

## The Day After Westminster

**See what the day after winning Westminster is like for the country's No. 1 dog.**

*Eve Adamson*

Those who think top-winning show dogs should be seen and not heard haven't met Uno, the adorable 15-inch Beagle whose "aroo-roo-rooing" (not to mention his good looks and considerable charisma) swept the judges and the audience off their feet at the prestigious Westminster Kennel Club dog show this February.

"I couldn't believe the way the crowd cheered for him," said Uno's handler, Aaron Wilkerson. "But he loves all that clapping and the lights. That really gets him amped up."

Photos by Mary Bloom Officially named Champion K-Run's Park Me In First, Uno loves any sort of spotlight, whether he's zipping around the ring or granting interviews to lucky morning show hosts. So although handler Aaron Wilkerson and his wife, Russella, were more than a little exhausted at 6:30 a.m. the morning after Uno's big win at Madison Square Garden, Uno was ready and willing to meet his adoring public.

"Our first stop was at the 'Today' show," said David Frei, director of communications for the Westminster Kennel Club, as well as an announcer for the annual show. "We waited in the Green Room and they used Uno for a lot of teases to get people to tune in at 7:30. They filmed him backstage and he was happy to do his little Beagle baying thing for them," Frei said. After hanging out with Meredith Vieira and Matt Lauer, Uno moved on to "The Early Show" on CBS, then off to "FOX & Friends," and "The Martha Stewart Show."

"Martha went great," said Frei. "I brought Uno out and put him up on her kitchen table and we had a nice visit." Although Martha's two French Bulldogs – decked out as usual in matching outfits – weren't sure they liked another dog on their home turf, Uno treated them like esteemed colleagues. "He does everything with a smile on his face," said Wilkerson.

After Martha Stewart, Frei and Wilkerson – along with a bevy of reporters – whisked Uno to Grand Central Station, for a satellite media tour surrounded by throngs of passersby eager to catch a glimpse of the now-famous dog next door. Next, the troupe headed to Sardi's restaurant for the traditional Dog Fanciers Luncheon and every dog's favorite tradition, eating that lovely chunk of rare steak off the silver platter. Being a typical Beagle, Uno wolfed his down before photographers even had a chance to focus. Fortified, he raced around the room, to the delight and amusement of the diners. Just like a dog.

Next, the crew headed off to film spots for Shepard Smith on FOX News, "World News Tonight," and "Charlie Rose." Usually, that's where a Westminster winner's press junket ends, but this is a Beagle, for dog's sake. Uno had more PR to accomplish – and his white-tipped tail never stopped waving.

Thursday morning: CNN's "American Morning" and "The View." Thursday afternoon: "Happy Hour" on the FOX Business channel, shot live from the Bull and Bear pub in the Waldorf Astoria. Friday morning: Uno helped ring the bell to open the NASDAQ stock exchange. Finally, on Friday afternoon, the weary Wilkersons piled into their car and headed for home, Beagle in tow.

But life in the spotlight isn't over for Uno. While the Beagle will retire from the show ring (after winning Westminster, what more is there to accomplish?), he will spend the next year "arooing" through personal appearances and exhibitions, as well as siring some beautiful Beagle puppies.

"You start with an all-American sort of dog [whom] people can imagine sitting next to on the couch, and you've already got a huge response. The media picked up on this dog even before the show began," said Frei. "Next, he'll be meeting the Governor of Texas and the Governor of Illinois, where he was born. They are declaring an 'Uno Day.' We've been talking to the Snoopy people, and he'll be on a float in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade. He has to make public appearances, or we would all be in trouble. The world wants to see this dog."

Frei has guided many winning Westminster dogs through post-show media tours, but he's never seen anything like the kind of reaction Uno engenders in his fans. "People usually see the dog, pause, smile, then walk on," Frei said. "But



with Uno, everybody stops. Everybody kneels down. Everybody wants to pet him or touch him or have their picture taken with him. I'm now an expert on how to work every single kind of camera phone because I've had to take so many pictures of people with Uno."

"He's the people's dog," said Wilkerson, patting Uno's head. "All he wants to do is make friends and be a happy, playful, merry little hound. People understand him."

"Aroo" to that.

Eve Adamson is a DOG FANCY contributing editor.

To read more about Uno's big win, check out the May 2008 issue of DOG FANCY.