Dam, Ch. Jay-Mac's Silk Stockings already mentioned, plus Sanbrook Silk All Over, Ch. Sanbrook Stage Struck, Ch. Sanbrook Wrapped In Silk, Ch. Sanbrook Fantasy In Silk, ch. Sanbrook Swept Away, Sanbrook Sultana, and her favorite bitch "Layla" - ch. Shajawn American Dream, which Ann once described in her own words as "premier brood, stunning show dog and beloved companion... a swan" (dam of 3 National Specialty Winners). In competition, there were numerous Sanbrook top winners, too many to name, that included many winners of National Specialties, BIS, Westminster, Local Specialties, Groups and so on. On the personal recognition front, Ann has been the recipient of Breeder of the Year award multiple times, as well as honored with Gaines and Dog World awards.

Ann was very smart, outspoken and articulate. She had the gift of a photographic memory about dogs, pedigrees and people. In line with the spirit of a good min pin, whenever she entered a room (or conversation), she never went unnoticed. When she talked about dogs, you could actually get a visual picture from her words, and she certainly didn't mince words on her likes and dislikes. This was at times not easy for the very sensitive types. It was dangerous sometimes to be sitting ringside next to Ann at a National! She always had a grand time at the Nationals with her zest for life, sharing time with friends and the love of the miniature pinscher.

As is the case with most successful breeders in the top echelon, there's a lot to learn from them if one really listens, even on points of disagreement. Among those seeking opinions or advice, Ann had a knack for identifying the real ones and the phonies, and unfortunately there were fewer of the latter in her opinion. The real ones were open to listen, debate and learn; and the phonies only sought to confirm their own opinions or agenda. Although her vocation was psychology, her avocation was animal husbandry for the greater part of her life, and her focus was family life, raising her beloved son Chris, loving grandson Alex, and improving the miniature pinscher.

So, what were some of Ann's principles and views on Min Pins, breeding and showing?

She believed passionately that the breed was not one dimensional and therefore, focusing on one trait above the overall dog would be detrimental to the breed. She wanted breed type and sound typical movement. Any attempt at breaking down these components to assign arbitrary degrees of importance to one trait over the other was not acceptable in her book. The total dog was "it".

The Dam is the backbone and the key to a breeding program. If you don't have a well-bred beautiful bitch, you have nothing for foundation stock. Ann loved the "swan", elegant bitch type. Breed to a well-bred dog, whether linebreeding or doing an outcross, although she mostly line-bred. Never breed to a stud dog with a mist-mash for a pedigree, no matter how beautiful the dog is. You can admire a good specimen with questionable ancestry but don't breed to it. You don't need large numbers to produce quality. Don't jump around in your breeding program if you're trying to create a consistent line and look. Don't keep too many males or you'll feel obligated to breed to them, and you should be breeding to the most complimentary dog in the country for your bitch. Producers produce, and good mothers make good mothers. She was not an avid supporter of frozen semen to bring back long gone dogs, as that would imply the breed was not progressing. She believed in making good specimens available for breeding for the betterment of the breed. Never breed for color (in terms of reds and b/r's, as she was never interested in chocolate/rust or any other exotic color). If you breed long enough and often enough, you're bound to run across anomalies and heartaches. So when it happens, be smart about eliminating it and don't be quick to blame one dog or the other, as all animals carry lethal genes that fortunately manifest themselves rarely. Give serious newcomers to the breed a chance and don't drown them with strings attached. Stay away from overnight experts! When advertising, less is more, and don't publish a bad picture! Mature looking puppies at six month old will likely look like toads at one year old. Unfortunately, too often many a promising puppy breaks down young if not well put together. Not every dog worthy of a championship is worthy of breeding. Ann's must-haves included a flawless topline, well angulated front and rear, ground covering, reach of neck, dark pigment, chiseled head and pleasing expression. Not acceptable were any flaw in topline; bad shoulder angulation; long, weak pasterns; long, thin stifles; and coarse, cloddy appearance.

There's so much more to say about Ann Dutton, the accomplished dog person, but she would say "less is more", and she probably would not approve of this attention. She did not seek attention or approval and always said she didn't need it. Several times she was asked to be interviewed for dog publications and she typically declined.

When I set out to acquire my first show dog back in 1986, several established breeders would not give a newcomer the time of day. Then one fine day I hastily contacted Ann and my search was over. I will forever be grateful to Ann for recognizing the serious intentions of a newcomer and entrusting me with quite a dog for my first show quality min pin, which went on to become a prominent winner and producer. There have been many newcomers before and after me that share this gratitude, as well as many others who appreciate and honor Ann's contributions to the Breed, her mentoring and friendship. May she rest in peace, surrounded by her two and four legged loved ones. Cheers to you Ann!

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