

Thoughts from the Toy Breeders

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Arc-en-Ciel
Biewer Terriers

1. My love for purebred dogs started when I was very young, I was born in the Middle East, educated in Europe and the US, I have been living in New York for 25 years. I started breeding and showing dogs 12 years ago. I had a Shih Tzu from Hallmark Jolei when I lived in NYC, she was shown to her grand championship and acquired a Group 2. I purchased property in the Hudson Valley and built a state-of-the-art kennel, I was focusing on a small Afghan Hound program, championed several bred-by dogs under the Gandhara kennel name, and campaigned a dog from Canada to a BIS. About 4 years ago I discovered Biewers and decided to get involved heavily in the breed with a sizable program under the Arc-en-Ciel ("Rainbow" in French) kennel name.

1. *Please tell us a little bit about yourself. Where do you live? How many years in dogs? How many years as a breeder? What is your kennel name?*
2. *What is your "process" for selecting show puppies? Performance puppies?*
3. *In your opinion, is your breed in good condition overall? Any trends that warrant concern?*
4. *As a Preservation Breeder, can you share your thoughts on the sport today? How's the judging these days? What do you think about the number of shows?*
5. *In your opinion, is social media good for the sport? Is it harmful?*
6. *What are the biggest challenges facing the dog show community as a whole today and how can these be addressed?*
7. *What are some of the positive changes you've seen in the sport over the past decade?*

2. Toy puppies take longer in the selection process. At 6 weeks I start to see shapes and temperaments on the ground in the puppy pen, my eye always goes to square with a high carried tail sitting over the topline. I look at bites at 8 weeks, always favoring scissor. Size shifts quite a bit between 8-14 weeks, I favor adults between 5-6 lbs. I never look at color, if the puppy is sound I will keep it even if it has a disqualifying color. There is no way to control Biewer color so we can keep it and breed it later on and it will produce correct color by accident. My only concern with color is for black that doesn't fade to blue, for bright white and for tan to keep its fire. I always favor heavy silk coats and round dark pigmented eyes obviously.

3. The breed is in very poor condition. Most breeders are not interested in being with the parent club and they don't show. They use the AKC to register litters and puppies but breed in the dark. The breeders who are in the parent club are led by a nonsensical standard that restricts and confuses them and the judges who examine their dogs. The Biewer ring at any given AKC show has a lineup of dogs and none of them look alike. The breed is called a Terrier but apart from the Yorkie, it has no terriers in its genetic makeup: its mostly Shih Tzu, Bichon breeds, Chihuahas, Papillons and Japanese Chin. It shouldn't look like a terrier with a long downward pointing muzzle (although the standard calls for a human expression which is completely ridiculous). The standard states the body can be longer than tall but not rectangular but it can also be square, the eyes can be round or almond shaped, the size can be 4 lbs or it can be 8lbs: it's a complete bipolar mess in writing and in reality these dogs are all very different in type. Let's continue: the standard states the breed has a "signature ponytail" but no topknot... NEWSFLASH: a ponytail IS a topknot they just don't want the hair tied like a Yorkie or a Shih Tzu but whoever wrote the standard doesn't know how to say that. Wait we are not done: now instead of letting the judges focus on exhibits that are properly put together and are sound animals with good topline, the standard forces them down a path of negative fault judging with impossible color disqualifications... so a roachy topline will get overlooked as well as a sound dog because by the time the judge is done examining the impossible pad colors and hunting for a point of gold on a heavily coated body, they just want to be done and get to the next breed with an intelligent easy to adhere to standard. Subsequently, you can imagine that in the Group the breed will not be a popular pick.

4. We all know there are fewer and fewer people and dogs involved in the sport. The sport has developed ways to survive by keeping momentum with shows throughout the year and throughout the country. I think judging is generally good, its difficult to dissociate humanity from judging in a ring, people always have certain preferences for certain dogs and certain people. Our hope is that the best dog always gets a well educated judge's attention on any given day.

5. Social media is great for the sport, it helps us all stay connected and a tight knit group as well as be easily accessible to a new generation. There is so much support on social media groups from whelping to grooming to buying show clothes!

6. Animal Rights is the biggest problem. People who are looking for pet puppies reach out to us and are afraid to say they want to buy a dog, they ask about our adoption policy instead. A really big challenge for breeders who keep large numbers of dogs are the vet bills, veterinary care in NY is a huge business, emergency c-sections can be anywhere between \$6000-10,000 depending on the clinic and the specific night.

7. Awareness, probably because of AR activism and social media, people really try to do better, be better carers for their pets and better sportsmen.