



## AUSTRALIAN-BRED DOGS DOMINATE SINGAPORE SHOW SCENE, YET AGAIN!

**Dr Arnold Tan**

All Australians who show dogs should celebrate. Time and time again, glorious dogs imported from Oz Land have won Best In Show in Singapore. They seem to possess a certain magical, almost compelling power, sweeping international judges off their feet and garnering major awards with noted consistency.

We don't have many shows here; we have only 5 – 7 shows each year, all championship level. As such, competition is understandably intense (but, thankfully, still visibly healthy) for some breeds like Shih Tzus, Whippets, Miniature Schnauzers, Siberian Huskies and German Shepherd Dogs, all of which are very strong, both in numbers and quality. For the few breeds listed above, the latest show catalogue shows imports from Germany, S. Africa, USA, Canada, Taiwan, Japan, Philippines, New Zealand, and of course, Australia.

Mrs Mariko Harase (Japan), Mr Thomas Lim (S'pore), Mr Ray Greer (NZ) and most recently, Mrs Stephanie Rickard (Aust) - have all given the same Australian-bred Whippet, Aust & S'pore Grd Ch Taejaan Ms Martini a Best in Show each, making her Singapore's #1 Dog of the Year 2000, Singapore's #2 Dog of the Year 2001 and now in the lead on points for Singapore's #1 Dog of the Year 2002 again.

Three other judges - Mr David Roche (Aust), Mr Tony Valli (Aust) and Mr John Lusk (Canada) - gave her the Best in Hound Group award, with the latter awarding her Reserve Best in Show. The fact that all these judges, regardless of nationality, preferred an Australian-bred dog over American, English and Singapore-bred whippets in our ring heralds well for Australian whippet breeders.

### The Latest Show – Australian Dogs Win Again

The Singapore Kennel Club held its 123rd Championship Show on Sunday 15th September 2002 at the spacious and fully air-conditioned Singapore Expo Hall. Established in 1972, the SKC also celebrated its 30th anniversary that day, complete with a huge chocolate dog-shaped birthday cake shared with all exhibitors.

The judge for this show was Mrs Stephanie Rickard from Victoria, Australia. Famous for her Wangan English Springer Spaniels, this was Mrs Rickard's first visit to sunny Singapore.

At the end of the day, Mrs Rickard picked the 5-year old Whippet bitch, Aust & S'pore Grd Ch Taejaan Ms Martini for Best in Show; and the 7-year old Shih Tzu bitch, Aust & S'pore Ch. Duxford Stormy Affair for Reserve Best in Show.

Bred by Mrs Molly Rule-Steele of NSW, this Taejaan whippet was handled by her owner, Dr Arnold Tan to her 6th Best in Show in Singapore, breaking all record as the biggest winning hound and whippet in the 30-year history of the Singapore Kennel Club.

Owned by Mdm Annie Ng, the Shih Tzu was bred by Mr Douglas Sidebottom and Mr

Stephen Thomas of NSW. A familiar face in the Singapore ring, Douglas handled this Shih Tzu superbly to the win. He also won the Best Adult Handler award at this show. In other words, both Australian dogs AND people did their country proud at this show! (Do I hear a rapturous chorus of celebrative 'Waltzing Mathilda'?)

### 10 Years Ago

At the post-show dinner, I spoke to the judge, Mrs Rickard and told her how - exactly 10 years ago this month - I had watched a lady win the Best Puppy in Show award with a spritely little Wangan English Springer Spaniel at the Melbourne Royal Show. The dog world is a very small place indeed: a decade later, that lady and I were to meet as judge and exhibitor in Singapore.

While we're on this, I thought I'd pen here that I still remember vividly the Best in Show winner that year. It was the



**Reserve Best in Show – Shih Tzu, Aust & S'pore Ch Duxford Stormy Affair (imp Aust) with judge Mrs Stephanie Rickard, breeder/handler Mr Douglas Sidebottom, and owner Mdm Annie Ng.**

Tomski's black American Cocker Spaniel (it never stopped floating around the ring!); and Runner-Up Best in Show was Lee & Hodgkin's Wire Fox Terrier (etched in my mind's eye - what a superb showman!).

The judge was Mr Bryan Giles from New Zealand. I think he wore a deep burgundy coloured suit then. That was September 1992. I have an elephant's memory. Dog people usually do, either through repeated bedtime exposure to dog magazines, or plain obsession.

### Clever Blend of the Best Bloodlines

Having been to many dog shows in the USA, UK and Australia, I agree with the general sentiment that American dogs ooze glamour, while English ones offer soundness. (However, I do not personally think they are necessarily exclusive to each other, as some have sweepingly made this out to be.)

My take on this is that many Australian dogs have a good balance of both. Thanks to clever and talented breeders Down Under, there is now a blend of exquisite bloodlines and stunning dogs in Afghans, Standard and Miniature Poodles, GSPs, Wire Fox Terriers, Boxers, Whippets, Salukis and many other breeds across the various states in Australia.

Phenotypically, these dogs are eye-candy both to their owners and the general public; genotypically, they are sound, living goldmines of precious lineage. After all, breeding a beautiful dog with good health and a corresponding happy disposition is what all responsible breeders set out to accomplish.

### Beauty Moves

The sheer beauty of Australian-bred dogs can be hypnotic. Standing in the unbearable cold of that winter day at the Melbourne Royal Showground, I watched that Yanky, Wire and Springer pup move and show their little hearts out. And I cried.

Beauty moves, figuratively. And literally too - when it happens to be an Australian-bred dog. Australia has become my mecca. Thanks, mate!

*About the Writer: Dr Arnold Tan has been showing dogs since 1977. He was originally associated with Poodles, having shown a Westpriors Miniature Poodle from Jean & Graeme Missen (Victoria, Aust) for many years. Today, he owns the record-breaking Whippet bitch, Aust & S'pore Grand Champion Taejaan Ms Martini (imp Australia) bred by Mrs Molly Rule-Steele of NSW, Aust. He adds that the views expressed are his personal observations and do not reflect that of any canine club, organisation, or individual.*



**Best in Show – Whippet, Aust & S'pore Grd Ch Taejaan Ms Martini (imp Aust) with judge Mrs Stephanie Rickard and owner/handler Dr Arnold Tan.**

### Australian-Bred Dogs are Hot Favourites

It has become quite evident that judges from all around the world have been appreciating the quality of Australian-bred dogs at our shows. In recent times, Mr John Lusk from Canada has picked the Golden Retriever, S'pore Ch. Ashmore Liveit Up for Best in Show. Mr Derek Smith from Great Britain has chosen the Shih Tzu, S'pore Grd Ch. Duxford That Damn Yankee for Best in Show, as has Mrs Kakuko Sasa from Japan. Mr Gary Doyle from New Zealand found the Smooth Fox Terrier, Aust & S'pore Ch. Rama Ranking Return for his Best In Show, while Mr Takahiro Miyagawa from Japan felt the Siberian Husky, Aust & S'pore Ch. Awenasa Keshena worthy of his Best in Show award. All these dogs were imported from Australia.

In addition, one particular Australian-bred dog has won many Best in Show awards under a string of international judges. Mrs Yvonne Smith (NZ), Mrs Gunilla Fristedt (Sweden),

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