

## **It's Been a Great Show**

It's been a pleasure and an honor to write about one of the most wonderful creatures I've been fortunate to know and love, the Chihuahua. Throughout my lifetime I have owned and loved many dogs. Working, herding, hound, terrier, sporting, non-sporting, toy breeds, and mutts have all been a part of my education into the world of dogs.

It wasn't until I became involved in the dog show world that I gained an in-depth knowledge of the dog. When trying to choose a dog to participate in the show world, I wanted a dog who was easy to transport, easy to groom, and didn't have many health issues. I owned Australian Shepherds at the time, but that was before they were AKC accepted, and the breed was not eligible to compete in the show ring. I thought the long-coat Chihuahua looked like a tiny Aussie with a tail, so I decided that was going to be my breed.

Little did I know how much I would come to love this breed. Smart beyond my expectations, willing to do anything a big dog would, and possessing a loyalty second to none. The long-coats were my joy for years, and one day I decided to try a different breed. Toy Fox Terriers had just been AKC approved, and I considered this breed. Having read their standard, I realized just how different it was from the Chihuahua standard and felt maybe this could be a conflict. Then one day, my friend had a lovely smooth-coat Chihuahua male available. The light bulb went on, and I decided this was to be my "new breed." Lucky for me, my new little boy, Mr. Lucky, was an absolute dream to show, as he floated around the ring as if he had wings. This began my love of the smooth-coat Chihuahua.

Either long or smooth coat, the Chihuahua has brought me so many years of joy and excellence. *Puppies, puppies, puppies*—is there anything that makes a person smile more? The joy of breeding and raising a puppy to adulthood and participation in the show ring is a special kind of thrill. I reached a personal goal of winning Best Bred-by in Show at the Regional CCA specialty last October, during CCA national specialty week. As a breeder, this was the pinnacle of my show career.

It was also this past year that I bred my first "tiny" two-pound Chihuahua, whom I chose to keep as my pet. She has taught me the joys of buying fancy doggy totes and shopping the Internet for those special "outfits" that come in XXS. It just feels fun. It has come to that place for me to slow down on breeding for the show ring and to take myself and my dog world a little less seriously.

I have had such exciting experiences and made some wonderful friendships these past 20-plus years in the show world and wouldn't trade them for anything. I have bred, loved, and buried some wonderful little dogs that will always hold a special place in my heart. While I don't believe we ever really retire, I have decided to take a step back and watch those wonderful younger breeders carry on in the best interest of this fabulous breed we all love, the Chihuahua.

I thank those who helped me get started, with a special thank-you to my sister who recently passed away, Courtney Ours Roberts, of Coryrex Pugs. Courtney talked me into getting involved in this crazy dog show world and was instrumental in finding a quality breeder who would place a beautiful show dog with a "newbie." Thank you, Sis, it's been a journey.

Thanks to all my readers through these years. I hope my words have been beneficial to you in some way. Keep your dogs safe and your hearts full.

—*Virginia (Jenny) Hauber*