

Laughing All The Way To The Top

BY YOSSI GUY

PHOTOS BY YOSSI GUY

Ch. Katwala's Laughing Man, an American bred Australian Cattle Dog, won Israel's second largest show this year, the Hope Cup. On the way he outshone a gorgeous Italian-bred Maltese and a very successful Cairn Terrier.

Following a radical change in the Israeli Kennel Club board, three of the biggest breed clubs got together for the first time to produce Israel's second largest show. Not an all-breed show, but a two-day complex of club shows that attracted over 200 dogs on the first day and 300-plus on the second day (our average all-breed show has an entry of 500-600 dogs).

"It all began almost a year ago when I contacted the president of the Mastiff-Type Dogs Club," recalled the originator of the idea, Mrs. Yolanda Nagler, president of the Toy Dog Club. "We decided to invite two foreign judges, Mr. Aramis Joey Lim from Australia and Mr. Stefan Stefic of Slovakia. We wanted to have back-to-back shows, switching judges between the clubs on two consecutive days. Then, several months ago, the Herding Dog Club wanted to join, so we invited a third judge, Mr. Cristian Stefanescu of Romania. A few other, smaller, breed clubs jumped on the wagon, including terriers, Schnauzers, Dobermans, Min Pins, Pointers and Setters."

Then the issue of an appropriate location arose. Israel clubs usually have small, one-ring shows at rather remote venues, such as a Kibbutz. However, such places are not spacious enough to hold three rings, in particular since the place must have a roof



to avoid the rain that can come down in buckets at this time of year. The president of the terrier club managed to find a large school gym near Tel Aviv that could contain the expected number of dogs and people.

All stewards are volunteers and we needed to find the right people to help out in the rings. That was also quite a difficult task since we had to apply to clubs that were not taking part in the show because club members usually show their dogs.

The amount of cooperation we received enabled us to man the rings with top personnel.

The week before the show, the weather forecast warned of an impending stormy weekend. For Israelis, used to almost perpetual sunshine, that is a real damper. Many show-goers who are not completely hooked on the show scene may wake up in the morning, see a cloudy sky and decide not to get out of bed at all. Speculations were rife as to the amount of "deserters" we would have. CONTINUED ON PAGE 96

Laughing All The Way To The Top

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 54

On Friday morning, the first day of the show, the skies took pity on us and although cloudy, not a drop of rain came down. While Israeli judges, Dr. Rita Trainin and Mr. Moshe Rosenstein judged the toy dogs, Mr. Stefic judged Rhodesian Ridgebacks, Mr. Stefanescu judged the Mastiff-type dogs, including English Bulldogs, Neapolitan Mastiff, Bull Mastiff, Cane Corso, Shar Pei, Dog de Bordeaux and Canary Island Mastiff. Mr. Lim had a mixed bag of English and German Pointers, Weimaraner, Vizsla, Irish Setter, Min Pins and Schnauzers, with a couple of Airedale Terriers to boot.

After each of the clubs held its best in show judging, the winners of the puppy, junior, veteran and club BIS got together to select the best of the day. Mr. Lim picked the Maltese, Cinecitta'il Codice da Vinci, bred in Italy by Mr. Stefano and owned by handler Maya Shtirbu.

"This dog is 'finger-licking good,'" remarked the club president. "He was imported from one of the world's leading kennels in Italy. He is a real star – excellent conformation, character and carriage. He has already sired several top-quality offspring and has given the breed here a new lease on life."

On the second day, the Herding Dog Club consisting of Collie, Sheltie, Border Collie and many other breeds, joined the party, as did the Terrier Club with mainly Scotties, Westies and Cairn Terriers.

The best puppy of the day was a Cairn Terrier, bred and owned by Dorit Dembin (whose dog represented Israel in the 2007 Eukanuba World Challenge). The best junior of the day was a Bulldog bred and owned by the Habani family. Best veteran was a Belgian Groenendael bitch, Ch. Liza Bilha, bred and owned by Bilha Koninsky.

The lineup at the end of a grueling but fantastic day starred the previous day's Maltese, alongside a perky Cairn Terrier and the aforementioned Austra-



lian Cattle Dog. Mr. Stefanescu put the dogs through their paces one last time and then placed "Hugo" first, before the Maltese and Cairn.

The sheer joy on the face of owner, Hagai Manor, was precious. This hard-working man fell in love with the breed some time ago and after acquiring two locally bred dogs decided to take the leap and get a top-quality dog from the USA.

"I looked for a dog in both the USA and Europe," says Tali Krotman who helped Hagai with the search. "The types I saw in the USA were quite diverse. I reached the Web site, and saw dogs of a type that took my fancy. The breeder was quite difficult at the beginning, concerned about sending a dog to such a distant land, but after being in touch for some time we began to understand each other. We hope Hugo will do a lot of good for the breed here."

Kathleen Buetow of Katwala's Kennel, Hugo's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 98

Laughing All The Way To The Top

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 96

breeder joined the greetings, writing: "What incredible news! Give him a big pat on the head and an extra hug from back here in the USA! I'm so glad that you're happy with him!"

"The Cattle Dog is among my favorite breeds in the herding group," noted judge Stefanescu. "I was quite surprised to see a dog of this quality here in Israel."

"Over the past two days," he continued, "I was really impressed by the Cane Corso in number and quality, as well as the Shar Pei. English Bulldogs were not surprising because I've seen your dogs before, but it's a difficult breed for both breeders and judges. In the herding dogs I had a medium quality entry. I expected more from the Rough Collie, but there was nothing to surprise me here. Some were old type, others a new, more correct type, but handling could be better."

"On the other hand, you have a lot of excellent young handlers – they are your future. It is important to implant them with the 'show virus.' I did my best to encourage them. I was also impressed to note the amicable atmosphere in and out of the ring. People were not at each other's throats when their rivals won and all in all they were quite gracious towards one another."

Mr. Stefic also noted the quality of the Shar Pei. "I had a few excellent Dobermans, but many were over-angulated behind, creating a wrong croup. There were some good quality dogs in other breeds, for instance Rhodesian Ridgeback, in which the overall quality was all right but the number of dogs was not something to write home about. Some of them had steep front angulation that adversely influenced their movement. Many people fail to understand this breed requires free movement with good reach and drive. All of them did have good temperament, something that has been on the decline in Europe lately."

All judges were impressed with the stewards. "The show was very well organized," noted Stefic. "The technical team in the ring was very professional," added Stefanescu. "The organizers did their best to have nice prizes, impressive trophies and good conditions for the exhibitors."

"This is the beginning of something new for Israeli clubs," said Dr. Lazar Gerassi, president of the Israeli Doga Club. "The cooperation we saw here may lead to future cooperation in club-initiated all-breed shows." •

