

Meet . . .

Owner-Handler

## Linda DeVincent-Easley

DaVinci Danes



- 1) **Tell us your whole name.** Linda DeVincent-Easley.
- 2) **Number of years showing dogs.** Ten.
- 3) **Your kennel name & how you got it.** DaVinci Danes - Italian version of my last name. Also name of sculptor, inventor, painter... Every Dane is a living piece of breathtaking art.
- 4) **Where you live.** Rockwood, Tennessee.
- 5) **Where do you travel to show?** Atlanta, Perry, Nashville, Franklin, Cincinnati, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Lexington, Indianapolis.
- 6) **How many shows do you attend in a year?** Between 15 – 20.
- 7) **Have you ever hired and/or used professional handlers and for what purpose?** Yes, I used pro handler to show my first Mantle Champion in 2007 - 2008.
- 8) **What made you decide to owner-handle your Great Danes?** Physical limitations at that time. Since I have owner handled with goal of Bred-By Exhibitor Champions. Budget limitations at this time as well.
- 9) **What are the greatest advantages of owner-handling your dogs?** Bonding and fun with your own dog. Individual attention to them that they may not get with a pro handler.
- 10) **What are the biggest challenges of owner-handling your dogs?** Competition with the pros, but it shouldn't matter. The best dog of the day SHOULD win, no matter who is on the end of the lead.
- 11) **What do owner-handlers need to consider if they want to be competitive in the ring?** Looking and feeling confident... Compete with the pros on their level.
- 12) **Do you feel your dog has ever been over-looked in the ring by the judge because you are an owner-handler and if yes please describe.** Yes..... There have been a few times that I have felt invisible. Not even a single look beyond the initial exam.
- 13) **Do you feel there is any stigma against owner-handlers in Great Danes and if yes please explain.** I believe that sometimes owner-handlers are thought of as second rate citizens by the Dane world's 'affluent and influential'. Here I'm talking about the wealthy owners... <sigh>
- 14) **What tips would you give a new owner-handler to help them step up their game?** Learn how to present your dog with confidence! Overcome the nerves.

- 15) **What is the most valuable advice you ever received about handling your own dogs from a professional handler?** Oh, I've received a lot from some very nice people. In general the pros in my area are good and respectful people. The best was.... You need to open YOUR stride and let that boy move out!!!
- 16) **What is the most helpful technique you ever learned just by watching professional handlers?** When to bait and when to leave the dog alone to shine on its own.
- 17) **What are some common mistakes you see owner-handlers committing in the ring?** Messing with the dog too much... Bait, move legs, mess with heads.... Always moving and distracting.
- 18) **What have been some of your show ring successes as an owner-handler?** I put the last few points on my first Champion after the professional handler got her the Majors. Recently finished my first Bred-By Exhibitor Champion dog.
- 19) **What are some of the most rewarding things about owner-handling for you?** Spending quality time with my dog and a great feeling of accomplishment when the wins come.
- 20) **Most professional handlers began as owner-handlers. What keeps you from taking that same route?** I'm old. LOL!
- 21) **Who is your favorite judge and why?** Jon Cole... A good and fair man who awards the best dog of the day. He is not influenced by color, handler, or ears.
- 22) **Bonus Question! (Please answer!) If the mockumentary movie "Best in Show" made a sequel with you as one of the characters, what famous actor/actress would play YOU?** Kristin Chenoweth - Short little blonde with a wry sense of humor.