

German Retriever Club Show 2005

I have just returned from a very exciting trip, which was also a family adventure. I was accompanied by my husband, Paul and seven week old son, Robert driving from the UK to Germany via Switzerland. You may ask why drive? The reason was simple I felt happier travelling by road with my son, than flying! Furthermore the excess baggage would be enormous for all those baby things one needs - a bit different to travelling with a seven week old puppy, which I have done on many occasions including taking them in the cabin of the plane with me! Why via Switzerland? Well Paul wanted to attend a radio rally at Lake Constance and I needed a helper for Robert whilst in Germany. Consequently friend Katrina was the "Swiss Aunty" for Robert and chauffeur for us both!

A year ago when I accepted the appointment to judge the Flatcoated Retrievers for the Southern Group of the German Retriever Club I did not realize that I would be taking a "trainee judge" in the shape of my son! I think the organizer of the show, Dorothea Bohmer, was very apprehensive when I sent an email in April and said that I would hopefully be accompanied by a baby that was already a week late on coming into this world!!! Fortunately, Dorothea had met me three years previously when I judged at their Show and Work weekend, which was a very enjoyable trip as well.

Our journey down to Switzerland went extremely well considering there was a heat wave with temperatures in excess of 30C and my car does not have the luxury of air conditioning! We had two days to recover from the journey before setting off to Pornbach, north of Munich. Our hotel and the hospitality we enjoyed was fantastic. I was very apprehensive as to how a baby would be received, but everyone, especially the show organisers and my co judges Catherine Zingg (judging the Golden Retrievers) and Beate Ting (judging the Chessies, Tollers and Labradors) were so kind and understanding. As for the exhibitors, many did not even realize that my baby was there thanks to the hard work from the "Swiss Aunty", keeping Robert cool and far enough away from me so as not to cause a distraction!

I don't think I have ever judged in such high temperatures so it was a real test of character to see how many tails were still wagging - amazingly the majority coped very well with the excessive heat. My best veteran bitch Neala's Neverending Joy (Exclyst Country Lad x Neala's Jungle Jane) bred and handled by Mrs. Yvonne Jaussi. Joy was amazing, she was so pleased and happy to be in the show ring, even when she came into the big ring to challenge for Best Veteran in Show late in the afternoon, she left the other veterans feeling the heat of the day and their age, whilst she lived up to her name of "Neverending Joy"! I was delighted to see that she was awarded Best Veteran in Show.

My best bitch, who was also Best of Breed and Best in Show was Starworkers Daily News (Almanza I'm on Fire x Moonstruck Jelly Baby), bred and owned by Helle Nielson from Denmark. When this bitch came into the ring my eye was drawn to her high quality and immediately I was excited at the prospect of being able to go over her, fortunately I was not disappointed! She is truly outstanding and a great ambassador for the breed and I am sure will have a great future, I have subsequently learnt that she has already been very successful. When the judging had finished I could hardly wait to see who her parents were and was delighted to see that her Father

was sired by Cariena's Thirtyfour-four a top winning Norwegian dog who came to the UK as a veteran and gained his English show title. Ironically I was collecting one of his grand daughters on my way home I only hope that she turns out as nice as Daily News!

The best dog was another Scandinavian bred dog Comics New Blue Chip (Inkwells Final Guess x Comics Blue Charm) owned by N. Gruber and M Joun of Switzerland, this is another high quality dog with a lot to offer the breed and has already produced some very promising offspring.

I would like to thank everyone who helped us on this adventure and wish the Deutscher Retriever Club every success with their dogs and events. The weekend was a great credit to all involved.

Thank you.

Sarah Whittaker
Kennel Bramatha
June 2005