

Meet Westminster's Oldest and Youngest Dogs

Canine competitors at this year's show range from 10 months old to nearly 13 years.

By Stephanie Brown

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Mr. Miyagi, the oldest dog competing at Westminster, receives a treat from owner/handler Alyssa Goldman. All the dogs that took to the ring starting Feb. 15 at the 134th Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in New York City had to be American Kennel Club champions. But there is no age requirement, so you might be surprised to learn that nearly a dozen years separate the oldest and youngest competitors this year.

At 12 ½ years old, a Shiba Inu, Ch. Taichung Koro Niji, is the oldest dog competing in Westminster 2010. Despite his age, the Shiba, nicknamed Mr. Miyagi, is "healthy as a horse" and still acts as if he's 4 years old, says owner and handler Alyssa Goldman of Rockaway, N.J.

"I only hope that I age as gracefully as he does," Goldman says.

Goldman said she began showing Mr. Miyagi when he was just a puppy, and, in 2001 at the ripe old age of 4 years old, the Shiba made his debut at Westminster.

Now he is a seasoned veteran, having competed in the event five times, Goldman said.

"Nothing fazes him now," she said.

Miniature Bull Terrier Sutter mugs for the camera while owner/handler/breeder Giselle Simonds looks on. By comparison Ch. Bosai Fools Gold, a 10-month-old Miniature Bull Terrier, is just learning the ropes.

Nicknamed Sutter, the youngest champ to compete is a typical 10-month-old Bull Terrier in that he is "energetic and full of fire," according to his owner, handler and breeder Giselle Simonds of Petaluma, Calif.

He's also typical of most puppies in that he loves to chew, especially on shoes, Simonds said.

The commotion during large dog shows, such as Westminster, can be a little distracting to Sutter, Simonds said.

"Some sounds can throw him for a loop," she said.

But the pup is steadily gaining experience and already has four dog shows under his collar, according to Simonds.

"It's a learning curve for him," she said.

Stephanie Brown is Associate News Editor for DogChannel.com.