Breeder Conversations

with Mary-Frances Makichen

In each issue I'll ask breeders one question about anything connected to the world of Cavaliers. Each of us as breeders has a unique perspective on that world. There are no right or wrong answers — just the delight of sharing information and finding out how we're all alike and different.

What preparation do you feel goes into getting a dog/bitch ready for the show ring?

Heidi Mohn
Covington Cavaliers

The day before a show I bathe my dog, put on a mesh drying coat, and crate dry it as I do for each bath. I might fluff the fringes with a blow dryer the day of the show. That's it for the weekend — it's that simple!

Yet “show condition” is not a step-by-step process, it's a way of life, beginning from the inside out.

Karin Ostmann
Sheeba Cavaliers

I know that some people think getting a dog ready for the show ring is all about grooming but grooming is a very small part of it. I believe the most important preparation for the show ring is a consistent conditioning program. Cavaliers need to be physically and mentally prepared for the show ring.

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They need some regular road work and exercise to stay in excellent physical shape. Another aspect of physical conditioning is how healthy their coats look. Coat health is a direct reflection of the nutrition a dog receives. It's important to monitor how a dog's coat looks and to provide good nutrition, vitamins, and supplements.

Lastly, Cavaliers need to be mentally prepared to be show dogs. They need time to figure out what they're expected to do in the show ring. It's good for them to feel like they have a job to do and to learn how to do it well. The most important thing is for them to have fun at the show. I think when you put all these together you have a dog that is ready to win.

Lamont Yoder
Woftam Cavaliers

What does it take to make a STAR in the show ring? Socialization, Training, Adequate nutrition, and Regular exercise.

S = Socialization. There is always good debate among breeders as to whether genetics or socialization creates the fearless temperament we love in the breed. Certainly an adequate balance of both is imperative.

T = Training. Find training classes in your area or for fun make your own with breeders of other breeds. Whatever your method, have your adult Cavalier happy and ready to go in the ring - wagging, fearless, willing to stand naturally and free bait without being hard stacked by a kneeling handler.

A = Adequate Nutrition. This is probably one of the most important aspects of preparation for the show ring, and everyone seems to have their own formula for success. We feed Royal Canine's "Natural Blend," obtain our own meat source as well as fresh produce and create our own special mix for our dogs. We also feed Dr. Kruger's...
Editors Note: When we received the new insert with our AKC registration certificate we wanted to find out how this great, educational handout came about. Stephanie was kind enough to share the history of this project with all of us.

I wrote the AKC registration insert for Boxers so it seemed natural to volunteer to do it for Cavaliers. The ACKCSC Board agreed, so I completed the project with the Board’s approval and input. Because the AKC reminds us that the majority of Cavalier owners are not exhibitors or breeders, the board members and I tried to think of the most important things that the first time pet buyer would want to know about a Cavalier. At the same time we thought it important to strike a balance so there would be interesting content for those who were already familiar with the breed. The illustrations were done by the talented Chris Quinn—who did such a lovely job. The AKC finished up the actual lay-out for us in the summer of 2003 and it went to press shortly thereafter. I think kudos go to our Parent Club for taking such positive steps and cooperating with AKC to help to defray the costs of printing.

It was a most enjoyable project, and I am very gratified that it seems to have been well received. I understand that it has already been copied and distributed at pet expos and breed seminars (with ACKCSC permission) and hope to see it shared and enjoyed by many.

AKC Ace Award
AKC is once again soliciting nominations for Awards of Canine Excellence. “This program shines the spotlight on deserving canines in the categories of Law Enforcement, Search and Rescue, Therapy, Service, and Exemplary Companion Dogs.”

The recipient in each category wins $1000 and a sterling silver medallion. Awards to be presented at the AKC/Eukanuba Invitational in Tampa, FL.

Anyone can nominate a dog, including the owner(s). All submissions must include:

1. An original, non-returnable photo of the dog. Hi-resolution electronic photos are permissible but not scans, 300 dpi and at least 5x7”.
2. A 500 word description of how the dog has demonstrated excellence.
3. Dog’s call name, AKC reg. name if applicable, breed, age, gender.
4. Owner’s or nominator’s name and contact info, incl. e-mail if available.

Application deadline is June 30, 2004.
Send to:
Ronald N. Rella:
ACE Awards 2004
American Kennel Club
260 Madison Ave., 4th Floor
New York, NY 10016
E-mail submissions: ACEAwards2004@akc.org
Free to cross-post or copy.
Submitted by Stephanie Abraham

Breeder Conversations Continued

Show Formula supplement and we love it. Show dogs should be in proper weight with a rib cage and loin that can be seen/felt and not a sausage body that rolls when they gait.

R = Regular Exercise. Our Cavaliers enjoy a daily run in the yard, barking and running after bunnies. You don’t have to road work your Cavalier, but if your yard is not adequate in size or your dogs are always in a run (I don’t care how big the run is), don’t act surprised when someone tells you their topline rolled when they gaited around the ring. Good muscle tone is important.

With a bit of common sense, the ability to use objectivity in evaluating your own dogs, balancing the above four topics of preparation while keeping the breed standard in mind will create tomorrow’s STAR!