

Judge Cyndi Flautt

1.) How long have you been judging the breed?

Since 1993.

2.) How many times a year do you judge German Shepherds?

2 to 3

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

Yes, my kennel name is "Caretti."

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

I was given a non registered shepherd my senior year in college. (1975). A couple of years later, I bought a Zeus of Fran-Jo grandson as a pet from a couple who was showing. Their dogs, and show pictures sparked my interest. I received my first "Review" and joined the GSDC of Jackson, MS, in '77, then joined the parent club in '78. My foundation bitch was a Sirocco daughter, bred by Gail Sprock.

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

I've judged both all breed and specialties, but mainly specialties since GSD is the only breed I'm licensed to do. I enjoy both, but prefer a large grassy ring, which is usually at a specialty.

6.) Do you have a color preference?

No.

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

No.

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

I judge the dog as I see it on that day, but handlers can most definitely enhance or detract from a dogs appearance and performance. Your dog may have outstanding sidegait at home, or at the park but if your handler shows him too fast, too strung up, etc., I may not be able to see in the ring, what you know you see at home! Dogs look can look different from day to day with different handlers, and even from day to day with the same hander. I guess it's a good thing, otherwise we could stay home and judge them from the computer. That certainly wouldn't be as much fun as going to dog shows!

9.) What importance do you place on missing teeth?

The standard states that any missing teeth other than first premolars is a serious fault. It also says that faults of gait and temperament are considered very serious. So, first I would judge on gait and temperament, and factor in missing teeth only if necessary to make a difficult decision between two equal dogs.

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

In the past I thought temperaments had improved, but as of late, I'm beginning to change my mind. I think possibly there are stud dogs being used that themselves have good temperament, but may have poor temperament behind them. I also believe that many youngsters who are not confident in the ring, have probably not been out enough (if at all). We need to exercise their bodies, AND their minds!

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

I want to see a dog on a loose lead some, but not necessarily all of the time. I prefer them to be shown at a moderate speed, and for the handler to give me a loose lead at least on the lap I specifically request it. An outreaching sidegait is good, but an outreaching sidegait that is fluid is

better. Two dogs with similar backs, front and rear angulation, and proportions may differ in fluidity due to things such as ligamentation, musculature, conditioning, AND the way they are handled. 100 mph on a loose OR a tight lead can distort a dog's motion.

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

Coming/Going: 7

Sidegait: 10

Temperament: 10

Teeth: 7

Coat: 6

Pasterns, hocks, feet: 7

Pigment: 7

Structure: 10

Shoulder/Reach: (I consider this a part of sidegait.)

Attitude: 8

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

I have no problem with it...I can double handle with the best of them! I do believe, however, its important to be discrete at all-breeds, and I know from experience that it can be done effectively. At specialties, I've seen many people double very poorly...usually too much, or at the wrong time.

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

The total package includes type, temperament, AND movement. All three are essential.

15.) Do you have a pet peeve about anything owners or handlers do concerning the showing of dogs?

Pet peeve? Clean ears (use a baby wipe); long nails (get a grinder); nasty teeth (give your dog a bone, or get a scaler)! These are supposed to be show dogs, right? On a serious note, since the first show I judged in '93, I've been amazed at the number of dogs with teeth that are covered with tartar. It's not only ugly, but can cause health problems, and I think people forget this. Harmful bacteria from the unhealthy teeth and gums can travel into the bloodstream, and of course is swallowed and enters the gut. Think about your dogs swallowing this bacteria 24 hours a day. It's not good for them. (Off my soapbox now!)

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

Be a good sport. We all win and loose, sometimes when we should, sometimes when we shouldn't. In order for clubs to stay alive, we need new members, we need the old members, and to attract and keep them, we all need to be good sports....Be a gracious winner and a gracious looser.

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

Don't ignore my request to slow down in the ring. It's usually given because I think the dog would look better. I like a goer as much as anyone else, but 100 mph, 100% of the time? No.

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

Listen to and learn from people who have been successful, but then learn to make decisions yourself. Learn from your mistakes...everyone makes them, but some make them over and over....Have fun! There are wonderful friends to be made and kept for a lifetime.

Any final comments?

Thanks for the opportunity to be interviewed. I wish you continued success with your site.