

## Judging the French Bulldog Club of Victoria.

I had both the honor and privilege to be asked to judge the French Bulldog Club of Victoria Championship Specialty show this past May in beautiful Bulla Australia. When I received the invitation a year ago, I was just so excited. I counted down the months, then the weeks then the days. Unfortunately, my husband was not able to attend due to work commitments, so a good friend Sue Roberts decided to make the journey with me.

The flight was not as bad as I had been warned, it was long, but flying over night really did help, plus staying awake as long as possible from the La to Melbourne leg of the flight really did make it easy to adjust. When we arrived we were greeted by one of the great club members, Shirley Taylor. Sue and I settled in and rested for the balance of our first half-day.

We were up and ready early the next morning to adventure around beautiful Melbourne. As we found out, the area of Melbourne where we stayed was very easy to navigate on foot. We walked I am sure for miles, and took in the sights. Happily we were lucky enough to be directed to a lovely cafe 2 blocks from the hotel. The food was so good I believe we ate there 4 times, maybe more.

The morning of the show I peaked out the hotel window, as I was warned of the big chance of it being a wet day, as this was the start of the winter season. Needless to say, the show was outdoors, but I was very prepared. Luckily, the sun was out, and the rain stayed away; the start of a wonderful day.

Our ride came and we had the privilege of having her wonderful Frenchie girl companion, give us our fix for the morning. The ride was so lovely to the site which was in Bulla , at what appeared to be a park setting. I was greeted by the president of the club, Mr Frank Huckstepp. Apparently the show was to be held at the indoor facility, but an error was made in the booking with two dog clubs needing the building the same day. Needless to say, the Frenchies were moved out doors. I was told the club worked frantically, to set tents, tables, raffles, ribbons, in the new location. You would never have known this from entering the site. What a wonderful group of club members, everyone worked so well to get things off to a good smooth start. Food, Frenchies and smiles were abundant, and very

welcomed.

After a lovely introduction by club president, the fun began. A few words first about the exhibitors. All were dressed to impress, very appropriate for the show. Every one who stepped in the ring came with a huge smile, pleasant hello, all were courteous and polite. They had wonderful hands on their dogs. Next to the grooming of the dogs, I have to say every entry was in excellent condition, beautifully muscled and sparkling clean coats, and mostly all the nails were trimmed.

I also had the pleasure to have 4 younger handlers who exhibited great sportsmanship. They all had exceptional hands on their dogs, and I think if they stick with it, could have a great future, they are the future of the sport.

I will say one thing I found to be very consistent, mostly all the dogs had a soft wonderful facial expression. Lovely shaped dark eyes, good pigment, and good eye placement. The nostrils were so lovely and open, nice breathers. The ears also on the whole were very nice size with correct placement and balance to the head, and very nice wide under jaws. It gave a very pretty finish that gave the melting expression. I would have liked to have seen some with a little better nose layback and upturn of the under jaw. It gave them a more rectangular look when seeing the muzzle from the front.

Mostly all were very balanced, and free from exaggeration. I did see strong quality with proper balance. The coat colors were clear on most of the peds, and the brindles on the whole, had a substantial amount of brilliant brindle.

The body shapes were lovely, good pear shape which is lacking in the breed in many areas. Toplines on a whole were also very good, only one or two with higher tail sets, which does not add to the smooth finish of a flowing top line. The rears consisted of strong drive, with no appearance of patella luxation.

I feel the weakest part on the whole was of the front assembly. Some moved closer, and had a shorter upper arm. Only a few were in my opinion, too short in front leg, which made it difficult for proper free flowing movement with reach and drive.

The class placements were awarded with a strong priority on head and topline, as I feel those are the hallmark of the breed. Also, I did put a lot of emphasis next on the side gate and the balance of each exhibit. To me there is nothing more beautiful than to watch a Frenchie move and be able to see the power of an effortless reach and driving side gate.

My Challenge dog was to come from the Australian Bred Dog class. Lovely in every way I looked at him. Balanced, melting expression, and strong side gate. My reserve Challenge Dog was also very balanced, excellent head, and strong side gate. It was a hard decision, but at my last look I was very fond of the neck and carriage on my Challenge dog # 26 Sup Ch Carrski Rumor Haz It. He is a 4 1/2 year old dog. My reserve dog #32 Ch Amindi Chuck Berryison Top was 4 years old.

My bitch classes I found to be very similar in quality and strengths as in my dog classes. They might have actually had a touch more strength than the boys. My Challenge Bitch came from the Junior Bitch class. She was just 14 months old. She was such a beautiful striking color, and very balanced, beautiful expression, with smooth flowing lines. So strong on the side gate. With her young age, she has such a bright future ahead of her. Her # was 59, Colkerry French Rouge. My Reserve Challenge Bitch was # 73, Ch Carrski A Portrait For Finch. She is 5 years old. Soft expression, very balanced, good on side gate. Lovely mature girl.

The most difficult time was to come in making a decision for my Best in Show. It was between my CD and CB. I thought it would be an easier decision, but as they moved together around the ring, they both possessed very important breed-specific traits. Both had lovely heads with equally good expression. Coming and going the dog had more maturity than the bitch, and more ring experience. One minute I had decided on one, then the other would catch my eye in another fashion. In the end I chose the dog Sup Ch Carrski Rumor Haz It for my Best In Show. The lovely very young bitch Colkerry French Rouge was chosen as my runner up Best in show. She had a lack of maturity and ring experience. I see a bright future for this promising bitch.

I give a big hand to the Club Members who works so hard to put on such a great Specialty. Again, it was an honor to be the 1st American judge to be invited to judge their specialty show.

After the show we gathered to talk a little about the breed and get to know one another. I was so excited to see the dog's in this country and to learn of some of the challenges the breeders face. Between quarantine and the restrictions put on breeders, I give much credit to the hard work the breeders face. It is a true challenge every step of the way. With the internet and shipping of frozen semen you would think it would be much simpler, but it is not easy. I see though how the people all work together for the breed.

All in all I found the quality to be very good as compared to dog's I have seen all over the world. The willingness of the breeders to work together will only bring them success for some of the obstacles they might face, with the government restrictions.

After a long day, and a very rewarding day, for me, Sue and I were back to our room. A nice meal and a good glass of wine finished off a lovely day. A day to be cool and filled with rain was sunny and pleasant. My lucky day!

The next day several members had invited both Sue and I for a great lunch on the water. The food was fabulous, the company better. I have learned much, and made many new friends. I look forward to returning to your lovely country as there were so many things i still want to do and see.

I was delighted to be taken to several wineries and a great lunch on my last day in Melbourne. I love Australian Shiraz so Trevor & Jacqui Webb, and Shirley Taylor took Sue and I on a great tour. I have memories to last me a lifetime, and many new friends. Your kindness and hospitality are so appreciated. I am so honored and humbled to have been invited to judge your fine French Bulldogs. I have learned so much, and am so appreciative of your trust in me.

Cheers,

Patty Sosa  
Bandog