



## PBGVCA National and 2nd World Congress - An Amazing Experience

By Robyn Wallis

May 24 to 29 saw a gathering of PBGV fanciers in Rhode Island, like never seen before in the USA. Breeders and enthusiasts from many countries around the world came together to enjoy and exchange ideas at the 2nd PBGV World Congress, which followed the two Eastern Regional Specialties and the 2005 PBGVCA National.

In record breaking cold weather (in fact the coldest days Rhode Island had experienced for 130 years, with temperatures around 44°F and sleet rain), the fun began at a Welcome Reception on the Tuesday evening where everyone got together and met those they had only heard of or not seen since the year before. The first of three shows, the New Jersey Regional Specialty, began on the Wednesday. On the Thursday

was the PBGVCA Eastern Regional Specialty, after which was held a New England Clam Bake Buffet at the Annual Banquet; culminating on the Friday with the 2005 PBGVCA National and a 'Saber Tails, End Party Pasta Buffet, including a fun and financially successful auction for the club where, believe it or not, someone actually bought the jar of vegemite I donated. At this dinner the judges who had officiated over the three shows gave their comments and a short critique.

Unfortunately, the weather did not improve until the day of the National but the organizers did a wonderful job of making sure that the show did go on. The setting was a fabulous hotel on many acres of rolling lawns, with beautiful gardens everywhere. The staff catered for the dogs and their owners brilliantly, making everything as easy as possible, even providing 'dog sheets' for the beds in the beautifully appointed rooms so that the dogs could recline with their owner if they wished! (Can't see that happening in Australia!) The event staged outside, as it was thought the weather would be around the 70-80°F mark at that time of the year, but because of the history making weather it was held under a huge marquee with the large classes running around the outside ring for short periods. Many of the judges were seen with their hands in their pockets to thaw them out between classes. It was especially nice to see that no one complained under the dreadful conditions and the shows ran incredibly smoothly.

Both the Specialties and the National ran Sweepstake events before the judging, so many PBGVs under the age of 18 months had the opportunity to be shown up to six times over the three days. Due to the World Congress being held in conjunction with the National this year, there were a number of overseas and long time breeders judging at these shows, which added a great sense of satisfaction to those who won or were placed. Australian PBGVs were certainly not left out of those coveted awards, with a representation of four that all took out honours at some stage at each of the events, with two really taking a slice of the lime light.

The New Jersey Specialty Sweepstakes was judged by long-time Dutch Breeder, Mrs Jolanda Huisman of the well known du Greffier du Roi kennel. The regular classes were judged by Dr Robert Indeglia, who, although not a breeder, is a well-respected judge of the breed.

I was very honoured to be given the opportunity to judge the wonderful young PBGVs over in the US in the Sweepstakes at the Eastern Regional Show. The regular classes were judged by one of the breeds' most well-known and respected long-time breeders and early founder of the breed, both in UK and USA, Mr Nicholas (Nick) Frost. He is known for his famous Dehra lines in the UK and took many of these dogs to the USA with him, becoming the basis of many of the current kennels there today. His knowledge of the breed is most respected and consequently the winners were very thrilled to take a placing under his expert eye.



Robyn Wallis judging

The National also had a duo of well-known and respected names. The Sweepstakes were judged by Mr Gavin Robertson (UK), who of latter years has been 'taking the breed by storm' in the UK and USA with his dogs, which he formerly bred in partnership as Afterglow (many will know this name as the prefix on one of our own well-known Australian dogs) and now under the new prefix of Soletrader. His dogs have won BOB at Crufts a number of times and BOB and Group Placements at Westminster. Mrs Kitty Steidel judged the regular classes at the National. An introduction to her is certainly not necessary to anyone involved with the breed, as she is one of its founders and founding member of the club in the US and has written one of the famous 'must have' books for any PBGV enthusiast 'Understanding The Petit Basset Griffon Vendéen (Rustic French Hound)'.

Four PBGVs have been exported from Australia to the USA since Christmas 2004 and their debut into the USA PBGV world was nothing more than amazing at these major PBGV events, leaving many people over there (and around the world for that matter) talking about the quality of the breed here. I think it is just easier for me to list their achievements at these events and let you gauge for yourself the results, taking into account that there was an all over entry of 151 PBGVs each day and the oldest of the Australian dogs entered was 20 months.

**Aust Ch Rokeena Parfaire L'Creme** (Owned: Helen Ingher) - Winners Dog at all three events under some of the worlds leading authorities in the breed. This young dog beat the top up-and-coming dogs from some of the best blood lines in the USA, which in turn gave him 3 five-point majors to put him into the PBGV world history books as the first import (and possibly any PBGV who has gained his US title) to achieve this, at not only the 3 biggest shows for the breed in the country but at the only shows he has ever attended in the USA. Of course, this also puts him in the Australian record books as being the first Australian bred PBGV to be a US Champion and to be given an award of Merit in the US, which he achieved at the New Jersey Specialty

**Rokeena Belle Etoile** (Owned: Maryem Haberstock) - only just made the age limit, turning 6 months a week before the National, and was a real star; also winning many hearts in her endeavours.

3rd in the New Jersey 6 to 9 month sweeps (10 entries, Jolanda Huisman). 1st in the New Jersey 6 to 9 month Regular Class (10 entries, Dr Indeglia). 1st in the Eastern Regional 6 to 9 months - Best Puppy and Reserve of Winners Bitch, beating 24 puppies and 35 bitches up to and including open age (Nick Frost). 1st in the National 6 to 9 month sweeps (12 entries, Gavin Robertson). 1st in the National regular classes and again Reserve of Winners Bitch. (Kitty Steidel).

(It was interesting that Maryem had four real offers to buy her, I wonder why?)

**Rokeena Tres Desiree** (Owned: Helen Ingher) - 3rd in the Eastern Regional Regular classes - 6 to 9 months (10 entries, Nick Frost). 3rd in the National Sweeps - 6 to 9 months (12 entries, Gavin Robertson). 2nd to her sister Belle in the National Regular Classes - 6 to 9 months (10 entries, Kitty Steidel).

**Rokeena Beau Dessin** (Owned: Suzanne Douglass) - 2nd in the New Jersey 6 to 9 month Regular classes (6 entries, Dr Indeglia). 4th in the Eastern Regional Reg classes - 6 to 9 months (6 entries, Nick Frost). 4th in National Sweeps 6 to 9 months (7 entries, Gavin Robertson). 3rd in National Regular Classes 6 to 9 months (7 entries, Kitty Steidel)



Rokeena Belle Etoile

Bev Tophill, who had decided to make the trip to the National due to the fact the World Congress was incorporated with it this time, had a wonderful time, handling the puppy bitch Belle to her outstanding wins, Beau to his wins and Easi to his Award of Merit. Her handling impressed many at the National and she was asked to help with a number of dogs for those who had too many to handle. It is nice to see the overseas people acknowledge the handling ability Bev possesses. Mark Gray (Bonhaven Kennels, Aus) was also at the event and like Bev, showed more of our Aussie handling skills whilst showing some lovely dogs for Lacey Kennels.



Bev Tophill

As mentioned before, the judges gave their comments on the dogs they had judged at the Banquet. It was interesting to note that most had noticed a change in quality in the PBGVs they judged from those a few years ago, as the breed seems to be moving back to the more correct size and shape of a more compact dog with more leg under it as the French originally designed it to be.

The Australian presentation at the Congress, presented by Robyn Wallis



Aust (and now Am) Ch Rokeena Parfaire L'Creme

photo Jolanda Huisman

The next day began the 2nd World Congress for the PBGV, the first being held in the UK five years ago. This consisted of a day and a half of presentations by delegates from Denmark, France, Canada, Australia, Netherlands, Japan, UK and USA (Unfortunately a couple of delegates were not able to attend for personal reasons but did send along information and photos of interest). Each had been asked to do a presentation on the breed and its development regarding numbers, litters, health issues, achievements, breed clubs and so on.

(For rest of article, see actual magazine)