

Potomac 2007 Judge's Critique

Judge Mary A. Wiest

To: The Labrador retriever Club of Potomac

From: Mary A. Wiest

The 2007 Labrador Retriever Club of Potomac show is over, now in the history books. The Potomac club asked me to judge this show over a year ago. I can't tell you how honored and scared I was. To judge Best of Breed at Potomac was a dream, a dream that was now coming true. I was thrilled and yes, a little bit scared of the huge responsibility of picking that one dog for Best of Breed from the 100+ Specials that were entered. When thinking about this show and how I wanted my ring to be run, I thought what would work best for the outside of the ring to see the dogs and what would work best for me. I was worrying my self for over a year about this. I also wanted the "pull" to really mean something. That the dogs I pulled were really being considered for Best of Breed. It was extremely hard to pick so few dogs from so many good ones for the pull. An incredibly hard task. In my final line-up, I could have put any of them up for Best of Breed and I would have been right. The depth of quality is incredible. Thank you all for showing these special dogs to me.

I was so pleased to see that most of the Specials had correct tail sets and carriage. This is something that has needed improvement in the breed and you breeders corrected it. How Lovely! Most of the coats were correct in every way. Bone and substance were excellent. Shoulders are still a problem, not so much with a short upper arm but with the neck going past the shoulder blades, giving a high neck line. I worry about this because when these dogs jump and come down, those shoulder blades will pinch the neck. That would have to hurt. Many of the dogs' hocks do not open when they move, (cycle hocked) making for lack of drive in the rear. For the first time in many years, I saw light eyes on some of the blacks, giving them a hard expression. I was so pleased to see many of the dogs again have the sweet, kind expression that a Labrador should have.

It is so impressive to see the Breeders in this country take a problem and fix it. My hat is off to all of you.

My Best of Breed dog, Ch. Copperstill Fors Fortis bred by Keri Schooler. By Dickendall Starfish and out of Horizon Dickendall Fat Toosday, owned by Keri Schooler. His head had the sweet, kind expression we want, good length of neck, going into good shoulders, topline was strong with tail and tail set good. Good bone and substance. Moved well. All of the dogs that I gave Awards of Merit ribbons to were of equal quality; there was just something about this dog that finally put him over the top. Best of Opposite was Ch. Lobuffs Puffin at Hollyridge bred by Lisa Weiss and Julie Quigley-Smith by Ch. Boradors By George and out of Ch. Lobuff's Turle Dove. This bitch pushed very hard for the top win but was a bit over weight giving her a bit of roll at the neck. Her movement is excellent, loveley expression, good length of neck, strong top

line with good tail and tail set. Wonderful bone and substance and in excellent coat. Moved well.

My Best Puppy, Madabout's Say Cheese Please by Ch Chablais Sudden Impact - Staghorn Hot Toddy At Madabout, owned and breed by Janice Kivimaki and Henry Morin, is a lovely chocolate bitch in good coat. She has a lovely expression, with good reach of neck. Shoulder and rear angles in good balance, nice depth of chest. Well boned. Moved well. I would have taken this one home with me.

When I looked at my final line-up, it was a beautiful sight to see. So many excellent dogs. As I said I could have given Best of Breed to any of them and I would have been right.

Thank you all for giving me the privilege of judging your very special dogs. I will remember it forever.

Mary A. Wiest