

## The Judges Talk About Maltese

*compiled by Cindy Chandler*

Peggy Hogg

Knoxville, Tenn.

Approved for the Toy, Non-Sporting and Terrier Groups as well as six Sporting breeds.

1. I first came across the Maltese breed in the early 1960s. I was immediately attracted to them by their silky white mantle of hair and their spicy, but sweet, disposition. It was quite a challenge to learn grooming skills that would do a show Maltese justice, as there is a lot of dedicated preparation before they are ever shown. As a professional handler I had the opportunity to show some of the finest top-winning dogs in the history of the breed.

2. Anyone wanting to be a good judge of this breed has to consider heavily the "General Appearance" section of the standard and the importance of the sought-after coat and temperament. As judges, we have to protect the not-often-seen silky coat and reward it when we can, as once it is lost, it is gone forever. I'm not saying you should reward a silky coat on an inferior animal, but it should be a deciding factor in animals of similar quality. The Maltese moves with a smooth, jaunty, flowing gait that is peculiar to the breed and the head must possess proper expression and pigment. As in most breeds, the key word is balance, balance!

3. I think the current AKC breed standard is quite adequate.

4. I have observed or judged Maltese in Europe, South America, Asia and Australia. Fifteen years ago I would have said the Maltese in the U.S. were superior in many aspects; however that has changed considerably over the years, and now we see excellent specimens of correct size, with beautiful heads and conformation, in other countries. In November of 2005 I judged the 15th Japanese Maltese National Specialty show and was overwhelmed with their quality and coat texture. Many of them could compete in the U.S. and win high honors. I really think the transfer of American bloodlines has helped the breeders in other countries to attain a more uniform, quality Maltese, and this was not possible without importation, as they had only their bloodlines to breed from. I have the honor of once again judging the American Maltese National Specialty in 2008 and am looking forward to it.

5. There have been so many lovely Maltese over the years that it is hard to distinguish between my admiration for them, but a few that I did not have any connection with and in my opinion were special are Ch. Ta-Jon's Tickle Me Silly, Ch. C and M's Tootsey's Lollypop, Ch. Pendelton's Jewel, and Ch. Non-Vel's Weejun. Of the Maltese that I was involved with, how can I not mention the great Ch. Joanne-Chen's Maya Dancer, who attained the all-time top-winning Maltese title by amassing 43 Best in Shows in a couple of short years when we went only to a sparse number of local shows? I loved the way he was put together both physically and mentally and he never let me down when I asked him to do something. Ch. Malone's Snowy Roxann was the most elegant bitch I think I have ever seen; her coat was spun-silk and she was exciting at all times, especially on the move. Ch. Maree Tu-Grand Kandi Kane had the most beautiful head and expression and loved to show. I showed other Group and Best in Show winners and I would never attempt to pick a favorite or the best one, as they were all special in their own unique contribution to the Maltese world.