

Meet . . .

Owner Handler

**Robin Blackburn**

YamRB Great Danes

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**1) Number of years showing dogs.**

14 years.

**2) Your kennel name and how you got it.**

YamRB Great Danes. It's my name, Yam – My middle name, May backwards, R – Robin B - Blackburn

**3) Where you live.**

Paso Robles, California.

**4) Where do you travel to show?**

Mostly southern California, some Northern California.

**5) How many shows do you attend in a year?**

Right now about 1-2 a month.

**6) Have you ever hired and/or used professional handlers and for what purpose?**

I haven't, but the breeder of one of my dogs asked me to let her hire a pro a couple times. The breeder felt someone else could get more out of the dog, but didn't!

**7) What made you decide to owner-handle your Great Danes?**

I just always wanted to do it myself! I couldn't see paying someone else to do what I wanted to do! I can't stand sitting ringside watching; I want to be in the ring showing!

**8) What are the greatest advantages of owner-handling your dogs?**

I know my dogs better than, someone else's dog. I know what to expect out of them.

**9) What are the biggest challenges of owner-handling your dogs?**

We both get too comfortable, and I give in easier to them than someone else's dog.

**10) What do owner-handlers need to consider if they want to be competitive in the ring?**

Always dress as professional as possible, watch the pro's in Groups, even watch Junior Handlers. You can learn a lot by just watching and apply what you see

**11) Do you feel your dog has ever been over-looked in the ring by the judge because you are an owner-handler and if yes please describe.**

Oh, yes! Sometimes I know I just didn't present my dog to it's potential. Then there are those judges that will only put up professional handlers! I've been in multiple day shows where owners are handling their own dogs most days, then comes the judge that puts up handlers only, and all these handlers show up in the ring that day! Then I know it's not my handling or my dog!!!

**12) Do you feel there is any stigma against owner-handlers in Great Danes and if yes please explain.**

Yes and No! Depends on the judge, some judges like owner-handlers, others want pro handlers only! AND, there aren't very many owner-handle in Danes. We DO have a lot of well-know, long time professional handlers.

**13) What tips would you give a new owner-handler to help them step up their game?** First of all, NEVER think you know it all! The day you think you know it all, is the day you lose!!! Be willing to listen to criticism and apply what you were told! It really isn't personal; someone really is trying to help you!!! Dress like a professional handler, stay late and watch Groups, apply what you see to your own dogs, and practice, practice, practice!!!

**14) What is the most valuable advice you ever received about handling your own dogs from a professional handler?** Gotta say that Jan Brungard taught me to stand tall and to really show off your dog! Sure helped me!

**15) What is the most helpful technique you ever learned just by watching professional handlers?** Make it fun for the dog! Not sure I have that one down yet, but each dog is different. It's gotta be fun for them, or they'll hate it!

**16) What are some common mistakes you see owner-handlers committing in the ring?** Thinking they are moving the dog at the right speed! I just made that mistake myself with a newer dog at the last show I was at.

**17) What have been some of your show ring successes as an owner-handler?** Group Wins!

**18) What are some of the most rewarding things about owner-handling for you?** Just being able to win myself. Someone else doing it for me is not rewarding, even if I have an outstanding dog!

**19) Most professional handlers began as owner-handlers. What keeps you from taking that same route?** I wouldn't mind handling other dogs, I just don't go out there and promote myself.

**20) Who is your favorite judge and why?** Not sure? I haven't found that favorite!

**21) Bonus Question! (Please answer!) If the mockumentary movie "Best in Show" made a sequel with you as one of the characters, what famous actor/actress would play YOU?** Jodie Foster.