



Interview with....

BREEDER JUDGE ANN GILBERT, SARKEL BOXERS

Please tell us how you started in boxers?

I was always drawn to the aristocratic look of the boxer from an early age. My first experience, however, with the boxer breed was back in the very late 1950's. As a teenage I took the death of our family Cocker Spaniel very hard and begged and pleaded with my parents to get me another dog. In those days going out and purchasing a purebred dog was something not commonly done by the working class. It was the generation where Mom's stayed at home and the family lived on whatever Dad brought home. I did, however, convince my father to drive me to the Humane Society in Pittsburgh to find the dog of my dreams. I had made up my mind that I wanted a Boxer or a German Shepherd and had high hopes that I would find one of them to take home with me. The variety of dogs was huge but I saw no Boxer or German Shepherd in the mix. My father was encouraging me to leave, thinking he had escaped me taking a puppy home, when a young man came walking in the front door with a basket full of fawn puppies – seven of them! I walked over to the young man and asked what kind of puppies they were? He said their Mom was a Boxer and the Dad was the German Shepherd next door. There was only one male in the basket and my eyes lit up and my heart sang as I realized I was getting both the breeds I was considering. Buster Brown came home with me that day. He was fawn with a black mask, the long German Shepherd nose and his tail curled over his back; he was intelligent with such a wonderful temperament and personality to spare. He was my first introduction to my own Boxer and although I always thought it was the German Shepherd side of him that I loved, years later when Herb and I brought our new boxer puppy home I then realized that my true love affair had been ignited by Buster's boxer ancestors.



Sarge and Kelly

Herb purchased his first Boxer, a Bangaway grandson, after getting out of the Air Force in 1954 but lost him before we were married. So when it came time for a dog for the kids, his choice was adamant, it must be a Boxer. Once we brought Sarge home I was completely convinced he was so right.

Who was your mentor?

My early mentor was Opal Adcock of Seedskidee Boxers in Denver, Colorado. Although not a well-known breeder she had such knowledge of our breed that she shared willingly with me. Books and magazines were always at my disposal and the long telephone calls were priceless. We acquired our first boxer from Opal, Gilbert's Sergeant At

Arms, a Treceder Sequel grandson, and a year later, again with Opal's help, we purchased our Kelly, Gilbert's Kelly Belle, her bloodline included some of the Willow Ridge, No Trump and Let's Box dogs. We bred a couple of litters with Sarge and Kelly to try my hand at applying the knowledge I THOUGHT I had. We did establish our kennel name as Sarkel, to honor the two boxers who started us on the adventure of a lifetime. Out of their second litter came Sarkel's Golden Apple. Badger had just barely begun his show career when fate stepped in and a move to Oklahoma put showing dogs once again on the back burner.

I also had the chance to learn from Pat Edwards of Moss Wood Boxers. Raising kids was always our first priority and our first show boxer was years away yet I still kept my eyes and ears opened by going to shows, and talking and listening to anyone who would give me the time of day. There were some who were rude and were not willing to give a "newbie" the time of day and there were some, like Pat and Ellie Wood who were perhaps "stern" with their advice but still willing to sit down and actually talk about the breed they so loved. "Throughout those early years there were handlers who gave me a great insight into what I should look for in a handler." "One can learn a lot by simply watching and visiting the various grooming areas to get a full picture of who and who you would not trust your fur kids to.

In 1974 we made the move from Colorado to Oklahoma and in 1975 our son, Paul, came along quite by surprise. With two teenagers and a new baby there was still no time or money for showing. We joined the local boxer club then and became very good friends with Bart and Jean Rowe of Cross Bars Boxers. Again I was fortunate enough to glean years of experience from them and in January 1982 I bred my Misty, Sarkel's Misty Morning, to Turo's Budweiser. Bart and Jean had purchased Bud from Turo Kennels to help set a good headpiece on their current breeding stock. The Cross Bar's name can be found in a number of top winning dogs, including the famous Ch. Turo's Cachet. Bud lacked one major from finishing and even though neither he or Misty were champions, their blood lines were full of boxer royalty, names like Fashion Hint, Shadrack and Cherokee Oaks to name a few.



CH SARKELS STAIRWAY TO STARDOM

What was the name of your first champion?

On March 30, 1982 our first homebred champion, Ch. Sarkel's Stairway to Stardom came into our lives and that path in pursuit of the perfect boxer has never wavered.

Sam (short for Samantha) was shown first by Carl Rounsaville and then finished by Bo & Pat Galle. Sam was two before I even put her in the ring. She taught me my first lesson in patience, wait for it and it will come. She quickly achieved all of her points except the last major. Because she was a late bloomer and did not have her first season until shortly before we started showing her, I questioned her fertility. Also, the

dog I had chosen to breed her to, Ch. Cross Bar's Constitution, was already nine years of age. I decided to stop showing her and breed her. There was NO fertility problem, with a 9-year-old stud dog and a maiden bitch. TWELVE puppies were conceived and on January 18, 1985 the next generation of boxers arrived at Casa Sarkel. Two of them became our second and third homebred champions, Ch. Sarkel's One-Step Above and

Ch. Sweet Katie Belle Of The Ball. Sam herself did not go back into the ring until she was four, recovering from the puppies, a tumor removed from one of her teats and a false pregnancy which blew her coat just before she was to go back on the show circuit delayed her return. By then she was competing with her daughters but showed she had staying power. She finished in August of 1989 and one month later she fell over dead in the back yard from a brain aneurysm.

As a breeder have you bred a particular dog or bitch you thought was special over others?

Left at home with only Sam's mother to comfort us, I sent Misty back to the whelping box and on March 30, 1986, (four years to the day after her half sister Sam had been born) Ch. Sarkel's Promise of Cross Bars, CD, CGC, DOM came into my life. Sadie was a bitch for all seasons. She loved the kids watched over them with the devotion so prevalent in our breed. She had that naughty spark about her though that made her a great show dog but sometimes not so easy to live with.

She was shown by Pat & Bo Galle and achieved her championship with little effort. As I mentioned, she was easily bored so I took her and her father, Gabby, Cross

Bar's Gabber Dean Hays (a Budweiser son) through obedience and both achieved their CD titles. Gabby completed his CD at the age of seven in three consecutive shows with an average score of 185. Sadie on the other hand, took four shows with a less respectable 178 average. Her third time in the obedience ring she showed me once again she would do things her way and decided that heel free really meant, "feel free." Although she ended up beside me at the end of the exercise she certainly had a good walkabout.



**CH SARKEL'S PROMIS OF
CROSS BARS,CD,CGC DOM**

On December 2, 1994 Sadie's daughter Mollie, Ch. Sarkel's Promising Future, presented the world with four gorgeous fawn puppies. She had been bred to Ch. Hi-Tech's Aladdin of Cynra, SOM and this breeding produced four champions, Ch. Sarkel's True Grit, Ch. Bomar's Sweet Charlotte, Ch. Mile's Magic Ditto and Ch. Miles Magic Tuff N Nuff. This breeding made Mollie my second DOM and made their sire, Biffle, a SOM in only two breedings here in the United States before he was sold to Japan. A fawn bitch from her second litter of two became Ch. Jasmine's Promise of Aladdin.



**SARKEL BEGINNINGS 2ND
LITTER**

These accomplishments were all part of Sadie's influence and although I love all my boxer kids equally I must say she was one of those I would have to say was truly special in every way. Her influence is still strong in my breeding program today.

Were there any particular dogs that you admired or thought represented what you wanted to breed or own?

When I attended my first National in Newark, New Jersey I spent every day sitting at ringside watching class after class. After a while I began to see a pattern being established about the young dogs I liked in the ring. By the end of the week it became easy for me to select the dogs I really liked and all were sired by either Ch. Fiero's Tally – Ho Tailo, SOM, SOMC, LOM or Ch. Berena's Gemini Splashdown, SOM, SOMC, LOM and LOMC. I never got a chance to breed to either of the dogs but in 1994 the opportunity to breed one of my girls to an Arbitrage son I couldn't have been more pleased. Not only did I now have Tailo in the proposed pedigree but Biffle's dam's pedigree also showed Splashdown. It was a perfect way to finally have both those dogs as building blocks. In March of 1995



**CH SARKELS PROMISING FUTURE
DOM**

Herb suffered a debilitating stroke and although I had not planned to take one of Mollie's puppies from this particular breeding, a trip to the co-owner's home in Texarkana was in order. In early April 1995 Ch. Sarkel's True Grit came home to give Herb the inspiration he would need and this "true girl" was exactly what the doctor ordered and exactly what I wanted for my breeding program. We were blessed that Herb was able to watch his Dollar Dog achieve his championship and saw all his wins except for the final major. Dollar was handled by Patty Chandler. Dollar become the sire of five more champions steeped deep in the Sarkel line, Ch. Sarkel's A Few Dollars More, Ch. Damas True Promise of Sarkel, Ch. Hi-Stand's How DoYA Like "Me" Now, Ch. Sarkel's A Dollar and A Dream and Ch. Sarkel's True Image by Hi-Stand. Herb did not live to see a SOM put at the end of Dollar's name but it is something I still hope to achieve in the next year or so. There are some Dollar pups on ice awaiting just the right girl to make it so.

As for the rest of the boxer world there have been many dogs and bitches I would like to have loaded in my van on any given day. Going to the National every year is a glorious way to see the best of our breed and to see what dogs are producing the consistency we should look for. To mention a few would be unfair to those I do not, suffice it to say that I do appreciate a good boxer regardless of whom he/she was bred by or who he/she was shown and campaigned by. In the end it's the dog that always rings my bell.

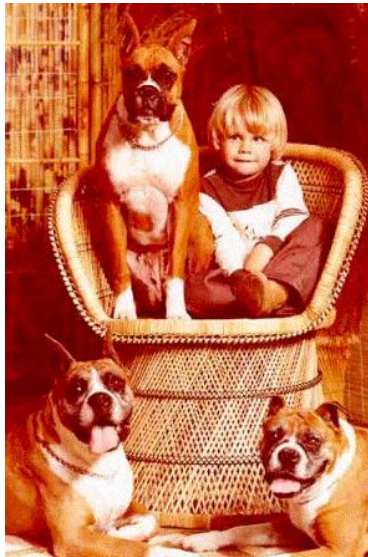


Coleen

What would you consider your greatest success to date?

In the fall of 1997 I traveled to Seekonk, Massachusetts, to breed my Colleen, Ch. Sarkel's

Still Steppin' Up, to Ch. Hi-Tech's Arbitrage. A litter of 6 puppies arrived and two more champions were in order, Bonnie Blue -, Ch. Sarkel's Strength to Dream, and Vinnie - Ch. Sarkel's Strength for Hi-Stand, Vinne was the grandsire of Ch. Hi-Stand's How DoYa Like "Me" Now. Vinnie's daughter, Ch. Hi-Stands Signature of Sarkel was bred back to Dollar. Dollar's son, Collen, co-owned by Charlie Hays, and myself was campaigned in



Paul and Boxers

2004 for the Top Twenty and was ranked number 10 in the nation for 2004. Campaigning a dog at this level, in my opinion is like running for public office, it's not something everyone should try but it's sure can be experience of a life time and one I consider one of our finest achievements.

Your greatest challenge?

Keeping one self grounded and keeping one's ego in check is a big challenge for anyone. It's easy to get caught up in the show world and I have seen so many people ruin friendships and partnerships over a show dog. There were many other Sarkel kids who for one reason or another didn't make it to the show ring. Being a wife and a mother have always come first and probably the most supportive boxers in my life have been the ones that were born here and lived out their lives without all the trappings of the show ring. Many went to loving homes where they

have proven time and time again that I must be doing something right. Our Sarkel's Plain Brown Wrapper was one of my biggest heart dogs and Wrapper taught me all about the upside and downside of raising a singleton puppy. He was a lovely classic fawn who preferred to shine in my eyes rather than the show ring. We should all remember that a show dog is only a show dog for a short period in their lives, the quality of their lives before and after that time should be the best we can give them.



SEASONS OF SARKEL THREE GENERATIONS

What do you think we need to improve in our breed?

We need to remember that the boxer is a medium sized dog. Balance and that square look are being lost today with so many tall boxers competing in the ring today. When we add height we must subtract something and it usually means a loss of that short back and the proper angulations. Try to breed to what is correct and that's not always the dog competing in the specials ring.

What advice would you give to someone just starting in boxers?

First I would find a mentor who was willing to take me under their wings just as I was encouraged those many years ago. If you are serious about showing then I would find the best bitch I could find, campaign her to her championship and then take my time looking for just the right dog to compliment her. You should never breed her to a dog that is not of equal or better quality. Temperament and health are two big considerations

as well and the final consideration should be how willing are you to make the sacrifices that will come. Money, time and heartbreak are always on that tally sheet

How long have you been judging and what breeds are you licensed to judge?

I have been a certified AKC judge since 2008 and at the current time this breed is the only one I am licensed to judge. I have been asked what other breeds I would like to judge and quite honestly my heart remains first and foremost with the breed I love as much as life itself. My daughter, Doris, has been raising English Setters for nearly 17 years now and if I would decide to venture into the ring for another breed it would probably be for English Setters. I've absorbed a lot about them in the past 17 years and one of the great breeders in English Setters, Joan Stainer, was right here in Tulsa so I had a great mentor at my beck and call. I may also pursue being licensed for Junior Showmanship, as the future of our breed is really in the hands of our youth.

What do you think about Reserve Best In Show?

There can only be one Best in Show. At the specialty shows, there are other awards to recognize the other dogs competing in the ring. Awards of Merit and now the Grand Champion titles awarded through Select Dog and Select Bitch give a judge the opportunity to recognize quality. Now in regular classes where a dog goes Winners in a big entry, I think some consideration should be given to the Reserve dog. Big entries like those at the National level certainly should count for something when you consider the number of dogs defeated for that Reserve. A lot of the classes often have enough entries to make a major in shows throughout the country, to win a class and then go Reserve to the Winner should have more of a reward than a trophy and a purple and white ribbon.

Was there ever an embarrassing moment in the ring?

Oh boy was there. Some years back while in shows in San Antonio my handler came to me and said they were asking for boxers to help put on a Judges Hands On Seminar and would I like to take one of the dogs to participate. I learned early on that I WAS NOT a handler. I can breed them and I can train a puppy to the lead. When it comes to running around the ring my clumsy ways just don't express themselves in the best way possible. I could make a top winning special look really bad! The handler pleaded that it would only take a few minutes and it was for a good cause so reluctantly I made my way to the ring. What was supposed to be only a few minutes turned into well over an hour's exercise. There were several dogs there and instead of one judge there were four judges, each taking their time to go over, and, of course, move the dogs. I was confident going in that Traveler and I would be excused early on but alas with every judge we ended up as one of the four placements. During the final exercise we were asked once again to move the dogs around the ring. I don't know who was more tired me, or Traveler, but at some point his front leg found itself in front of weakest knee and suddenly the floor came up to greet me. Half way down I realized what was happening and began to laugh, I was still laughing when everyone rushed over to see if I was OK, they thought I was crying from being hurt – the only thing hurt was my pride.

Have you seen a trend (good or bad) in the Boxer ring?

As previously stated the boxers of today are becoming far to tall. The balance is off, chests too narrow and weak fronts and rears are just a few of the results of going too tall. The standard is being exceeded far too often. I realize many think you need a big boxer to compete in the Group ring but if the Group judge knows the standard then the standard should be their measuring stick.

How do you feel about being approached after judging to discuss your placements?

I have never had a problem in answering anyone's questions about how I judged and why I did what I did. If it's important enough for someone to ask then it's my obligation as a judge to answer any and all questions.

What is your biggest Pet Peeve when judging?

Someone bringing me a dog in poor condition or bringing me a dog that does not want to be there really makes me angry. A dog should always be presented in the best condition possible and a poor temperament should never be tolerated.

What other hobbies do you enjoy?

Writing has always been one of my hobbies. I've dabbled in rug hooking and embroidery over the years. Herb and I also raised Appaloosas for a few years and I've always enjoyed riding. Our horses were for trail riding and endurance riding and although I have not swung up in the saddle for years I still admire the beauty of my second favorite animal.

Boxer Daily would like to thank Mrs. Gilbert for sharing her thoughts and dogs with us.
