



An Interview with Leslie T. Kettring Bayside Great Danes

Please tell us how did you get started in Great Danes? Were they your original breed?

I got started in Danes more by accident than design. When I purchased my first home I decided that I needed a dog to bark. I initially acquired a mixed breed lab/shepherd/husky mix that would open the front door and run down to the pond to go swimming. She would jump into any open car window soaking wet thinking that she was going for a ride. It was not necessarily my car. She would not come when she was called and was generally the scourge of the neighborhood. I thought that getting another dog would quiet her down. My law partner's wife, Susan, told me about a rescue Dane who was pregnant by her litter brother. The owner was going to put her down because she had become aggressive with the other dogs. The vet tech had gotten her and assured me that she had seen no signs of aggression. Susan and I reached an agreement that the puppies would be born at my house but that she would find a home for them after they were born. 24 hours later Onyx a mismarked pregnant black out of harlequin breeding showed up. 24 hours after that she whelped a litter of 3 puppies. Whelping box? What's that? I knew nothing. One pup had a cleft palate and had to be put down. The other two survived despite me and as promised Susan picked them up at 6 weeks and found them homes. Onyx became my first Dane. She was spayed and lived to 11 years of age. The mixed breed was placed with a family with children and entertained an entire birthday party when she arrived (Worked for the dog, for me and the neighbors).

About a year later, I decided that I wanted to show dogs. I decided that I would show Danes and started my search for my first show dog. His name was Arndale's Benjamin Smith, CD. He was named Ben because he was a little cross-eyed and reminded me of Ben Turpin. He was an "honest dog" who hated to show. I was and still am the world's worst handler. He did not finish. At the time I started, the Great Dane's in Florida were not very good. Everyone in the Northeast and Midwest would come down on the Florida Circuit to finish their dogs. That has now changed. However at the time I started, I was told that cow hocks were normal.

I had begun to look at the Great Dane Reporter and decided that I would go the Westchester Kennel Club in Tarrytown, NY to see the dog show and the Great Danes (the National Specialty was held there). I saw class after class of beautiful dogs with nary a cow hock in the group. I decided that I wanted a Great Dane that looked like the ones in Tarrytown and contacted Larry and Carleen Radanovich. I liked the dogs that they bred and wanted a puppy out of their breeding. I acquired BISS CH. Stockdale's Designing Woman from them. As a testament to her quality I actually put her first point on her. She was my foundation and constant companion.

How many dogs do you have?

5 Danes and 2 Australian Cattle dogs

What colors have you owned or bred?

Fawns and Brindles

What other breeds have you had?

Doberman (co-owned with Carol Kepler) and Australian Cattle dogs



Georgia

performance. I have kept that promise.

Are you currently showing any dogs?

Yes. We are currently showing Bayside's Whatever Lola Wants. She is being handled by Gary and Jinny Rojas. I also co-own a bitch with Pam Koerper and Karen Burkhardt, Sunquest Bayside Your Still the One who is being shown on the West Coast.

What is the name of your first champion?

BISS CH Stockdale's designing Woman (Georgia)

How many champions have you had?

I don't know but probably 30+

Do you handle or use professional handlers?

I use professional handlers. My Husband Gary also handles our dogs. I promised Terry Goldman that I would never ever set foot in the ring handling one of my dogs after a particularly dismal



Sunquest Bayside Your Still the One



BISS Ch Creekside-Bayside Just Tina, HOF

What is your greatest success to date?

I would have to say that winning Best of Breed at Westminster in 2006 with BISS Ch Creekside-Bayside Just Tina, HOF. A close second would be having her named as Brood Bitch of the Year in 2009.

What is your greatest challenge to date?

Trying to find enough time to do everything we want to do.

Who were your mentors?

Carleen and Larry Radanovich. Brucie, Mitchell and Nina Vecchio Powers (Mastiffs)



Porche Pups

At what age do you evaluate a litter?

I plan the breeding and Gary whelps the litters. Gary and I are constantly watching and evaluating puppies when they start moving around at around 4 weeks. What we are looking for is the puppy that stands out or as Gary says “glows”. This is the puppy that keeps catching your eye. I will evaluate structure at 6 weeks. I will evaluate again at 8 weeks to see what direction the various puppies are going. I want to see improvement. Heads are always a work in progress. Sometimes the most promising head in the litter can be the

ugliest as an adult and vice versa.

What is your position on health testing? Do you health test all your dogs?

I do certain health tests such as hips and elbows on all of my dogs. If a line that I am working with has particular problems such as thyroid or heart issues I will test for that as well. My problem with many of the tests is that they do not tell you much other than what is happening on the day of the test. They are not predictive of future problems. Health testing is not a substitute for knowing what is in your pedigree.

What would you like to see improved in the breed?

We need to improve bone and substance. There are too many dogs and bitches that are lacking in that area. We also need to concentrate on topline which are not good. Shoulder layback has gotten better however the upper arm is either straight or short or sometimes both. It is very hard to find a correct one. There are quality dogs being shown however the depth of quality is lacking. I’ve seen lots of Danes being shown that do not belong in the conformation ring. I don’t know whether the problem is with the owners, breeders, judges or a combination of the three.



BISS Ch Creekside-Bayside Just Tina, HOF



BISS Ch Creekside-Bayside Just Tina, HOF

What advice would you give to someone just getting started?

Before you get your first show dog read the illustrated standard. The next step is to go to dog shows with large entries of Great Danes, get a catalogue and watch the dogs. Check off the dogs that you like in each class and put a minus sign on those that you do not like. You should see a pattern of what you like after a couple of shows. Your aesthetic will be different from others so don’t be concerned if what you like is not necessarily what the judge on that day

happens to like. However, if you and the judges never agree, you may need to go back to the standard.

After you find out what you like, find out who is producing those dogs and contact them. Buy a good well bred bitch with the help of the breeder. Be prepared for setbacks because as much as we try as breeders to pick out good show prospects, we never know what they will grow up to be. Puppies need to be trained to be good show dogs, so don't expect that you are going to finish out of the puppy class. Some do, however some of the best ones don't come into their own until they are adults. After your dog is trained put him up until he is ready to win. Look at your own dog in the ring and evaluate him or her fairly against the competition. Always congratulate the winners even if you disagree. They are thrilled and the problem was with the judge. Do not trash other people's dogs' ringside.. You never know who is behind you and it is unsportsmanlike. Be professional and polite to the judge and ringside. You can kick the tires of your car in the parking lot. Remember that it is just a dog show and there will be another one next week. Sometimes you will lose when you should have won and win when you should have lost.



Vinny BOB

Would you like to become a judge? What breeds would you like to judge?

I would like to become a judge and would like to judge Great Danes, Mastiff's, Boxers, Dobermans and ACD's.

What have you judged as a breeder?

Yes, I have judged sweepstakes in Arizona and in Brooksville.

Do you have any favorite Danes of the past?

Yes. Ch Stockdale's Savannah, Ch. Reann's No Jacket Required, Ch Regene's Brigadoon v Jonathie, Ch Lobato's Anything Goes, Ch Rojon's Rumor Has It, Ch.Hauerdane's Indian Amber, Ch

Sheenwater's Gamble on Me, Ch Giant Step's Front Page News, Ch Stockdale's Charleston, Ch Honey Lane's Jazz, Ch

Gemstone's Kaitlyn La- Di- Da, and Ch. Longo's Primo d Aquino. There are many others but these are the ones that spring to mind. I also have a great deal of admiration for Ch Reann's French Aristocrat as one of the great Stud Dogs.

Any funny stories or anecdotes to share?

I had a young Dane girl who liked to go to the dog shows but wasn't really cooperative in being set up. She wasn't afraid but stubborn and had learned that if she went limp it was impossible to set her up. I had asked Jinny to show her and watched as she very carefully would set her up and watch her dissolve. Much to Jinny's relief, I told her that I would take her because it was obvious that she wasn't going to be cooperative. Several minutes later another handler was boasting ringside that he was the world's greatest handler. I listened for a few minutes and said if you are the world's best try to show this bitch. He took the challenge and walked her into the ring without working with her. To everyone's amusement, she dissolved into a heap when he tried to set her up. It took



Pumpkin

him a good 2 minutes to get her to stand up in some semblance of a stack. She did not win and he never boasted again ringside about his prowess as a handler. To his credit he did not charge me either.