

Meet . . .

Owner-Handler

## Pepper Lee Riddle

Destiny Great Danes

### 1) Number of years showing dogs.

I started when I was 13 years old and I am old now.

### 2) Your kennel name and how you got it.

Destiny Great Danes. I started using it when I was a Junior Handler and showing collies. My grandmother made a comment about me finding what I was destined to do and I shortened it to Destiny and kept it.

### 3) Where you live.

Santa Rosa, California.

### 4) Where do you travel to show?

All over California and I have done Oregon, Washington, and Montana.

### 5) How many shows do you attend in a year?

Depends on if I am breeding a litter that year or concentrating on getting a dog finished and promoting heavily. Usually once a month at least and when really going everything I can.

### 6) Have you ever hired and/or used professional handlers and for what purpose?

I did try to hand one of my girls one time to a trusted handler and she was amazingly patient but my dogs do not show well for anyone but me.

### 7) What made you decide to owner-handle your Great Danes?

I like the idea of doing it myself, I enjoy competing and it always makes me feel that much better when I know I worked hard to get that title or win.

### 8) What are the greatest advantages of owner-handling your dogs?

I think my kids always show better for me, and it makes our bond even stronger outside the ring.

### 9) What are the biggest challenges of owner-handling your dogs?

Patience when something goes wrong and trying to bring a dog back from whatever it is. Also I think that sometimes there is a lack of respect for the owner-handler if they are not a professional. Not as bad as it used to be but there are still judges that will not put up a dog no matter how nice unless a pro handler is on the end of a lead.

### 10) What do owner-handlers need to consider if they want to be competitive in the ring?

I think the whole picture, present your dog to the best of your ability, always watch the pro's and pick up tips (most of them are amazingly helpful and will help if they can). Look professional and develop your own style and always show respect to the judge and competitors in the ring with you.

### 11) 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.

No! I have had wonderful success with my dogs.

### 12) Do you feel there is any stigma against owner-handlers in Great Danes and if yes please explain.

I think everyone has to show they are in it for the long haul if you do people will pay attentions and help, if you don't then people will dismiss you and offer no help.

### 13) What tips would you give a new owner-handler to help them step up their game?

Always ask questions be friendly and take note when people offer advice. I try to take everything in good and bad and apply what I can. I am still learning and I don't think you ever stop.

### 14) What is the most valuable advice you ever received about handling your own dogs from a professional handler?

STOP Fiddling!! I get nervous and start to mess with my dog thinking I can do better but it just makes the dog nervous and then you are both defeating the purpose.



**15) What is the most helpful technique you ever learned just by watching professional handlers?** Bait to free stack. I have more luck letting my dogs stack alone and bait than I do standing them and holding them.

**16) What are some common mistakes you see owner-handlers committing in the ring?** Sloppy presentation, my Grandma always said dress for success and I try to take it to heart. Look neat and develop your own style, but dress to compliment your dog and yourself.

**17) What have been some of your show ring successes as an owner-handler?** I have shown my girls to a Best in Specialty Show, and several Specialty wins.

**18) What are some of the most rewarding things about owner-handling for you?** The sense of accomplishment and friendships I have developed over the years with people I trust and respect.

**19) Most professional handlers began as owner-handlers. What keeps you from taking that same route?** I take friends dogs in for them when asked and love that but I don't consider myself a pro so feel it would be presumptuous to charge like one.

**20) Who is your favorite judge and why?**

I have several, and all because they judge the dog to the Standard and do not play political games in the ring.