

The Glory, the Glamour, the Garden

The club's founding members resolved to create an unforgettable show; 130 years later, Westminster remains unsurpassed.

Amy Fernandez

A Tale of Toys and Terriers

Two of this year's front-runners come from the Toy group. The Pekingese, Eng. & Am. Ch. Yakee If Only, is currently the top-ranked dog in America. Closely following in second place is the Pug, Ch. Kendorics Riversong Mulrone. Toy breed authority Victor Joris says, "I have had the opportunity to judge the Pekingese and the Pug both at the same show. It doesn't surprise me that both the number one and the number two contenders are Toys, considering the quality of these two dogs. I think it proves that beautifully constructed dogs that exemplify breed type will win consistently no matter their size."

Over the decades, Joris has attended Westminster as a spectator, exhibitor and judge. "Although I grew up with dogs," he says, "Westminster was the first dog show I attended. In 1970, I was living in New York, had just purchased my first Shih Tzu, and was anxious to see the entry at the Garden never contemplating that I would someday be asked to judge there. It was an incredible experience. Since then, I have attended 34 Westminster Kennel Club shows, and look forward to next year's. It is, after all, the most prestigious dog show in the world."

This year's show will mark the second appearance at Westminster for the Peke. His breeder, Bert Easdon, offered the following comments about Jeffrey. "He has a stunning head, expression and body. He moves so well, and has the best of temperaments."

"Since 8 weeks old, I thought he would be outstanding. He was crowned a U.K. champion whilst a junior. His father is the famous Crufts BIS winner, Eng. Ch. Yakee A Dangerous Liaison, and I could always see he would follow in his fathers footsteps."

On his decision to send this phenomenal dog to the United States, he says "I had three dogs all the same age winning for me in the U.K. When I made Jeffrey up, I wanted to campaign the other two to their titles. Jeffrey was far too good to be left sitting at home. I am so proud to have sent him to Kit Woodruff in America. Jeffrey and his handler, David Fitzpatrick, have such a wonderful rapport."

Last year, Jeffrey captured the Toy Group at WKC. Easdon was there to cheer him on, and plans to be there again this year. "Westminster is one of my favorite shows," he says. "There is such a buzz about it."

Considering the level of competition, there is no question that this year's Toy Group will be a highlight of Westminster 2006. The judge, Dr. Harry Smith, is definitely looking forward to the challenge. It is an honor and a privilege to judge at the Westminster dog show. It is an elite affair, very formal and worthy of all the exemplary comments that people make of it. Just about every dog lover in the United States avidly watches it.