

Please tell us about your background in Rottweilers, including kennel name, highlights, judging experience--and a photo of yourself! We'd also like to know where you live and what you do outside of dogs.

Dogs have been part of my life since a child, growing up with a cocker spaniel, poodle, and later, a Doberman Pinscher. After the sudden death of my Doberman to an aneurism, I decided a change of breeds was in order. I began watching the Rottweiler ring and was impressed by the Rottweiler's presence and overall look as well as their intelligence. My serious involvement in the AKC show ring began in 1984, when I bought my first Rottweiler, a show prospect bitch, Brenna. I showed Brenna to a four-point major early on, and was then officially "bit by the show bug." She accumulated more points before being bred. She had three litters, producing Champions from each. At that point, I began looking for a male dog to bring in house, traveling to New Hampshire to pick up the pick of a litter, who later became known as 'Chase' or Ch. Yden's Chase Manhattan, CD, BH, HCT, TT. Chase sired my second and third litters with Brenna. He also was used at stud by others, achieving the American Rottweiler Club Gold Producer award. I have had the joy of handling my dogs to noted levels of accomplishment at nationals and other specialties. Without a doubt, my most memorable win was when I showed Chase to a Best in Specialty win at the large Cleveland IX show. Over the years, I have bred on a very limited basis. With my breeding stock aging out, I recently brought in two new bitches that show great potential.

Von Wertz is my kennel name. Since "Wertz" is German and the Rottweiler was named after the drover dogs which populated in the town of Rottweil, Germany, I decided to maintain the name with an added "Von" in front meaning "of or from" in German.

As a breeder/owner/handler, I have been involved in conformation, obedience, herding, rally, and some SchH training. Having personally witnessed the Rottweiler's innate herding ability in the early 1990s with my own dog Chase, I was part of the instrumental team responsible for aligning the Rottweiler to be accepted at AKC herding trials in June, 1994.

Licensed to judge Rottweilers in 2010, I later added Boxers and should complete my permit requirements very soon. I enjoy judging dogs very much and look forward to adding more breeds to my resume. Having judged the Rottweiler national specialty sweepstakes years ago, it would be a true honor to again be chosen as a regular judge for a future national specialty. I am a member of both the American Rottweiler Club, having served as Director for six years as well as a Judges Education committee member, and the Colonial Rottweiler Club. For the past 11 years I served as President of the Rottweiler Health Foundation with my term ending June 30 of this year.

I currently live in northeast Ohio and own a small digital marketing company. When I am not involved with the dogs or working - I enjoy spending time friends, golfing, cooking, outdoor activities, and gardening.

What traits do you look for, in order, when judging Rottweilers? What do you consider the ultimate hallmark of the breed?

Overall balance, type, temperament and presence. It is important not to focus on one particular area which might be a personal pet peeve such as round, light eyes, but to look at the total dog. In your mind's eye, how much does the dog align with the breed standard? Is he balanced? Is he almost square (9-10)? Does he have that Rottweiler type that is undeniable? Does he have the presence that warrants further consideration? Could he/she perform the duties he was bred to do?

The build should be compact, yet robust denoting great strength, agility, and endurance. The attitude should be calm and confident promoting a regal stature/presence – never shy. In judging the Rottweiler, I believe it is important to keep in mind the Rottweiler is first and foremost a working breed and should have the physical and mental attributes to that end.

What shortcomings are you most willing to forgive? What faults do you find hard to overlook?

Cosmetic features such as lighter markings, some pink in the mouth, or a bit lighter eye are easier to forgive. Faults of structure or temperament cannot be overlooked.

How has the breed changed since you became involved with it? Do you see any trends you think are moving the breed in the wrong direction? Any traits becoming exaggerated?

Most definitely. The incorrect trends I am now seeing are: lack of balance (exaggerated rear angulation with moderate fronts) lending to movement that is neither effortless nor attractive; lack of upper arm length and shoulder lay back; lack of fill under the eye; lack of presence/intelligence giving way to lifeless eyes.

A great Rottweiler is one that exemplifies the standard of the breed with the physical attributes, mind and attitude, and carries a certain “presence” that can not be overlooked. A great Rottweiler should give the impression they are always thinking, unlike some of the “empty stares” you may see in the ring these days.

How do you feel about undocked tails?

I do not care for undocked tails. In my opinion, an undocked tail completely destroys the breed's overall type and essence. The breed standard reads “Tail docked short, close to body, leaving one or two tail vertebrae” and that is exactly how I prefer to see each dog in my ring.

Why do we mostly see dogs (as opposed to bitches) in the top ranked Rottweilers?

Perhaps because the bitches are often tending to mothering duties or held back for a breeder's litter plans. A campaigned male can continue showing with no break, other than planned breedings.

Is there anything Rottweiler handlers do you wish they would not?

Throw bait for attention and not have the decency to pick it up; and not allowing enough space between dogs.

Name a dog not currently being shown that exemplifies your ideal type. If possible, please include a photo and/or explanation.

Yngo – Multi V-1, Sieger, Multi BISS Am/Can CH Yngo van het Dornedal Am/Can CDX, Am TDX, Can TD, SchH III, FH, BST, BH, TT, CGC. Yngo was imported from Belgium to Canada as a young dog. He is a great example of the complete Rottweiler – lovely type, great mind in a robust body – not to mention he had a sense of humor. He also has passed on many of his great attributes to his offspring, earning him a top position in the parent club production point schedule.

Anything else you'd like to add?

I love the look of the Rottweiler and their overall constitution – their willingness and (actual) need to do a job, their power, their intelligence, and their humor. Their loyalty to their owner is unmatched and as you age with one, they only become more endearing. The best way to explain this is to own one.