

A Blast From The Past

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A Gratifying Concept

One of the most satisfying things in the world is helping others learn about one's chosen breed. Thirty years have passed since I acquired my first Australian Terrier, and I think back I remember the individuals who took the time to share their knowledge about the Aussie with a newcomer to their world.

The communication took place both in person and in writing. When I found my first show Aussie I also found a mentor who patiently explained so many things that I now find myself explaining to the next generation. Nell Fox would send detailed pages answering a question I'd raise - sometimes continuing on to the outside of the envelope with just one more thought.

There were also lessons in grooming that I appreciated, Mary Cobet, Mae Roo, and Mary Mead were willing to share their knowledge. After my show ring debut, Mary Cobet declared "I can't stand it any more! I'll help you with your dog's coat." (Until then I thought that was something done in seedy little joints in border towns). Mae showed me how to groom feet to make them catlike and natural looking, as if untouched by human hands. Mary Mead shared with me how to sculpt an Aussie head, removing hairs with fingers, scissors, and a stripping knife.



Rosamond Hathaway taught me there are two sides to a dog - the exhibitor's side and the judge's side. and one had better check both! A topline may look just fine on one side, but there can be a serious dip on the other that will result in no points for the day.

There were those who helped me understand the structure and movement of our Aussies. Ida Ellen Weinstock proved herself invaluable. Her greatest gift was allowing me to move her specialty Best of Breed girl so that I realized one can "feel" the dog's movement through the lead. When evaluating, one of the best questions to ask is, "May I move your dog?" Wit this simple exercise a world of information comes into the left hand holding the lead.

For years in the Aussie world there has been an ongoing, heated discussion about whether to breed only red to red and blue/tan to blue/tan. Ida Ellen's words of wisdom based upon experience were, "Breed the best to the best!"

Many people - and you know who you are - have given their thoughts on grooming, exhibiting, and breeding of the Australian Terrier. They fully understand Jack Lemmon's advice: "If you're lucky enough to have done well, then it's your responsibility to send the evaluator back down."

Indeed, it is just fine to ask each other about tips. I have noticed that a number of the people mentioned above (especially Mae Roo) would never pontificate about what should be done. but, if asked directly, they would share a thoughtful answer and often a demonstration as a follow-up lesson. It is important as a follow-up lesson. It is important to pass on the good fortune that's come to you, and the ideas you are putting to use. It is a very rich, rewarding concept.

