

Meet.....

Owner Handler

Michele Neff

Castle Creek Great Danes



1) How did you get started?

I will start this by saying I had never once thought about showing dogs until the purchase of my first Great

Dane, Isabella. I have wanted a Great Dane since childhood, but my parents did not think a Dane was a practical dog. About 12 years ago my Mother set in motion a search to find a Dane puppy for me. I had always wanted a black Dane and to my surprise there was a local breeder who happened to have a black puppy bitch. We visited the breeder but she was not sure she was willing to sell her. A few days later she called us back and said she would consider selling her to me on a co-ownership, but only if I would be willing to show her. I had to give that offer some serious thought only because I knew nothing about dog shows and I truly had no interest in showing dogs. A week later I called her back and purchased the puppy. I was bitten by the show bug the first time I walked in the ring. It opened up my world to so many things, and so many wonderful people are now in my life because of it.

2) What has been your most valuable lesson?

With my second Dane Keno, I was at a specialty show and still very new at handling. While in the ring waiting for my turn there was a lady sitting ring side that called out to me and said, “Do not ever stop showing him, keep him stacked and always present him. You never know when the judge is going to be looking.” We took RWD that day. After the show I walked over to Claire Burke (who was Keno’s breeder) and told her about the advice that the nice lady ringside gave me. Claire chuckled and said, “You don’t know who that is?” Of course I had no clue being a newbie. Claire informed me that it was Louise Van Alstyne, and to this day I am very thankful for her advice that she gave me that day and so many other times since. So I suppose in response to the question there are two valuable lessons here. Always present your dog to his best while in the ring, you never know whose watching and listen to others who are willing to offer their help and advice.

3) What tip could you pass on to others starting out wanting to owner handle?

I suppose my answer to this question would go back to the previous response. Always be willing to listen to the advice of others who have the experience. Go to the group ring and watch the top handlers. Do your homework and start out with the best dog possible. Last but not least “Have fun.”