

Bettering The Breed

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There is a woman who lives here whom I've known for close to 20 years. She's one of those people that you can never forget. She's gracious, kind, thoughtful, and generous with her time, all while being a good sport. I'm sure you know many people who fit this description; but, I am describing someone who is also a dog breeder and fellow show competitor. Her stable, sincere character overflows into the doggie world most of us live in. She has a true love for the breed. She reflects her adoration of the Rottweiler in her words and deeds, and genuinely tries to better the breed through those whose lives she touches. Her character is a rarity: as I am discovering nowadays, it is more of an anomaly rather than the norm.

I am talking about a subject rarely discussed openly. I know most of you who are reading this know exactly what I am speaking of. On the surface, we see sportsmanship, well wishes and camaraderie. But beneath that, and behind the scenes, it can be much different. I have often wondered where our "love for the breed" has gone. For that matter, where are we aiming our focus when we stand on our soap boxes and preach "to better the breed"?

How is it, then, that in the USA, and I would imagine in other countries around the world, can you love the Rottweiler, yet despise the winner if the dog is not yours? Should we not all be proud of a Group or Best in Show placing Rottweiler in an All-Breed Show? Or at an All-Breed performance event? Yet time and time again, I know for a fact that there are resentful competitors who refuse to acknowledge, support, or congratulate a deserved title or win.

Regardless of who wins, to reach such status as "Best in Show," "High in Trial," or "Top Scoring Dog" for any Rottweiler is an achievement in itself. As lovers of this breed, one would imagine unbridled admiration, pride, and high esteem for any Rottweiler attaining such a coveted prize from everyone claiming to love the breed.



The show scene is not the only place where prejudice within our breed is happening. In a time where some places in our world are threatened with losing the right to own our beloved breed, we have people causing division

within the American Rottweiler Club over tails. I've seen the look of disgust on people's faces at the sight of a tailed Rottweiler. In fact, just last year an incident occurred at a large specialty show where a respected European titled dog won Best of Breed. This win caused the Internet forums to go haywire over the win: not because the dog lacked merit, but because he had a tail. Is he not just as good a Rottweiler with

a tail as without? Have we gone so far to one extreme that we cannot see past our own prejudices and preconceived ideas? How can we say we love the breed, but only cast our adoration under certain situations?

If we truly love this breed, should we not cultivate new interest, and guide and encourage new people within the breed rather than cast stones at the mistakes they make? I've read about new people who are crucified mercilessly on Internet forums, shaming them for asking questions they seek resolve for. In some instances, this forever pushes them back into the darkness from where they came. Where are all the mentors?



I've been lucky. One of the first people I met in the doggie community was a great mentor for me. She sparked my interest in furthering my Rottweiler hobby and getting involved in ethical community organizations that did positive things for our breed. We all need more people like Sylvia Werner. We need mentors who don't get jaded over the years, who can talk and listen with a fresh perspective. Mentors who, no matter how famous they become and how prestigious their dog adventures make them, will always have a spare moment to lend a helping hand. Mentors who can take a moment to appreciate another dog's merits: the merits of a dog that just defeated their own dog in the ring. Mentors with the ability to see from the other side of the hand they are shaking, that the person on the receiving end is also forming a love for the same breed. They, too, represent us and represent the Rottweiler, in all its good and bad qualities.

When we see those who own this breed and cast a bad light on its reputation, we must ask ourselves, "did we contribute to the Rottweiler's demise?" Think hard about this question. Breeders out there, think about the times we've answered inquiries for puppies from well-meaning newbies and we've declined their request because we place our pups only in the best show homes. Who, then, do these new people turn to? How often are new people told to seek out "ethical breeders" only to be turned away because they are not a "show home?" If "pet people" do their due diligence and yet cannot find their puppy from you, where do you think they will go out of sheer frustration and lack of contacts? My point exactly.

There are pages upon pages of dialog regarding theories of "Bettering the Breed." Well, I say before we start talking about the aspects of reproduction in bettering the breed, we must all first start by offering the Rottweiler our UNCONDITIONAL support.