

# Today's Breeder<sup>®</sup>

ISSUE 14/\$2.95

A PURINA PUBLICATION DEDICATED TO THE NEEDS OF TODAY'S BREEDER.

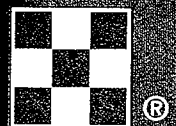
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## BREEDER PROFILE

Lynn DeRosa, breeder of champion toy poodles, began her distinguished career in dogs almost 30 years ago with a single black miniature. To this day Lynn remembers the bitch, named Rene, with the kind of tenderness usually reserved for family members. The two of them were inseparable. Although Rene was not show quality, she happened to possess some very nice bloodlines. So nice, in fact, that she went on to become the foundation for Lynn's very first champion.

Today, Lynn remains enamored with the beautiful and talented poodle. Her kennel includes a wealth of toys, all black like the original Rene. "I love the black toy's elegance," she says simply. Lynn feels there are clear contrasts between the ever-popular white and black toy poodles, especially in the chiseling of the bone of the face. "I think there is a definite difference between the bridge of the nose and the muzzle," she says. She prefers the appearance of a square muzzle over a pointed one. "Squareness of muzzle is usually seen on the standard poodle," she explains, "but not on smaller versions of the breed. I love that look, and that's what I try to produce."

Having just finished her 73rd champion, Lynn is an authority on the breed. She's proud to say that hers were the only black toys invited to participate in the American Kennel Club's poodle breed standard videotape. However, Lynn is quick to point out that she breeds to satisfy her own vision of perfection, one that does not always coincide with the opinions of others. Her decisions are based on what is beneficial for the breed as well as pleasing to her eye. Take structure, for instance. "There's nothing I like better than watching my dogs run through the pastures of our farm," she says, referring to her 37-acre home in Virginia. She will not compromise on structural soundness. "Structural soundness, yes, but also elegance," she adds. These few words characterize her image of the well-bred toy poodle.



# LYNN DEROSA OF DALIN KENNELS

## TOYING WITH SUCCESS

All Dalin Kennel poodles are tested for hereditary eye disease before they are bred. Lynn is extremely concerned about the incidence of progressive retinal atrophy in the breed and looks forward to the availability of DNA screening tests.

Dalin Kennel maintains three lines of black toys, which Lynn compares to having her own outcross. Nevertheless, all of her dogs are true to a single type. "I know the type of dog I like," she says with confidence. "It has the total balance of a giraffe. I've always admired the giraffe's long neck and the beautiful way it moves with the head held up. The poodle standard calls for a square appearance, but I feel a dog with a shorter back and a little more length of leg is a more elegant animal."

"Type and balance are two words that tend to be confused," she continues. "To my eye, overall balance in a dog means the right amount of bone combined with body size for that particular dog. Too much bone makes a dog appear heavy, less refined. Also, I don't care for an overly long headpiece on a short-bodied animal."

Lynn formally evaluates her litters at 5, 9, 13 and occasionally 16 weeks. She begins by standing over the 5-week-old puppy and looking down, checking to see whether it is compact from head to tail and judging how well it can balance on its legs. The 9-week-old puppies are observed at play; when they come to a halt, Lynn feels that their feet should point straight forward. "Elbows shouldn't be underneath the chest or feet heading off in either direction," she says.

At 13 weeks, Lynn turns her attention to attitude. Active youngsters should hold the head up, she believes, and when in the company of other dogs, should not cower or withdraw. "They must have a stable attitude," she insists. Some puppies are reevaluated at 16 weeks, at which time Lynn feels she can gain a better impression of head structure.

To breeders of large and mid-sized dogs, the word "litter" usually conjures up the image of several pup-

## BREEDER PROFILE

pies. But toy bitches commonly produce a single puppy, says Lynn, adding yet another challenge to the complicated breeding equation. Therefore, in order to remain competitive toy breeders often keep a number of active breeding dogs in their program. Remember, says Lynn, "first the toy puppy has to survive, and that's not always easy. Then it must be the right size. Next it must be pretty, typey, well balanced and have fairly decent legs and feet. Finally, it must hold its head and tail up, and ask to be shown."

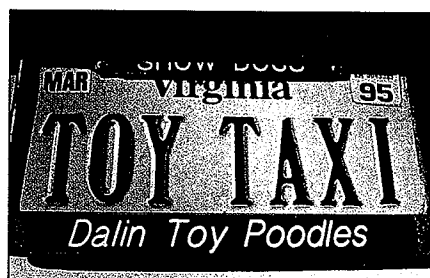
She personally handles almost all of her own dogs. Lynn enjoys the competition, the camaraderie of the show world-- even the intricacies of poodle grooming. "I like to win," she says, "but that's not the whole thing. I also adore making the dogs look pretty and showing them off." She learned basic grooming skills many years ago from Dr. Arthur North, a well-known consulting veterinary surgeon for Cornell University, and went on to operate her own grooming business until she moved to another state. Working alongside a professional handler in Michigan for close to 15 years helped polish her grooming and scissoring techniques.

Now it can justly be said that in a breed where grooming is elevated to an art form, Lynn is an expert. Nothing, she says, makes her heart beat faster than imagining the hours of meticulous grooming that go into a line-up of stunning show dogs. When she is not on the road heading to or from shows, she spends around six hours of each day--from noon to 6 p.m.--grooming her own dogs.

Lynn runs her kennel like a tight ship. The morning hours are devoted to putting pairs of dogs out in the runs, preparing food, cleaning and doing other kennel chores. In the evening she takes the dogs indoors, mixes their feed and socializes the puppies while checking out their development and show or breeding potential.

All of the dogs, from puppies to retirees, are fed Pro Plan® brand dog

foods. Lynn feels the size of the Pro Plan Performance kibble is perfect for toy-sized mouths, and says the Pro Plan diets help promote good health and coat growth. Each pair of



*Top to bottom: Int'l. Fr. Bel. Lux. CH. Dalin Santiago "Senior"; Lynn's dog license; meticulous grooming is a time-consuming but ultimately rewarding task.*

dogs receives a portion of dry food in the morning, which they are allowed to eat ad lib for the rest of the day (they are fed again at night).

The retirees receive Pro Plan Lite

Formula. Almost all of the breeding stock eat Pro Plan Adult Formula until they are bred and if Lynn feels they need more calcium and other nutrients, then they are switched to Pro Plan Brand Growth. Lynn's show dogs dine on dry Performance Formula during the day, but their evening meal is moistened and mixed with some Pro Plan canned food. This entices them to eat that extra little bit, she says, and gain the weight that may give them an edge in the show.

Lynn has had many victories in the show ring, such as the time Ch. Dalin Haley's Comet won the Variety at the 1983 specialty under Judge Edward Clark. The Dalin Kennel poodle with the brightest show career currently, however, is Ch. Dalin Cordaroy. "Roy" finished his championship as a puppy, and was honored by a well-respected breeder-judge with the Award of Merit at the 1992 national specialty. Currently co-owned by a dog fancier in Japan, where he completed his Japanese championship, "Roy" travels regularly to Thailand and Korea for shows and returns to the US for specialties and Westminster. He produced five American champions in 1993, all of whom Lynn finished within the year. "Roy's" oldest puppy, Int'l. Fr. Bel. Lux. CH. Dalin Santiago, was sent by Lynn to France, where he became the number-one dog in late 1993. His owners call every Monday with fresh progress reports.

"My dogs have done very well in Europe," says Lynn. In fact, in late 1993 one of her dogs received Best of Variety and Best of Breed in a French show that is comparable to an American regional specialty. It went on to take a Group II and then finished at a major show the following week. A continent away, a black toy poodle sired by Ch. Dalin Kubla Kahn won the Variety at the 1993 World Show in Brazil. Yet other poodles of Lynn's breeding reside in Hawaii and the Netherlands.

"I am proud to have bred dogs I believe in," says Lynn. Evidently there is no earthly limit to their success.