

## Records Set and History Made at Westminster

**Rare breeds wow dog show aficionados and spectators alike in two days of competition.**

*By Allan Reznik and Susan Chaney*

Posted: February 11, 2009, 5 a.m. EST

Sporting Group winner, Sussex Spaniel Stump. Photographs by Mary Bloom  
The 133rd Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show at Madison Square Garden in New York held more than its share of upsets, which in turn led to some surprises during the Group and Best in Show judging Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 9 and 10, 2009.

Perhaps the surprises were fitting given the equally unexpected balmy mid-winter weather. Here's a recap of this year's event's history-making wins that led to another memorable Westminster.

### Day One

The Hounds were the first Group to enter the big ring at 8 p.m. Judging this Group was the winningest owner-handler in American Kennel Club dog show history, Patricia Craig Trotter. She has won the Westminster Hound Group a record 10 times over the decades with her Vin-Melca Norwegian Elkhounds. Today a respected author, lecturer, and judge, Trotter confidently and graciously presided over her ring, congratulating each exhibitor on their Best of Breed win.

Ultimately, she ended up with two sighthounds and two scenthounds for her Group placements.

Terrier Group winner, Scottish Deerhound Scottish Deerhound, Ch. Gaylewayward's Tiger Woods  
Group First went to the Scottish Deerhound, Ch. Gaylewayward's Tiger Woods, bred and owned by longtime Deerhound devotee Gayle Bontecou, and shown by Clifford Steele. Tiger has accumulated an impressive show record, but taking the Group at the Garden is without a doubt his most illustrious win yet ... quite a feat for a 7-year-old dog of a giant breed.

A powerful Irish Wolfhound, Ch. Dun Myrica Speaker of Eagle, claimed second place. Trotter found two worthy girls for third and fourth: big-winning Bloodhound, Ch. Quiet Creek's Mi Amor, and the Wirehaired Dachshund, Ch. Daybreak's Awesome Blossom W.

Among the top-winning Hounds left out of the Group placements were the Basset Hound, Ch. Topsfield Vision Silver Noodles, the top Hound in the nation in 2008, and the Italian import Greyhound, Ch. Sobers Galathea at Grandcru, another multi-Best-in-Show Hound of 2008.

Last year's Best in Show Hound, Uno the Beagle, then made a crowd-pleasing appearance to draw attention to the Angel on a Leash WKC program, which brought together a double-amputee veteran and a patient of the Ronald McDonald House in 2008. An extended standing ovation for all American troops brought tears to the eyes of many.

The consummate Terrier man, Peter J. Green, who last won Best in Show at Westminster in 1998 as a professional handler, this year judged the Group he knows so well.

### Terrier Group winner, Scottish Terrier

Ch. Roundtown Mercedes of Mary Scot  
History was made when Green excused two dogs from the ring due to "conflicts of interest." The Airedale and Cairn Terriers were exhibited by two of Green's former handling assistants. It's the first time in the 133-year history of the show that a judge has excused dogs from the Group Ring for this reason. Judges and exhibitors praised Green's decision, considering it the honorable thing to do.

Green was well-known as a handler for making quacking noises to keep terriers looking curious, and he amused the crowd by walking down the line of breed winners, making silly noises to gauge the dogs' animation. Clearly Welshman Green

has a great sense of humor, as well as keen knowledge of the terrier breeds.

An enthusiastic crowd supported Green's first place choice, the Scottish Terrier, Ch. Roundtown Mercedes of Mary Scot, owned by longtime terrier enthusiast, Amelia Musser and handled by Gabriel Rangel. She is quite the showgirl, and thunderous applause only served to ratchet up her performance. Mercedes was among the top terriers in the nation for 2008.

Refusing to slow down for a moment, last year's Terrier Group winner, the Sealyham, Ch. Efbe's Hidalgo at Goodspice "Charmin," placed second in this competitive Group. Another crowd pleaser was the Norwich Terrier, Ch. Skyscot's Poker Chip in third place. Miniature Schnauzer, Ch. Earthsong Remedy for the Blues, rounded out the placements.

Non-Sporting Group winner,  
Standard Poodle Ch. Randenn

Tristar Affirmation "Yes" Judge Charlotte Patterson took control of the ring for the Non-Sporting Group. Glamorous Poodles have triumphed in this Group on many occasions, and Monday night the Standard Poodle, Ch. Randenn Tristar Affirmation "Yes," brought home the honors literally and figuratively for her owners Toni and Martin Sosnoff of New York City. Her handler, Tim Brazier, has shown thousands of Poodles to their championships, including Yes' late, top-producing sire. Yes was a singleton puppy, produced by artificial insemination, but, oh, what a puppy. Yes is now the top-winning black Poodle in history.

French Bulldog, Ch. Lebull's Midnight Confessions, came from a field of 42 dogs in her breed, one of the largest entries in the show, to take Group Second. Third place went to another audience favorite, the Bulldog Ch. Kepley's Showbiz Razzle Dazzle. Rounding out the Group was yet another showgirl, the Bichon Frise, Ch. Gemstone Spoiled to Perfection.

Missing from the Group ring was multi-Best-in-Show-winning Tibetan Terrier, Ch. Players Protocol, who was defeated at the breed level.

The last Group of the night to be judged was Herding, presided over by Robert Slay. The biggest upset in this Group was the absence of the top Herding dog of 2008, multi-Best-in-Show Pembroke Welsh Corgi, Ch. Coventry Vanity Fair, who had lost her bid for Best of Breed in the afternoon.

Herding Group winner, Puli Ch.

Cordmaker Field of Dreams It's not often that a Puli leads the pack at this prestigious event, but Group First went to Ch. Cordmaker Field of Dreams, or Conrad, owned by Susan Huebner of the world-renowned Cordmaker Kennels in Australia and Jackie Beaudoin of the United States. Linda Pitts is best known for handling top American Cocker Spaniels, but shows this corded dog to perfection. The success of Cordmaker Kennels and their many exports to America prove that global partnerships among breeders can have a huge impact on a breed.

The Bouvier des Flandres, Ch. Voodoo Slam Dunks Susants, claimed Group Second. Third place went to the blue merle Rough Collie, Ch. Sylvan Argent Simply Irresistible. The last placement of the night was the Old English Sheepdog, Ch. Lambluv's Daydream Believer.

Day Two

The surprises continued on the second day of competition in New York City.

Tuesday saw the return of the Sussex Spaniel Stump, more formally known as Ch. Clussex Three D Grinchy Glee, to Madison Square Garden after a five-year retirement. Stumpy won the Sporting Group here in 2004, a huge achievement for the breed, one of the rarest in the world. In Weimaraner judging, an almost 2-year-old female triumphed over many older top-winning representatives of the breed, and was a new face to the Sporting Group ring in the evening.

Judge Robert Ennis, a Cocker Spaniel breeder and Sporting Group expert, was as delighted to see the Sussex back as the cheering audience was, and rewarded the 10-year-old veteran with Group First. The public often wonders what happens to retired show dogs. In Stump's case, he is adored by his owners, Cecilia Ruggles, Beth Dowd, and Scott Sommer, and remains every bit the ham he was during the height of his show career. Sommer handled him during his active show career, and again on Tuesday evening.

Following behind the Sussex were the top Golden Retriever and English Setter in the nation, Ch. Toasty's Treasure Island and Ch. Chebaco Blames It On Trabeiz, respectively. The black Labrador Retriever, Ch. Beechcroft Study's Top Secret garnered fourth place in this competitive Group.

#### Toy Group winner, Brussels

Griffon Ch. Cilleine MasqueradeThe Toy Group was in next, judged by Fred Bassett, who has one of the most-fitting names in dogdom. Papillon judging at 9:15 a.m. produced a major upset when two of the top Best-in-Show-winning Paps in the country were defeated. Adding to the international flavor of the show was a Maltese who arrived just last week from Scotland and prevailed in his breed over some glamorous domestic competition.

For Group First, Bassett chose the top-winning Brussels Griffon in the history of the breed, the smooth-coated English import, Ch. Cilleine Masquerade, owned by longtime Griffon supporters, Mamie and Evalyn Gregory, and the Jahelkas. "Lincoln," the No. 2 Toy dog in 2008, was handled as always by Paul Catterson.

Second place went to the Pug, Ch. Tupelo Shoboat Tu China Tu; third, to the Pekingese, Ch. Pequest Match Point; and fourth to the Pomeranian, Ch. Velocity's Shake Ur Bon Bon. Affenpinscher, Ch. Tamarind Tug, the top dog of his breed in history and the No. 1 Toy for 2008, made Bassett's cut, but went without a placement.

#### Working Group winner, Giant

Schnauzer Ch. Galilee's Pure of SpiritThe last Group of the night was the Working Group, judged by Paula Nykiel. The surprises in this ring included a Bernese Mountain Dog from Canada who had defeated top Best in Show American champions earlier in the day; the defeat of the No. 1 Boxer for 2008; and the first harlequin-colored (white with black patches) Great Dane to win Best of Breed at Westminster in some 20 years.

Competing for the first time was the Dogue de Bordeaux, a French mastiff breed, recognized by the American Kennel Club in July 2008 and probably best-known to the American public for its starring role in the Tom Hanks film, "Turner and Hooch."

In this red-hot Group, Nykiel pulled the Giant Schnauzer, Ch. Galilee's Pure of Spirit, for first place. Spirit was the top dog all breeds in 2008 and is the top-winning Giant Schnauzer in breed history. She is owned by breeder Mary Hayes, along with Joe and Carla Sanchez, and handled by Taffe McFadden. Spirit is another example of international dog breeding at its best; her sire was imported from Russia and proceeded to make his presence known in this country.

Group Second went to the Boxer, Ch. Winfall Brookwood Styled Dream, and third, to the Alaskan Malamute, Ch. Nanuke's Still The One.

Drawing thunderous applause when Nykiel pulled him in her cut was the gold Tibetan Mastiff, Ch. Drakyi Gold Standard. This is only the second year that the breed has competed at the Garden. Last year, Midas' sire went Best of Breed at the age of 8, and also made the cut in the Working Group. Tonight Midas topped his sire's Westminster coup by claiming a historic Group Fourth. Two weeks ago, Midas won an all-breed Best in Show, the first ever for a TM since AKC breed recognition.

#### Best in Show

##### Best in Show Judge Sari Brewster Tietjen

with Sussex Spaniel Stump and handlerThe lights were dimmed for the dramatic entrance of the seven Group winners who would vie for Best in Show Judge Sari Brewster Tietjen's approval.

The Sussex Spaniel, Scottish Deerhound, Giant Schnauzer, Scottish Terrier, Brussels Griffon, Standard Poodle, and Puli were welcomed back to the ring with applause and cheers, however the loudest response was reserved for the Sussex Stump.

At a few minutes before 11 p.m., Tietjen marked her judge's book, thanked the exhibitors for a beautiful Best in Show lineup, and announced that her winner would be the Sussex. The crowd went wild, filling Madison Square Garden with enthusiastic clapping and cheering.



The night ended with Stump making history as the oldest dog to ever win Best in Show at Westminster.

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