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Our guest columnist this month is Pamela DeHetre of Loganville, GA. Ms. DeHetre comments on her judging assignment at the May 2003 MPCA Nationals in Massachusetts will give us the "judge's perspective" of what is being presented in the Breed ring at this time.

Ms. DeHetre: Thank you all for the great pleasure to have been selected to judge the Miniature Pinscher Club of America sweepstakes in 2003. I was very impressed with the overall quality of the puppies. In the larger classes there were definitely more than 4 that will finish their championships. Just to be able to see that many good ones together was the thrill of a lifetime. I also want to say that I have handled Min Pins since the late 60's so I do know how difficult it can be to get them to "focus", so I commend you on the training and conditioning that you have put into these dogs. One after the other, after the other, actually walked properly on a leash and stood on the table for examination! I know how hard it is to do that with this breed and I will say I was totally impressed at the time you all put into your dogs to show them at the National. It made my job so much easier. Thank you all for doing an absolutely fabulous job!!! The breed is excellent shape. As for some of the normal questions asked here goes:

Heads - There were many good ones with nice ear sets and good carriage.

Bites - A few out of line but most were very good. The ones with the problems seemed to be more in the dogs with the narrow muzzles.

Light eyes vs. dark eyes - I found that the eyes have definitely improved and although I did see some light eyes, I felt that there were more dark ones. Along with that I thought the shapes and size of the eyes are quite good.

Fronts - It appeared that we still need to work more on getting depth of brisket although it has improved. Shoulders seemed much better than they were several years back.

Rears - Still need to be worked on to get the right angle and correct movement. However I saw more rears that were good than those that were not.

Feet - here is an area that really impressed me. Most were quite nice. The handlers helped the feet by keeping the nails short.

Structure - I felt that most were balanced nicely but we still need to work on overall smoothness of body and of movement. I saw only a few that I thought were too refined. On the other hand I also saw only a few that I felt were too heavy boned.

Movement - We can take all the parts piece by piece and even though they appear correct the dog starts to move and the truth is told. The final word is how all the parts fit together. Overall I felt that we have improved the hackney and now have to get the rears to work together with the fronts. Of course the winners had it all.

Toplines - most were good standing, when the dogs moved some rears went up high and some backs were weak. Most looked quite nice.

I must repeat that this breed is in very good shape. Yes, there is room for improvement; however overall---- Min Pins are looking very much like Min Pins.
Thank you again for such a thrill. (Pamela DeHetre, Judge)

FKG: Thank you Pam, for sharing your judging comments with us.

I would at this time like to add a footnote to Ms. DeHetre's comments for those readers who are not involved in the show ring and perhaps are considering adding a min pin to their family in the future. There is more to being a "breeder" than putting two dogs together and letting them make puppies. Serious breeders, the ones who have an all consuming focus on maintaining the standard of this breed and making improvements or strengthening some areas are the people that YOU want to contact when you decide to make a purchase. These are the people who are putting their dogs out there to have their quality evaluated and judged week after week. In reading Ms. DeHetre's comments, you get a sense of how closely these animals are evaluated before placements for awards are made.

For more information about Miniature Pinschers, whether you are interested in showing, or are looking for a family companion or have room in your heart and life for a rescue minpin, or looking for a breeder referral, please visit the official MPCA web page at www.minpin.org or contact the AKC Breeder Referral Service at (***) ***-****.

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