Am. GCHS CAN MBISS Laurado's Dragonfly

A Chat With
Katie Edwards, Laurado Great Danes

I have been "in," Great Danes since the mid-60's when at age 12 I started sneaking out of my grandparent's house at night to go across the road to the original Laurado Kennels. It was owned by Hazel Mage in Redmond, Washington who had it since the '50's. I ended up living at the kennel off and on much of my teen years and, since I was already producing champions 10 years before we lost Hazel to cancer, both she and the AKC felt I could own and continue the kennel name. So now here we are, over 50 years later, retired, and back in the State of Washington, still "doing," Danes. Due to my age I have taken on a few Dane fancier friends because sometimes "It takes a village," to get breeding, whelping, distribution of pups, training, and health testing done. Thus you will see Barb Breuer's kennel name "Sobeit," added to Laurado on litters the last several years. We at Laurado and Laurado/Sobeit have never considered this a business, we just enjoy the challenge of producing the best Dane we can and improving the breed as we go.

Over the last 50 years the Laurado breeding program has been purposely kept small as life gave us 3 kids (all junior handlers) and took us to Alaska for 24 years. Dog shows were often used as weekend family outings. Averaging less than one litter per year we have produced about 40 American champions with minimal showing, many also with Canadian championships. The vast majority were owner handled. These include BIS, MBISS, therapy dogs and several that were in the top Twenty. We have at least 9 or 10 consecutive generations of champions.

The days of madly driving a bitch in heat hundreds of miles to facilitate a breeding are gone, thank heavens, as social media has put breeders in touch with each other at the touch of a button. It is now so much easier to "see what else is out there" far from home. Thank you kind people for live streaming shows. Shipping semen coast to coast and even around the world has become common resulting in expanding and improving choices in breeding. More choices increases the chance of seeing those special pups show up in the whelping box. Since Danes pups grow faster than just about any breed, no one can guarantee what a grown Dane will eventually look like but at 6-8 weeks old you should be able to get an idea of angulation, topline and other basic structure early on.

A Dane is not inexpensive to buy, maintain, breed, or show. It takes real commitment to show, and a lot of expense to campaign a dog. Helping make this possible are dedicated pup owners like Bill Boomer, who is showing the current Top Twenty MBISS Am GCHG Can CH Laurado's 'N Sobeit's Warship On The Horizon. "Zak," is one of those pups that caught your eye in the whelping box. Handlers have a valuable place in the dog show world and Zak's handler Christina Ulberg can be credited for taking 190 pounds of dog who just wanted to play and make him into a show dog.

Is the Dane breed in good condition? Yes and no. In all of dogdom there are only two true "giant," breeds - Irish Wolfhounds and Great Danes. One dealt with wolves and the other with wild boar - two of the toughest and vicious adversaries on earth. To do their job Danes had to be very large, confident, and be able to run down and take on prey that would fight back. Judges are often being mentored that Danes no longer need the previous size and functionality and will reward them if they can show like Dobermans. They are not Dobermans and it is a fallacy that a large Dane cannot move. They need to be judged for proper breed type but with consideration for what they were originally bred for. When upcoming judges too often see our winners lacking size and bone (especially in bitches), straight fronts, steep croups, weak backs and rears and occasionally sketchy temperaments, they may think it is the norm for the breed. As one mentor recently said: "Judges are afraid to withhold ribbons. It doesn't

get you invited back!" Though color is the last thing we look at overall, there is still some confusion over what variations are acceptable, especially after the merle was accepted into the ring.

The Sport of Dog Showing has gone from bigger shows (but less of them), to many shows that tend to be smaller. I remember when show entries were $6 per dog and Herding and Working Groups were combined. Specialty shows often could be 100 entries and never had a repeat judge. Rising expenses are probably the biggest challenge to keeping people in the sport today. However, the AKC has made advances in giving juniors and owner handlers their own categories to encourage continuation in the sport. More exhibitors place with "Selects," and can build championships from "Grand" to "Platinum." Young puppies get extra recognition. Years ago there was pretty much just conformation and obedience. Now Agility, Fast Cat, Dock Diving, Trick Dog, Barn Hunt and a myriad of other activities add other interests and bring new people in that just want to have fun with their dog. The dogs love it and so do the newcomers. Perhaps there is a future for the dog sports after all.

2004 AM/CAN Ch.
Laurado's Hi Mynt'nance Woman ROM

AM GCHG CAN CH
Laurado's 'N Sobeit's Warship On The Horizon

2017 AM. BIS CAN. GCHB. CAN
Laurado's Rhinestone Cowgirl At Sobeit

AM CH CAN GCH
Laurado's 'N Sobeit's Release The Kraken

BISS AM GCHB CAN GCHS BIS MBISS Laurado's More Cowbell At Sobeit

2022 AM. CAN CH. Laurado's Melody Of A Distant Drum