

State-of-the-Art Dog Show Facility Debuts

Nestlé Purina opens \$10 million world-class event center dedicated to dog sports.

By Ernie Slone

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Guests at the grand opening enjoyed demonstrations of agility, herding, disc dog and other sporting events. The dog world welcomed what many are declaring the premier dog show facility in the country with the grand opening Wednesday, Aug. 18, of the Purina Event Center in Gray Summit, Mo.

Fittingly, renowned four-legged celebrities headlined the gala, as Nestlé Purina invited six Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show best in show winners as guests, including this year's winner, Sadie, a 5-year-old Scottish Terrier. The dogs arrived one by one in limos, walking down a red carpet with owners and handlers to the cheers of the gathering.

"What better way to showcase a world-class facility designed for dog shows than by honoring some of the finest champions to ever enter the show ring?" said Terence E. Block, president of Pet Foods for Nestlé Purina PetCare-North America.

The six Westminster Champions participating in the Purina Event Center Grand Opening were: CH Roundtown Mercedes Of Maryscot, "Sadie" – 2010 Westminster Best in Show Winner, a 5-year-old Scottish Terrier.

CH Clussexx Three D Grinchy Glee, "Stump" – 2009 Westminster Best in Show Winner, an 11-year-old Sussex Spaniel.

CH K-Run's Park Me In First, "Uno" – 2008 Westminster Best in Show Winner, a 5-year-old Beagle.

CH Felicity's Diamond Jim, "James" – 2007 Westminster Best in Show Winner, a 10-year-old English Springer Spaniel.

CH Rocky Top's Sundance Kid, "Rufus" – 2006 Westminster Best in Show Winner, a 10-year-old Bull Terrier.

CH Special Times Just Right, "J.R." – 2001 Westminster Best in Show Winner, a 12-year-old Bichon Frise.

Nestlé Purina broke ground for the \$10 million, 84,000-square-foot Purina Event Center in April 2009. The extensive, all-season indoor facility just outside St. Louis complements the existing venues at the 350-acre Purina Farms for outdoor dog shows, lure coursing, agility, obedience, herding and earthdog trials.

For those who show, groom and handle dogs, it is clear that every detail was considered in designing the new state-of-the-art facility: Unlike typical indoor lighting, the high-tech lights in the 45,000-square-foot main exhibition hall are color tuned to show the dogs' true coat colors.

The adjoining 13,500-square-foot benching and grooming area has a dog bathing room with three stainless steel tubs set up for left-handed groomers and three tubs for right-handed groomers.

Each of the 160 grooming stations has its own electrical access.

Special padded sports flooring ensures comfort for the dogs and their handlers.

The entire complex offers free wireless Internet access.

Brock Fitzgerald, director of Purina Farms and a guiding force in creating the new center, said the vision for the complex is simple: "We're just trying to help people have fun with their dogs."

The Bull Terrier Rufus, 2006 Westminster champion, steps out of his limo to a celebrity greeting. David Frei, best known as



the voice of the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, told the gathering that he travels the world to top dog events and there is simply nothing like the new center.

“The fancy is fortunate to have this place,” said Frei, who also is co-host of the National Dog Show presented by Purina. “That Purina invested in this facility at a time the economy is so challenged says so much about their commitment to the fancy.”

Major events at the new center will kick off Oct. 29-31 when the United Kennel Club holds its Gateway Nationals, with 2,000 entries expected.

A premier global manufacturer of pet products, Nestlé Purina is part of Swiss-based Nestlé S.A., the world’s largest food company.

Ernie Slone is the editor of DOG FANCY and DogChannel.

[View a slide show of behind-the-scenes photos from the event center >>](#)