

KAREN GRAEBER

WHITEBRED BICHON FRISÉ



Dr John and Karen Graeber



BFR: How did you become interested in Bichons, and how long have you been in the breed?

KG: I became interested in the breed when our Cocker Spaniel died and our family decided to find a dog that we liked that didn't shed and had a great temperament. So we went to a Sussex Hills dog show and walked through the grooming area talking to people. When we decided on a Bichon Frisé we went looking for a reputable breeder. It has been 15 years now.

BFR: Have you ever shown any other breeds? Or currently do so?

KG: I have never shown any other breed except in a show helping another handler and showed a Standard Poodle. I must admit it seemed easier to show a larger breed and not be on your knees and the dog actually loved the bait, ha.

BFR: How did you come up with your kennel name?

KG: My kennel name is a wonderful family joke. My husband always teases me because my daughter and I like very plain foods, and we don't try anything new. We were sitting at the dinner table one night and when my husband suggested I try something new I of course said no. He then said, "Okay whitebred." And my daughter said "That's it—that is your kennel name". My daughter is very artistic and she is the one who actually created my logo.

BFR: Who were your early mentors? What advise did they give you?

KG: My earliest mentors were a few wonderful people who helped me along the way—especially since I was VERY green in the dog show world. My friend and breeders, Sharon and Steve Sopko, and Loretta Marchese who was my original groomer and showed my dogs for me many times. Both told me to watch, listen and create a philosophy for ME, not what everyone else does. And I have always followed my heart and values with regard to my dogs.

BFR: Where did you get your foundation dogs?

KG: My first Bichon came from my breeders, Sharon and Steve Sopko of Alluradel Kennels. They had a beautiful show dog that had just finished with a top handler at that time. They took me under their wings and told me about handlers, co-ownerships and the good and bad of showing dogs.



"Sassy", our foundation bitch now age 11. She is an ROM.

BFR: Why did you choose those particular dogs?

KG: I did not breed for the first 3 years. I showed my first dog, Ch. Alluradels Domino Royale to his championship with the help of a handler. It took longer because he was a larger dog but had beautiful movement and pigment. The next three years I went to shows and watched and learned and tried to decide what kind of dog I would like to breed. I got my second pup and my foundation bitch, Ch. Alluradels Sassy Sweet Tooth from the same breeder. She had a different lineage and she was a wonderful show dog. She showed and got to Number 3 Bichon bitch. I had made my first step up!



"Domino", our first Bichon. He was shown my handler Mark Threlfall, and also appeared in a Burger King commercial. When he's happy his tongue is out!

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Whitebred, cont'd.



"Rosie", our first homebred champion and ROM.

BFR: What were your earliest key breedings?

KG: My first litter and the first puppy I kept was out of those two dogs, and our baby "Rosie", Ch. Whitebreds Ruff And Rosie was the pick of the litter. We were on our way! Rosie had pigment to die for and a tailset that was exactly what I loved. Tragically Rosie was killed this past year and broke both my husband and my hearts—a loss that we will never overcome. She was our baby.

BFR: Who were the first progeny that you felt were the type you wanted your kennel to stand for?

KG: Rosie produced 4 amazing litters and her get will continue her legacy. Sassy also produced 4 litters total and a beautiful list of champions.

I also bred to the Dove Cote line and I loved Doris and Maggie Hyde's dogs from the beginning. Their faces were always amazing and I wanted to insure that look in my line. But of course my foremost breeding and one that I will love forever, is when I bred my Rosie to Dorianns Int Man Of Mystery, "Austin", and produced my two top dogs—Pearl and her litter mate Frosty. That breeding was the next step that my breeding program made in moving up the quality that I dreamed of for my kennel.

BFR: How many other champions have you owned/bred?

KG: I have been so lucky to place dogs in homes that allow me to show them. I place them as show homes where they are treated

as pets. My owners are my pride and joy and they have allowed me to have over 25 champions. I only have 5 dogs in my home—all champions. I don't have a kennel and can not keep many dogs. Our town has a limit but my show dogs live close by and I will go to my owners' homes, pick them up or they drop them off as needed.

BFR: At what age do you consider a puppy a show quality, and sell them as such?

KG: By three months I will sell a show prospect and then evaluate them again at 6 months.

BFR: What are your thoughts on training puppies to get them ready for the ring?

KG: I start working with a puppy on a show lead at 10 weeks and usually by three



"Kali", our first puppy sold!

months when they leave they are leash ready. I have the owners continue to use a show lead and to stack them. Just before they are to start showing I take them to show class weekly and get them used to a ring and other dogs near them. Hopefully they are at least familiar by the time they start to show.

BFR: Can a Bichon be both a house dog and show dog?

KG: Absolutely! I used to stand near the ring when my handlers showed my dogs and they were always happy. Pearl lived with her handler for 2 years during her campaign and



Our first litter with our first homebred champion, "Rosie", Ch. Whitebreds Ruff And Rosie who was also Pearl's dam.

came home sometimes days at a time when they were going or coming to a show. She always knew when she was going to work or play. We have been fortunate in that way as many show dogs can not see their owners while they are showing or at ringside.

BFR: Do you have a preference between dogs and bitches?

KG: I could never chose between the males and females. They all are so loving in my home, although my only boy is probably the most devoted to me.

BFR: How many times would you breed a bitch in her lifetime?

KG: I have discussed this extensively with my vet and we both have come to the same conclusion. If after three breedings there have been any problems they are done breeding. But if the dog is under age 6 and have had three litters with no incidents I will breed a 4th time, and have done so with both my Sassy and Rosie. All were easy deliveries.

BFR: Do you have dogs at public stud and if so what are your requirements for the bitches?

KG: If I know the kennel that is interested in using my stud for service, then I will review the bitch's pedigree and testing results. And of course require all the tests pre-breeding such as brucellosis etc.

BFR: What do you feed and do you supplement at any time?

KG: I feed and always have used Eukanuba

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Whitebred, cont'd.



Kristen winning Juniors in 1992 with Ch. Alluradels Domino Royale.

Small Breed Puppy dry mixed with a can food, and of course mixed with either beef chicken or any people food that I have on hand. After age one they are switched to Eukanuba Adult Small Breed and of course either low fat or senior as the dogs age. They get pet tab vitamins till age one and coconut oil or olive oil in their food for their skin and coat. I have used Bil Jac wet and dry and they all love that too.

BFR: Of all the dogs you have owned, which

are your personal favorites and why?

KG: Well I could NEVER choose a particular dog as more special although Domino, our first who is 15 years old and my appendage is special. All the dogs that live with me, Sassy, Pearl, Angel, Tiger Lilly, and of course our precious Rosie was special. But if any of my owners were to ask me that question, I would not be able to choose just one as I have a close contact to ALL my breedings. I know where they all live and try to see ALL of them at least once a year. It is important to me to maintain close contact with my owners and be their source of information. I also dog sit for ANY of my owners at any time if I am available. After all, who would take care of my babies better than their first mother?

BFR: Do you use handler or show the dogs yourself?

KG: I love to show my dogs. I love training puppies and take pride in getting them lead ready. Its always been a joke with some of my breeder friends who ask, "How the heck did you get that puppy moving like that at their first show at 6 months?"

I have used several different handlers depending how the dog showed with me and how long they have been showing. And certainly my current handler, Mr Anibal Faria,

has helped my kennel name become something I am so proud of. My main purpose of those dogs living as pets in a show home is to get them finished as quickly as possible and save the owners money. I don't show their puppy unless I think there are competitive. My owners are my wonderful source for allowing me



Little did we know that in this litter was the World Winner of 2004 and Number One Bitch in the U S for two years. And her brother Frosty, Number 7 in 2006 with limited showing.

to show their dogs that I have deemed show quality at their expense. I have always respected my owners' budgets as well as my own. But I also LOVE to see my dogs in the ring with a handler—especially when I campaigned my Special, Pearl.

BFR: What do you think is the biggest mistake owner-handlers make?



Pearl was the first female Bichon Frisé to ever enter Crufts from the U.S. and win a CC from England; Best Female at Crufts and Best Opposite--we were there to see it.



Known for her perfect reach and drive Pearl commanded attention whenever she showed.

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Whitebred, cont'd.



Pearl with her best friend and one half of the team her handler Mr Anibal Faria, who presented, protected and loved her 24-7 for 2 years and still does.

KG: Not asking for help and advice, and not listening or watching. I am still learning to groom a show dog but I continue to try! HAHHAHA.

BFR: What is your favorite dog show class to enter and why?

KG: I could say Puppy Class to try and win a Sweeps as it says I have worked hard on my puppies. But I am thrilled to show or have my dogs shown in Best of Breed as I believe that they have earned the right to be there. Since it took me a while to breed a dog that I am so proud of being qualified for the ring I love seeing my dogs in the ring.

BFR: If you use a handler, what do you look for in choosing one?

KG: I have used several handlers, sometimes changing because they were not available at the time I needed them because they might have been committed to show another Bichon. Mostly I have been very satisfied with the handlers I have used and learned something from all of them. I watch to see how my dog responds to them, how they treat the dogs that are in their care, cleanliness, tenderness. Of course how they present a dog is important and I would be lying if I didn't say that grooming, and how available they are to me in location and flexibility is important to me as well.

BFR: What was your most memorable win?

KG: Well I have a few. My first Winners Dog for a 5 point Major at a Bichon specialty with Frosty, at his first show, and then getting to the final cut at Westminster with all handlers when I showed him having his owners there. But of course there have been so many thrilling wins with my girl Pearl, like winning the World Show and getting a Group placement and being there to see it. And her Group 1s that I was there to see were as good as it gets. Also the first time Pearl was on television at one of the Animal Planet shows and getting a Group placement on TV was a VERY proud moment for both my husband and myself since he was there to see it live.

BFR: We all have done silly things and have embarrassing moments, please tell us one of yours.

KG: Haha! Embarrassing moments. Well I can think of at least two. One occurred going to my first Westchester, watching my handler win the class with my first dog, Domino. I had no idea what Winners Dog etc., was. I was still a novice and when he won his class I went nuts since it was the Open Class and so large. I started calling my breeder and screaming and hahahha then he went back into the ring and the Bred By dog beat him for the points. People looked at me and thought who is that nut case.

Another time I took one of my Bichons to a show in Toms River. When I got there he had slobbered and thrown up and was a wet mess. I had to show him in 30 minutes. I had



John and I have delivered pups together and both my girls have delivered pups. Kara, on the left, and Kristen, on the right, who just announced she was expecting.

nothing to clean him up with so another owner helped me powder him and dry him enough to go in the ring and win the point. I was hysterical. As I think back on it, it was a nightmare but so funny. And finally when one of the dogs took a dump on the table just before they were going in the ring and people were calling me to the table to show me!

BFR: Do you prefer breeder-judges or all-rounders?

KG: I like all all-around judges as I think they are usually more forgiving and look at the whole dog. I don't always agree with who they chose but if they give my dog its fair look then I'm satisfied.



Pearl's wedding to "Max", aka Ch. Leewards Chick Magnet

BFR: Name a couple of Bichon, not owned or shown by yourself, that you feel were/are particularly outstanding, and why they were/are good in your opinion.

KG: Well of course, Pearl's father Austin. He is the best mover I've seen. The first Bichon that absolutely called me was El Toro years ago. I had never seen anything with a coat like that. And of course Max, the stud that was here from the Leeward's kennel in Finland who had such a coat and chest and a black pigmented body. That really impressed me.

BFR: What do you think are the most common faults in Bichons today?

KG: Bad movement, and so many with very shy temperaments. One thing most handlers and friends have told me is that I should be proud that all my dogs' tails are up and have outstanding temperaments.

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Whitebred, cont'd.



Chloe finishing at the Lehigh Show.

BFR: What is the fault you just can't live with?

KG: A too shy a dog which I think is not what a Bichon temperament should be.

BFR: How would you rate type, temperament, and soundness in order of importance?

KG: Temperament, soundness and type since I say if you don't have type you do not have a Bichon to begin with.

BFR: Which three words best describe the breed?

KG: Flashy, happy and loving.

BFR: Do you have any family members that show or are interested in getting involved in the sport?

KG: My daughter Kristen showed Domino in Junior Showmanship until she got to high school and became too involved in her own sports to continue. But she always came and helped me at shows. Now I am mentoring one of my owners, Joey Guinta, who owns two of my dogs and is showing dogs in Junior Showmanship and is learning all about dog handling.

BFR: Are there any other people who have dogs of your breeding who have done well with them, either in the ring or as producers, that you would like to acknowledge?

KG: I am so proud of all my owners that have given their love to my breedings and taken good care of them—especially when they were being shown. I often borrowed them on weekends and asked them to have them bathed and ready. I am thrilled for all those who have become champions and allowed me to breed them and continue to

produce beautiful Whitebred Bichons. I am especially thrilled for Pearl's litter mate's owners, Mr. Joseph Toscano and Ms Bernadette Molloy who drove each week to my home with Frosty. They had NO knowledge of dog shows and at their first show, a Bichon Specialty their puppy got Winners Dog and they got lots of prizes. The look on their faces was worth all the years of breeding that I struggled with.

I'd also like to acknowledge Susan and Gordon Levine, (Faro) who have always been there for me and love our Jessie. Now I have several dogs in Canada with Stephanie Toom (Encore) and Kendra James (Kenningway). We are all excited about this new adventure together.

I would be remiss if I did not mention Fred and Tammy Mack and their daughter Hailey



Frosty

of Manhattan who own Pearl's litter mate Skipper, and sponsored Pearl during her entire campaign. For that John and I will be eternally grateful.

Finally, John and I want to thank our handler, Mr. Anibal Faria and all those who have helped him ringside with our Whitebred dogs. And Lisa Croft Elliot whose outstanding photography and advertising helped put Whitebred Bichons on the map.



Grandma hugging her favorite boy, Domino.

BFR: Do you have any other pets besides dogs?

KG: We had a cat named Twinkle for 19 years that was a wonderful pet and Sassy's best friend. And of course Sassy had a pet frog in our pool that she looked after every day during the summer. It was amazing to watch. We do now have a granddog since my daughter lives near the water and decided to get a dog but not a Bichon. She got a dog that could get wet, a Portuguese Water dog named Doug. He gets along well with

WHITEBRED Annual Bichon Gathering

Date - July 22

Rain Date - July 23

Time - 2 PM Place - 4 CONCORD Rd. Whippany, NJ

Please RSVP to 973-884-0272 or whitebredkg@aol.com



Our Family 2005
Hope you can join us this year
"BYOB" [BRING YOUR OWN BICHON]

My annual Bichon party. I love having my owners there each year and know where all my dogs are that I bred.

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Whitebred, cont'd.

the white kids.

BFR: What other hobbies do you have that are not dog related?

KG: I was a physical education teacher for many years and am still a High School Swim Official and Assigner. Presently I manage my husband's dental office. I also play on a competitive tennis team. My newest hobby will be becoming a grandma!

BFR: What are your plans for the future?

KG: After going to two World Shows and our first visit to Crufts this past year, our girl Pearl, now has completed her International

Championship along with five other country championships. We were thrilled to have a dog that qualified for such a prestigious show. We look forward to more traveling with our dogs. Win or lose we are so thrilled to have elevated our breeding program to that level.

We will continue to watch and listen and learn. We are thankful to all our Whitebred owners and kids and all those that have helped me along the way the last fifteen years . . . you all will never be forgotten. □