

Meet . . .

Owner-Handler

## Lisbeth Sørflaten Høgmo

Nordic Giant



- 1) **Tell us your whole name.** Lisbeth Sørflaten Høgmo
- 2) **Number of years showing dogs.** 18 years
- 3) **Your kennel name & how you got it.** Nordic Giant. Wanted a named that was associated with the nordic country that I live in, and of course the giant breed that the Great Dane is.
- 4) **Where you live.** I live in the vest part of Norway, near the city Bergen.
- 5) **Where do you travel to show?** Mostly shows in Norway, but there has been some shows to our neighbor countries Sweden and Finland.
- 6) **How many shows do you attend in a year?** It can be a variable numbers of show from ten to seventeen.
- 7) **Have you ever hired and/or used professional handlers and for what purpose?** I have hired and used professional handlers when I not have been able to be at the showground, or had entered several dogs to the same classes and needed help.
- 8) **What made you decide to owner-handle your Great Danes?** First of all will I like to explain for the readers that here in my country it not so common to use professional handlers as it is in your country. I was born into a family who breed dogs, and I was allowed by my father to pick my own Siberian husky puppy when I was about 12 years old. This was the first dog I showed, I can't remember that it was any discussion about it however I should show it myself or not. It went well, and I have always enjoyed showing and handling dogs since that. It has been natural for me to show my own dogs.
- 9) **What are the greatest advantages of owner-handling your dogs?** The greatest advantages for me is that I can work and train my dogs from they are puppies during the whole year, also outside the show season. I also get to know my own dogs well.
- 10) **What are the biggest challenges of owner-handling your dogs?** The challenges is to get good handler help when I have more than one dog entered at the same show.
- 11) **What do owner-handlers need to consider if they want to be competitive in the ring?** Besides, from having a good dog, you must be able to show your dog as best as possible and present it in a positive way. The dog must be in show condition and have gotten the needed exercise.
- 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.** I have not felt that personal no.
- 13) **Do you feel there is any stigma against owner-handlers in Great Danes and if yes please explain.** Maybe? Some seems too believe that if you have a professional handler on your dog it will win, or if you have a well-known face. Fact is that a good handler know how to show a dog in the best way and some handlers will not show a low quality dog. If you are owner-handler and attend to many shows during the years, you will undeniable be recognized...

14) **What tips would you give a new owner-handler to help them step up their game?** To get a good show dog is not something that happens over the night, it is several hours of work during the whole year, or even several years. Even the best puppy can be destroyed in the hands of an unexperienced owner, as a beginner you must ask for advices to feed and exercise your puppy the correct way from your breeder, or others who have the knowledge. The show training must start early in a positive way for the little puppy, and must not be over done in my opinion. Only few minutes at the time.

Learn how to present your dog as best as possible in the ring. Personal I like to see a dog be stacked as natural as possible in good balance. Movements have to be showed in the best way, and running forward and back to the judge in a straight line is very revealing for the movements, it is important to show this as good as possible.

To get good movements the dog also needs correct exercise.

To understand more about what the judges are looking for it can be a good advice to know and understand the breed standard. Many I meet at shows has never read the breed standard. How can they then know how their dog should look like if they not can their breed standard? In the standard, we can for example read that our breed shall have a long elegant neck, so if your dog has a short neck, how can you improve that part?

Study experience handlers, go to handler classes, and of course have fun with your dog.

Remember that the dog is the same either you win or not. Ask for advices ,be humble, and remember that even when you have showed for several years there will always be new things to learn!

15) **What is the most valuable advice you ever received about handling your own dogs from a professional handler?** I am not sure, maybe to have faith in my own dog and myself?

16) **What is the most helpful technique you ever learned just by watching professional handlers?** To show the dog in natural balance.

17) **What are some common mistakes you see owner-handlers committing in the ring?** Many are not good enough prepared.

Second is that they keep moving one leg, then the next leg, then another leg... even the dog stood good from the start... In the end the dog looks as it not can stand on it own four legs at all.

Then many have no idea of how they shall show movements.

18) **What have been some of your show ring successes as an owner-handler?** I have gotten several champions that I have owned and handled myself.

19) **What are some of the most rewarding things about owner-handling for you?** It is to finish a dog. I also love to show veterans.

20) **Most professional handlers began as owner-handlers. What keeps you from taking that same route?** That would been huge fun, but as a breeder with puppies and adults at home to care for, I would simply not have enough time.

21) **Who is your favorite judge and why?** Without doubt, breed specialists or the judge who have special interest in the Great Dane.

The reason is as simple as that they know the breed and the breed standard.

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?** I have not seen it.... Guess I must see it after this question!