

Pointer Wins Purina's National Dog Show

More than 1,500 dogs competed at the Kennel Club of Philadelphia's annual show.

By Rose Strong

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Best in Show winner

Photos by Joanne GrazianoThe cavernous Greater Reading Expo Center was home to the Kennel Club of Philadelphia's Dog Show and Purina's National Dog Show this year on Nov. 22 and 23. With so much space, it was a good thing I had on my walking shoes.

Entering the show area, I was hit with the cacophonous sound of pre-show preparations. Hair dryers, clippers, handlers trotting with excited dogs, vendor booths making sales, and of course barking filled the room, echoing against the high ceiling.

Terrier Group winnerIt wasn't until the National Anthem began playing that signaled the start of the show, that all grooming, shopping, and walking stopped. The difference was tremendous with the only the song and a few barking dogs heard.

The music ended and the activity picked up where it left off and I had to look at the map of the show floor to see where to start.

My companions and I decided to walk through the benched area since it was early and thought it would be fun to see all the primping needed to get these dogs into the ring.

Gordon Setter in benched areaWhile I was walking through an aisle of benches glancing at the show schedule, a wet nose gently touched my right cheek. I turned and came face-to-face with Deacon, a stunning Gordon Setter. His owner-handler, Kristeen Davidson-Christman, told me he was flirting! I certainly enjoyed the peck on the cheek and spent time watching as he was being groomed for the ring. Deacon later won best of breed.

With group judging starting, we took to the curtained-off area of the National Dog Show. It was full of bright lights for filming the Thanksgiving broadcast and fall flowers amid the blue carpet and ring barriers.

Music was playing as the television staffers were putting out signs in the center of the ring with the Terrier Group being the first to start the judging. The excitement could be felt through the standing-room-only crowd. My friends and I were anxious to see who would wind up this year's winner.

There were 1,505 dogs entered in the show for 2008 and it was narrowed down to the top seven – one fabulous dog from each group. I could hear the audience wonder in hushed tones how the judges can choose the best dog out of such variety. Of course, any dog who makes it to best in group is great, but I'm glad I'm not a judge!

And the winners are:

Sporting Group: Pointer; Ch. Cookieland Seasyde Hollyberry, handled by Michael Scott

Non-Sporting Group winnerHound Group: Basset Hound; Ch. Topsfield-Vision Silver Noodles, handled by Bryan Martin

Working Group: Samoyed; Ch. Pebbles' Run Hammy Davis Jr., handled by Andrew Green

Terrier Group: Sealyham Terrier; Ch. Efbe's Hidalgo at Goodspice, handled by Margery Good

Toy Group: Cavalier King Charles Spaniel; Ch. Pinecrest Rock The Boat, handled by Ted Eubank

Herding Group: Australian Shepherd; Ch. Vinelake Collinswood Yablon OA, OAJ, handled by Jessica Plourde

Non-Sporting Group: Lhasa Apso; Ch. My Thai Ta Sen Halleluiah Chorus, handled by Susan Giles

Best in Show winner: Pointer; Ch. Cookieland Seasyde Hollyberry

Rose Strong is a freelance writer who lives on a small farm in Pennsylvania with her partner and their many four-legged and feathered companions.