



# "Cloud Land" Dogs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 70

Josie through a set of weaves with guide wires a few times and figured it out. However it is important to keep training sessions short and fun and also to stop while they are still enthusiastic. They hate repeating things. In agility if you try to repeat a sequence too many times, like more than twice, they tend to get creative or think you want something else. I always dreaded if there were more than three or four sits in a rally course. They are not like traditional performance breeds that will always compete. They are not usually 'people pleasers.' They do it because they think it is fun. You can't coerce them into running a course. When they want to be there, they are great. If they don't, you are wise to just call it a day."

Bobbie Wood noted that when she first started doing obedience work with her current Lhasa. Multiple BISS NBISS ARCHX Ch. Anbara Alasara Smart Alek CDX RE (CDSP) CD-H CH-HCH CDX-H (APDT ARCH RL1 RL1X3 RL2 RL2X2 RL3 RLV that was twice high in trial at the Lhasa National Specialty, he seemed to enjoy the work because he was doing something with her. "He really liked his treats and would offer everything he knew just to get a treat. He didn't care if his performance was perfect. He was just having fun. Some things he learned very easily but there were other exercises that took a long time. The dumbbell and drop on recall took at least a year to train even though the trainer



Am/Can Ch OB Ky-Ann Pepper UD RE ALAC HIT ROM ("Pepper"), one of Becky Hughes' Lhasas, helped her understand that Lhasas "are always the first to learn new things in class but performance in the ring is always a coin toss. If they do not want to do something, they won't and you can't make them."

worked hard to think up ways to get him to do it. Because this is a breed that really 'thinks,' you have to convince them that this is what they want to do. They do not need a job like some breeds and are perfectly happy just hanging out on the sofa, barking at the occasional passerby. They are very smart and love the 'parties' when they get something right. However, they do not want to be wrong so they can shut down if you make too big a deal when they make a mistake."

Becky Hughes said that the words "performance work" are a million dollar phrase with Lhasas. She owns Am/Can Ch OB Ky-Ann Pepper UD RE ALAC HIT ROM ("Pepper") and Am/Can/Int Ch OB One's Harley Davison CDX RE ALAC HI ("Chopper"). "They are always the first to learn new things in class but performance in the ring is a coin toss. If they do not want to do something, they won't and you can't make them. They also get bored easily so you have to make every training session unique and exciting. You absolutely cannot let them get away with something or they will learn that 'trick' too. They require a fair amount of positive psychology. You have to make them feel things are their idea and make it worthwhile to perform in the ring. You cannot bully them into it. They are more stubborn than most people and they do not forget. Think of a stereotypical 'smart but extremely rebellious student' and that is what training a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 98



Ch. Indian Hill Suds-in-the-Bucket RE NIP CL1 ("Suds"), one of Melissa Torgerson's Lhasas, showed her that Lhasas cannot be coerced into running a course. When they want to be there, she said, they are great. If they don't, you are wise to just call it a day. (Photo by Jessie's Photography)

## "Cloud Land" Dogs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 96

Lhasa is like. In the end, their egos have to be intact and they have to think that they have won. You have to train them for every possible situation before you get into the ring or they will shut down completely and not perform at all. They bore quickly and will stop working if you let them. If you give them an inch, they definitely will take the mile. Through all this, you cannot show your frustration as they pick up very quickly on that and will use it to their advantage. There will be times, no matter what you do, when they simply don't feel like working. When they do not want to work, they can make your day miserable. On the other hand, they are incredibly cute when they do everything right."

Wood agreed. "They are cute and they have a wicked sense of humor. No matter how well trained they are, they will still be creative doing it the way they want to do it. Whenever we go to a trial, Aleck always comes up with something I have never seen him do before and when he does, he's always very pleased with himself. They know you can't do anything about it in the ring. With a Lhasa, you never know if it will be a good day or a day when it is just not going to happen."

One positive about the breed is that they can have long performance careers. "They can compete most of their lives," said Torgerson. "Structurally they are very sound and suited for agility, or a correct Lhasa is. They are also relatively easy to keep in condition as long as you monitor treats. However, this is a breed with which you really need to build a relationship. They will not usually perform for anyone other than their person."

While most Lhasa owners have had nothing but positive experiences in the performance ring, every now and then they run into a judge that dislikes the breed. "One time, I had a judge tell me that my dog had earned a qualifying score in utility after she had added up the points twice. When I left the ring, I told her that the dog had just completed her UD. Five minutes after we



Ch. Indian Hill McLou's Josie OA AXJ NF CL1 CL2-H CL2-S CL2-F CL3-F SS SJ SR ("Josie.") showed "Suds" how to do the weaves in agility. (Photo by Jessie's Photography)

left the ring, ribbon in hand with a new title, the judge found me outside the ring and said she had made a mistake. The dog didn't qualify after all, having missed by a single point. Later that day, I took another Lhasa into the ring and the same judge said, 'I can't believe you'd bring another one of these into my ring.' The whole incident was rather bizarre and it seemed obvious to everyone watching that the judge did not like seeing this breed in the obedience ring," said Hughes.

There are some challenges associated with this breed. "It is not always easy convincing people that Lhasa are great dogs," said Torgerson. "They don't have the best of reputations. They are very intelligent and will try to run the household. They are not 'toy dogs.' They were bred to be guardians. You can never let a Lhasa get away with something, not even once."

Hughes agreed. "They are stubborn and need an owner who is up for the challenge of 'out-thinking' them. They are very smart dogs and often find ways of controlling their owners and getting their own way. Since they were originally bred as little guard dogs, they are naturally chary of strangers. They often have difficulty trusting strangers near them or lurking in the crowd when they are in vulnerable positions. However, I love the challenge and the hard-earned satisfaction of working with these dogs and they have made me a much better handler." •