

Show Sight Magazine (May 2009) *Malamutes - The Breeder's Perspective*

Interview with Bernadette P Quercio - Artic-Luv Alaskan Malamutes

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1. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR BREED?
2. WHERE DID YOUR BREED ORIGINATE AND WHAT WAS IT'S PURPOSE?
3. DO YOU THINK THE DOGS OF TODAY COULD FULFILL THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE BREED WAS DEVELOPED? WHY OR WHY NOT?
4. WHAT IS THE MOST DISTINCTIVE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CHARACTERISTIC OF YOUR BREED?
5. WHICH KENNEL, DOMESTIC OR FOREIGN, HAS GIVEN THE MOST TO THE BREED, AND HOW?
6. WHAT ADVANCEMENT IN STRUCTURE, HEALTH AND/OR TEMPERAMENT HAVE YOU SEEN OVER THE YEARS?
7. WHAT CHANGES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN YOUR BREED?
8. WHO IS THE FOREMOST AUTHORITY IN YOUR BREED?
9. WHO DO YOU FEEL ARE EXCELLENT JUDGES OF YOUR BREED?
10. WHAT IS THE MOST COMMON JUDGING MISTAKE IN YOUR BREED?
11. WHICH DOG NOT BRED OR OWNED BY YOU, DO YOU WISH YOU COULD HAVE OWNED AND WHY?
12. WHO DO YOU HOPE READS THIS?
13. HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED IN THE SPORT OF DOGS?

1.

I had just been married, and moved to California from New Jersey. I wanted a dog to keep me company because my husband worked the graveyard shift. Being a novice those 38 years ago, I went to pet shops looking at dogs, and I came across a paper back book on the breed written by Dr. Charles Berger. So there I was in search of the Alaskan Malamute. Now I did not know about kennels or breeders or dog shows. I happened to go to a swap meet and there it was - a large black and white Alaskan Malamute lying in the bed of a pick up truck. The gentle man told me he had a litter of seven puppies at his house not too far from where I was living. After having this puppy for a few weeks the people got in touch with me to attend a match show, and I won BOS from an entry of 30 dogs. This started me in this wonderful sport of showing dogs.

2.

The Alaskan Malamute came across the Bering Strait from Siberia to Alaska during the last Ice Age with the ancestors of the Inuit people who today inhabit the Arctic regions of North America and Greenland. These Alaskan Malamutes are the work horses of the Arctic. They were used for the heavy freighting when the Arctic was being explored - unlike the Siberian Husky which is built for speed.

3.

Many could not do the work and fulfill the purpose for which these dogs were bred. The Alaskan Malamute is losing a lot of the traits that make them the working dog they are supposed to be! This includes head shape, tail carriage, feet and coat. A lot are missing the shoulder layback and bend in stifle that is vital in their movement to cover ground. People are losing sight of the fact that the

Alaskan Malamute should be more than pretty. Alaskan Malamutes should be powerful and sound, this is more important than pretty.

4.

Physical Characteristic: they should be impressive but not over done or over sized. When looking at or judging them a person should ask himself if the dog could pull them out of a snow storm. The breed should be judged on it's structure so markings should not be a consideration.

Mental Characteristic: they are highly intelligent and can be dog aggressive, but they are people dogs. They would rather be with people than other dogs or animals.

5.

There are three in the past 38 years that I feel have developed correct breed type (and were also consistent in producing correct and healthy dogs). Back in the late 50's, 60's and 70's there was Tigara Kennels; the breeders were DC and Dorothy Dillingham. Many of the pedigrees of today have these dogs in them. Since 1967 to the present there is Uyak Kennels; the breeders are Dr. Harold and Mrs. Schwartzapfel. These dogs continue to contribute to some of the dogs today. Then from the original Kotzebue, Mrs. Eve Seeley (who is the mother of the breed). Paul and Wendy Willhauk of Frostfield Kennels is still active today with an important genepool that will produce what a lot of the dogs are missing in the correct type.

6.

This question deeply troubles me. The only advancements I see are the temperaments. The people in the breed have learned how to train and bond with their dogs, and their temperaments have greatly improved! As for the structure, many do not understand that breeding is an art! Not only to read a pedigree and look for titles which is not important, but to read the pedigree and know what these dogs looked like and what genepool they had to contribute to your breeding. You need to know the negatives and the positives of each dog. Structure is very important and many do not know how a dog should be put together for soundness and the purpose they were bred for. In our health issues, in my opinion, our National Club has dropped the ball in supporting the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation on our breed's defects.

7.

The change I would like to see in the breed would be better structure and breed type.

8.

The kennels I have mentioned before Dr. Schwartzapfel and Paul and Wendy Willhauk.

9.

Michele Billings, Karen McFarlane, Lee Reasin, Betty Leininger, and Dr. Carmen Battaglia. I miss the great judges of years ago such as Derek Rayne, Eileen Pimlott, Dennis Grivas, and William Harvey. Excellent breeder judges are Ruth Zimmerman, Barbara Brooks, Mary Ratkowski, Paul and Wendy Willhauk.

10.

I have noticed many judges are afraid to pick a dog that looks different than the population that is being shown. They will put up a mediocre dog because the ring has more mediocre ones than the real good ones! They are completely lost when they see one that stands out is different, but may be true in breed type.

11.

Ch Tigara's Torch of Arctica, Ch Toro of Bras Coupe, Kobuk's Dark Beauty, Ch Kodara's Kodiak of Erowah. These are the dogs I admired. I cannot just pick one. All of these contributed a lot to the breed. Their genepool or genebank is greatly missed in today's population of breeding stock.

12.

I hope many of the newer people in my breed read this because they need to be mentored in doing the right thing for our dogs. I am in hopes that some of the newer judges read this and get mentored by people that will not push a certain line or kennel, but will mentor by following the blueprint of the American Kennel Club Standard.

13.

I would like to be remembered as someone who contributed a lot to our breed in producing good dogs and in pushing for DNA Markers for the health of our dogs.