

The Secret Lives of Show Dogs

Up close and personal with Westminster contenders.

Nikki Moustaki

Ch. Rocky Tops Sundance Kid

Call name: Rufus.

Breed: Bull Terrier.

AKC group: Terrier.

Age: 5.

Owners/Breeders: Tom and Barbara Bishop; William and Rebecca Poole; Norma Shepherd.

Handler: Kathy Kirk.

Home: Holmdel, N.J., with the Bishops.

Favorite toy: Planet Dog Earth Ball.

Favorite reward: Krispy Kreme doughnuts.

Best canine buddy: A white Bull Terrier named Emily, the grande dame of the household.

Canine nemesis: At times, Emily (even though she's his best buddy). Friendship can be like that!

Quirk: The hucklebutt. He takes off at top speed, then does a quick spin and turns around, usually in a small area. He gets about three feet in the air, all four feet off the ground, then lands on his feet he's very agile.

What drives him nuts: Applause! When he's in the ring and the crowd cheers for him, his whole demeanor changes he loves the attention.

Sleeping spot: Rufus always sleeps in bed. Barbara is lucky to get a few inches at the edge, and maybe a little piece of pillow.

Favorite contraband treat: Vienna Fingers cookies.

Typical day: Wakes up and eats a peanut butter sandwich for breakfast, then goes out in the yard to play. He comes in and goes back to bed, then goes out again around noon. Then it's time to run errands with Barbara, where he sits in the front seat with his doggie seatbelt on. Later, he goes for a walk, eats dinner, and hangs out in the yard. Finally, he watches a bit of TV before bed. The night before a show he gets a bath, which he doesn't mind. The only difference between his life and a non-show dogs life is that on most weekends he's on the road. Rufus is a house pet who just happens to be a top-winning show dog, too.