

Judge Carol Moser

How long have you been judging the breed? How many times a year do you judge German Shepherds?

I have been judging the breed for 8 years. About 12 times a year.

Are you an active breeder of German Shepherd Dogs? Do you have a kennel name ?

I have always bred about one litter every five years. My kennel name is Halcyon. I have bred dozens of champions, have shown and won in every state except Hawaii, and have bred generations of AKC champion register of merit producers, and generations of AKC specialty BOB and all-breed BIS.

How long have you been in the breed? When and how did you get started?

We got our first German Shepherd in 1967 in southern California. My husband was a fighter pilot who was going to Vietnam. He wanted me to have either a Doberman or a Shepherd. Thank God it was a German Shepherd. Our male was sired by Balzar's Fane of Mar-Sa, he (Fane) being out of GV CH Mar-Sa's Velvet of Malabar, the lovely Ulk daughter bred by Warren and Nancy Godwin (Balzar) and Sam Stall (Mar Sa). In spite of our novice bumbling, Bruno turned out to be a show dog and the Godwin's were the rarest of all jewels, that is vastly knowledgeable experts on the breed who were willing to tolerate the millions of questions by a newbie. I will ever be grateful to them.

Do you judge both all-breeds and specialties. If so, which do you prefer ?

Yes, I don't care which. I just love to get my hands on German Shepherds.

Do you have a color preference?

Yes and no. I prefer a rich black and red. Actually, I don't care for bi-colors and blacks, yet I always seems to put them up, so it doesn't make any difference what I like best as far as the exhibitor is concerned.

Do you find it harder to judge solid blacks? If so, why?

Again, yes and no. A judge must be very careful of the lighting when judging a black and not be afraid to put hands on the dogs, and the reflection of light off a gleaming black coat can cause distortion in what the judge is actually seeing.

When judging the dog, do you also judge the handler? Please elaborate if possible.

Yes, in the sense that if the handler does not follow my instructions after repeated simple statements regarding what I want, then in frustration, I will penalize the dog. Let me be perfectly clear: I want the dog shown at a moderate speed on a loose lead, I don't want them forging at top speed down and back, I don't want them slung around the turn on down and back, I want to see them moving as God decreed, not as some owner-handler conspiracy has decided they would look better.

What importance do you place on missing teeth?

A German Shepherd is a working, utilitarian, functional animal. The standard is clear about missing teeth and what is acceptable. The dog needs teeth to hold a criminal and he needs teeth to turn a recalcitrant cow. Teeth are a good thing.

Please discuss temperament in the ring today. Has it improved? Declined? Please explain.

I think it is better than it was ten years ago and about the same as it was 30 years ago. I seldom see truly shy dogs in the ring now. Unfortunately, non-breeder judges do not understand the difference between shyness and focused obsession on trying to find out where the owner is on the outside of the ring. A German Shepherd is hardwired to focus on his beloved human. This is his function, to watch, to guard, to be a companion. He cannot be indifferent to his human. It is not within his nature. Intelligent German Shepherds are not impressed by rings and judges and

crowds. They want their person and do not see any sense in bonding with a stranger standing in the middle of the ring.

Do you prefer a dog to be shown on a loose lead?

Absolutely, absolutely, absolutely. Listen, one of the most gratifying things in the universe is to watch a German Shepherd on a loose lead, moving with panther-like elegance and fluidity in a long, easy stride, covering ground at an impressive rate without much expenditure of energy, suspending, floating, head level and out, back firm, balanced timing. It is better than chocolate! Handlers, leads, and double handlers do not have the capability of improving on this. Leave the dogs alone.

How would you rate the following in sequence of importance? (On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best).

I have to do this my way. Sidegait, hocks, shoulder, reach, coming and going, are all part of structure. Submitting to the laws of physics and engineering, one has to admit that an animal cannot, CANNOT move correctly and efficiently without proper structure. It is inevitably true that in the case of the German Shepherd, form does follow function. Type is not only structure. It also encompasses temperament, attitude, pigment and coat. A lot of judges who are contemplating applying for German Shepherds have asked me what is the most important thing about a German Shepherd, fully expecting me to launch into a discussion on sidegait. I tell them, "Nobility, difficult to define, but unmistakable when present," as they stare at me in confusion. This gives me an opportunity to go into my beliefs about what makes this breed different. It is the intelligence, the unswerving loyalty unto death, the courage, the strength, the bottom – this is what we used to say about horses that gave moist in the performance ring or on the racetrack or on the hunting field. The ability to reach down and go an extra mile. When a German Shepherd walks into the ring, there should be an immediate recognition of the presence, poise, confidence, competence, intelligence present in the animal. This is an animal that can handle any situation, comprehend any complexity, partner in the best possible way with a human being. They are absolutely special and anyone who cannot understand this or appreciate this should not pass judgment on them.

Coming/Going:

Sidegait:

Temperament:

Teeth:

Coat:

Pasterns, hocks, feet:

Pigment:

Structure:

Shoulder/Reach:

Attitude:

In your opinion should double handling be allowed? Please explain.

I don't care if people on the outside of the ring strip naked, paint themselves blue and have bells attached to every possible appendage. Just don't mess with my dogs in the ring. I don't want them scrambling in movement. Your double-handling WILL NOT influence my opinion about their temperament. I am capable at double handling flukes past any temperament test and have done so in the distant past before it dawned on me that it was easier to breed good temperament. Don't try to con a con. If a dog standing in line is gently doubled to keep the ears up, that is fine with me. In fact, I approve of it. Make them look good, just be aware that most double handlers are not all that skilled and end up being a negative influence on the judge.

Do you feel more emphasis should be put on the total package, and less on movement?

How can a knowledgeable person separate the two? Trying to do so only demonstrates ignorance as to what factors contribute to correct movement.

Do you have a pet peeve about anything owners or handlers do concerning the showing of

dogs? (Do you have any suggestions for owners or handlers regarding anything they should NEVER do when showing under you?)

DO NOT bring a dirty dog to me, smelling of perfume (doggy perfume) sprayed to mask the smell of urine and feces in the cement run. It is not so much that I am offended by dirt. I am offended by the demonstrated indifference to the overall well-being of the dog.

Do you have any suggestions for owners or handlers regarding anything they should ALWAYS do when showing under you?

Send me a clean dog that is not so thin that one wonders if it has been living in a concentration camp. For some bizarre reason, a lot of people now think that a dog moves better if it is horribly thin and that its outline appears to have more angulation if it is thin. Don't be stupid. An athlete has to have muscle and this requires some nutrition and some flesh. A performer has to have a sufficient store of glycogen in the liver to perform. A good moving dog is a good moving dog. Starving it won't make it any better, just mope tired.

Do you have any advice for people who are relatively new to showing and/or breeding?

Don't spout euphemisms you hear at handling classes and dog shows. Educate yourself. Don't disregard the other breeds at an all-breed show. Take an hour to go through the grooming area and talk to handlers and breeders of other breeds, particularly hounds, working and sporting. These people know about movement too.

Any final comments?

I am astonished at the amount of people who believe they are experts in German Shepherds who have never read the standard. I have actually run across a few who don't know one exists. How can you experience the joy of owning a German Shepherd and not devote the few hours and the small amount of energy it takes to read the history of the breed, to read several of the absolutely marvelous books out there on movement and what constitutes good movement, to open your thoughts to people who are veterans of decades of success in other breeds who understand the structure of dogs and who have survived decades of parent club turmoil and showing and breeding with the resulting pleasures and heartbreaks. This is a breed that is worth your paying your dues. If you do not think so, take up another hobby.