

TERRIER GROUP

We are so blessed to share our lives with this affable fellow. —*Karen Lapierre, 2009*
Airedale Terrier Club of America

Australian Terriers

A JUDGING STANDARD

What makes the perfect judge? Some owners might say it is the judge who likes their dog best. I beg to differ. Yes, I want each judge to choose my dog for Best of Breed, Best of Winners, and so on, but that is not what makes the perfect judge. In my opinion, the perfect judge is the one who gives my dog, win or lose, the same consideration as every other dog in his class.

I had the opportunity to show to a judge last weekend whom I would consider “Best in Show,” as the judge’s performance in the ring was very close to the standard I would love to see all judges aspire to. Watching him judge the breeds prior to mine, I could tell he took his job seriously. First, he acknowledged each individual as he noted his or her armband number. He then stood back and looked at each stacked dog before he asked the group to move around the ring one at a time, on his signal. He watched the side movement of each dog, turning his head to follow them as they moved across in front of him before he signaled the next. He did not look into the other



Australian Terrier Ch. Elvyne
Regal Salute, c. 1960
(Tauskey photo)

ring nor make eye contact with someone outside the ring, as I have seen other judges do.

After the last dog went by, he turned and regarded the first dog in line waiting for him on the table. After first taking a second to view the overall picture, he positioned himself so the dog could see him coming and talked soothing nonsense as he made contact. He asked the handler to show the bite and then used not just his eyes but also his hands to measure the proportions of the head and body. You could tell he even used his hand to find the distinctive keel that shows an Aussie has its forelegs set well under the body, which is something a lot of judges never even look

for. He then asked the handler to move his dog down and back, and he maneuvered so that he had a clear view of that dog’s movement. Once every dog was individually evaluated, he walked down the line of stacked dogs to view expressions before asking everyone to move around the ring as a group. When he announced his BB, BOS, and Select choices, was my dog one of them? Nope. However, I walked out of the ring feeling that my dog was given a fair consideration, and that all the work I put into breeding, grooming, and training was not ignored.

This is a far cry from the treatment I received from one judge many years ago who

made his choice, surprising the professional handler on the only other dog in our class by choosing his dog over mine. The handler knew that my dog was clearly the better of the two and mouthed “Sorry” as I congratulated him. The judge, however, shocked both of us further when he said to me, as he handed me the second-place ribbon, “It isn’t who you are, but who you are not.” Needless to say, I never wasted my money or time on that judge again. There are very few judges whom I avoid, as I feel that in the spirit of competition I need to show to judges who may not care for my dogs so that my competitors will show against me later to a judge who may not care for their dogs. That is what happened last weekend, and the experience made it well worth the effort.

—Grace Massey, Gloucester, Virginia
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Australian Terrier Club of America

Bedlington Terriers

PRIORITIES AND CONCERNS

I was invited to join my breed’s parent club 42 years ago when I attended my first Montgomery weekend and national specialty. I was Best of Winners with my dog under John Marvin, so the dummy from Texas was fresh meat for the shakers and movers. A few