

# Westminster Dog Show (USA)

By Janna Morgan



evrmor@comcast.net

www.evrmor.com

*Editor's Note: Janna Morgan's Rottweiler, AM/CAN CH Evrmor's Legend of Stoneridge, CD, RE, HSAAs, TT was invited to Westminster in 2005. Her second Rottweiler, Best In Show, Best In Speciality Show CH Evrmor Xtrodinaire V Stoneridge, CGC was invited in 2008, and her toy Manchester Terrier was invited both in 2009 and 2010, CH Evrmor's Ruby of Burmack. Janna owned the first dog and bred the others.*



The Kentucky Derby and the Westminster Dog Show are the oldest, continuously held sporting events in the United States. This year's Westminster Dog Show is the 134th time where owners, handlers, and their dogs convene to compete for one of the most coveted prizes in the world for dog breeders - The Westminster Kennel Club "Best in Show."

The Westminster Kennel Club was initiated by a group of sporting dog enthusiasts in 1876. The Club's initial interest was with sporting competition and its greatest competitor was the Pointer named "Sensation." Through the years, the Club has done well to preserve the memory of Sensation by adopting his picture as the club logo.



The Westminster Kennel Club evolved to include an interest in all dog breeds. The Club's intent is to encourage the improvement of each breed as determined by its standard set by the American Kennel Club and to hold an annual dog show

encouraging all AKC approved breeds to compete in New York City. With only a few exceptions in its early years, the Westminster Dog Show is held in February at the Madison Square Garden event center and is held annually, regardless of World Wars, power shortages, national depressions, or snow storms.

The Westminster Dog Show limits dog entries only to dogs who have earned their AKC champion of record title. The Show draws entries from each state in the United States and draws entries from Canada and many other countries as well. The competition is truly an international event.



*Multi VI, Multi VISS, Multi USRC Select, Shelkon's A Cool Java Blend, CDX, BH, AD, RAE, HT, CS, TT Owner: Irv Ploke Westminster 2003; Handler Daviann Mitchell Photo by CPM*

Dogs coming from distant cities may arrive two or three days before the Show opens. New York City throws open its doors, welcoming breeders, handlers, and the dogs themselves. The Show is a benched, sanctioned event, meaning that participant dogs must remain on site during designated hours and facilities are made available for them. For the millions of people who attend the show to observe the event, there are signs pointing to the benching location of their favorite breeds.

Almost two years in advance of every show, the Show Committee begins the selection of the judging panel of approximately forty judges. The dog that reaches the top at Westminster will have been passed upon by three different judges - the judge of the breed, the judge of the group, and the Best in Show judge. The Show is two days of continuous judging - breed judging in the day with group judging in the evening. By the evening of the second day, only seven dogs, representing each of the seven groups, remain in the competition from the more than 2,500 dogs that opened the two-day show. Finally, to the thrill of all in attendance, only one dog, representing 170 different breeds of dogs, will stand alone in the center of the Garden arena: Best in Show at Westminster!

Terriers have had remarkable success in the Show - a terrier has won the top prize 42 times. The oldest original Westminster catalog in my collection is 1953. It shows only one entry for the Rottweiler. In this year's Westminster Dog Show, the Rottweiler breed entries totaled 32 with dogs coming from 17 different states. The Rottweiler has placed only 4 times in Working Group and won the Group only once, in 2006. He was Ch. Carter's Noble Shaka Zulu. No Rottweiler has ever won Best in Show.

Attending and competing in the Westminster Dog Show is a thrill greater than can be imagined. However, regardless of a win or miss, you know in your heart that you will be taking home the "Best in Show."