



MEET THE BREEDER

GINGER HARRISON
Bentwood Cavaliers

ED. NOTE: Ginger joined CKCSC in 2006. She has held numerous positions within the club, including President of Cavaliers of the Midwest, Treasurer for CMW, Director on the National Board for two terms, and Secretary of the Cavalier Health Foundation. She loves talking about Cavaliers and is a great resource for aspiring breeders. Although modest in listing her accomplishments, under the Bentwood affix Ginger has bred multiple champions in both CKCSC and AKC, and is one of the most knowledgeable breeders in the country.

1. WHERE DID YOU GROW UP? DID YOU GROW UP AROUND ANIMALS, AND WHEN DID YOU GET YOUR FIRST DOG?

I grew up in a small community in Central Texas, so small that it was akin to living in the country. I acquired the love of animals from my parents and grandparents. I always idolized my grandfather as he was a country vet who definitely “had a way” with animals. He seemed to hold dogs spellbound as he trained them in whatever assignment they would have in life. He and a cute little mixed breed dog taught me an important lesson in training; you have to “think” like a dog to teach a dog. Great memories of my family and those beloved animals have always stayed with me.

2. WHEN AND HOW WERE YOU FIRST INTRODUCED TO CAVALIERS?

The very first time I was shown pictures of Cavaliers and was told of their sweet temperaments, I was hooked. At that time, it was difficult to even locate a breeder and the only available puppies one could find were listed in the newspaper. With no internet to do research, I picked my first Cavalier from the back of a station wagon in 1996, a little Tri who we named “Quila”. From that point on until we lost her at 16 ½ years old, she ran our lives (of course). Even though she was not a show dog, she was and always has been a champion to us.



3. HOW DID YOU FIRST LEARN ABOUT THE CKCSC-USA?

My sister introduced me to her close friend’s sister, Mary Grace Eubank, who urged me to join the Club and sold me my first show dog. At that point, I began going to every Club show possible. As we all know, it becomes a passion quickly and, as my husband says, I became bitten and joined the cult. The camaraderie and the sharing of knowledge by other breeders at the shows was absolutely wonderful at that time, especially if you were a newcomer. Being involved with the CKCSC has been a big part of my life ever since.

4. WHEN AND WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO FIRST BREED? WHAT LINES DID YOU USE?

My first two Champion dogs were males, so I waited until I had finished a Champion bitch

(and was a bit more knowledgeable) to make the decision to breed. I found that many hard-learned lessons come with breeding Cavaliers, the biggest of which is that you cannot beat Mother Nature, no matter how hard you try.

After showing a few different lines when I started, I had the good fortune to meet Shealagh Waters of Maibee Cavaliers. She soon became a close friend and a mentor to me and through the years, shared with me approximately 20 of her lovely dogs, many of whom became CKCSC-USA Champions.

5. WHO WERE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE DOGS (WHETHER BRED BY YOU ORNOT)?

There are so many dogs who come to mind that were favorites for different reasons – many due to their personalities. But one of the obvious favorites has to be **Maibee Montrose (1)**. Montrose was one of the top stud dogs in the history of the breed and is behind most of my Cavaliers that I have owned and bred. Two of the favorite personalities that I owned include my sweet **Ch Maibee Just My Imagination, “Jenny.” (2)** and my funny little showman **Ch Maibee Milan, “Geordie” (3)**.

My current Cavaliers include **Ch Bentwood High Class, “Cassie,” 13 years (4)**. **Ch Lanola Santana of Maibee, “Walter,” 11 years (5)**. **Ch Bentwood Starstruck, “Tucker,” 10 years (6)**. **Ch Bentwood Leading Lady, “Lena” (7)**. **Ch Bentwood ForestCreek Rob Red, “Rob-**



“Rewarding the dog whose only virtues are flash and soundness over one of correct type who might be marred only by a degree of unsoundness is counter-productive to what breeding show quality animals is all about.” - Richard Beauchamp

bie” (8), co-owned with Heather Borton); **Ch Maibee Agent Cody “Cody” (9)**; and **Bentwood Tiara, “Tia.”** I also co-own a few Cavaliers with other breeders.

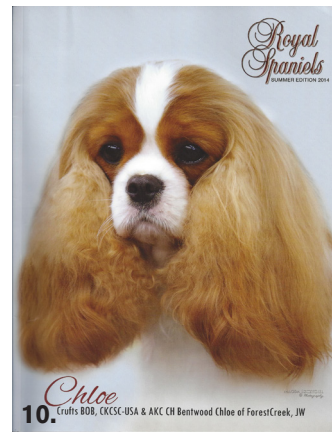
6. WHAT ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR TIME WITH CAVALIERS?

Highlights would include having bred and owned the only American Cavalier to win Best of Breed at Crufts in England and the first bitch to become an English Champion, **Ch Bentwood Chloe of Forestcreek (10)**. She was also awarded Best of Breed at the CKCSC National Specialty the year before.

I would be remiss if I did not include **Ch Bentwood High Class (“Cassie”)** who won both Winners Bitch at the AKC National Specialty and the following week, won Reserve Winners Bitch at the CKCSC National Specialty. She also won an Award of Excellence at the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship the same year. I have had the pleasure of showing many dogs to their championships and I cherish each and every one of those memories. There have been so many highlights and I’ve had such fun in Cavaliers, it would be difficult to write them all down in one article.

7. YOU ARE AN EXPERIENCED CAVALIER JUDGE. WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN THE BREED TODAY?

I think that Cavaliers continue to improve both in structure and therefore movement. But I realize that by improving these structural issues, we must also acknowledge that “breed



type” is of major importance in Cavaliers.

Unfortunately, I see too many bad croups in the ring today, and one of my least-favorite weaknesses includes what is referred to by many as a “weedy” Cavalier, one who has no substance nor any bone. Even the toy dog should possess a good solid base.

8. TALK ABOUT THE HEALTH PROBLEMS IN THE BREED AND THE BEST WAY, IN YOUR OPINION, TO DEAL WITH THEM.

Even though we have not been able to fully find the answers to eradicate either of these diseases (MVD or SM), many strides have been taken in research. I believe that ethical breeders continue to aid in narrowing down the prevalence of both MVD and SM by health testing and only breeding healthy dogs. Research for both diseases is currently being funded by the Cavalier Health Foundation, on which I currently serve as an officer. As conscientious and responsible breeders, we should actively support these research efforts until it finally provides us with an answer to someday eradicate – or at least reduce the prevalence of – either or both dis-

eases. The ethical breeders will continue to do the best that can be done. Hopefully, the research will eventually provide answers to these problems and better health will continue to improve our beloved breed.

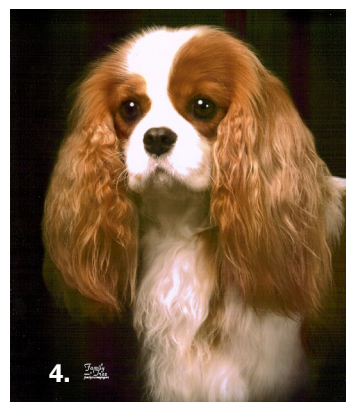
9. LIFE ISN'T ALWAYS JUST ABOUT THE DOGS. TELL US ABOUT YOUR TALENTED HUSBAND'S ELVIS IMPERSONATIONS AT THE CKCSC SHOWS.

When initially asked to help with the auction at the 50th Anniversary of the CKCSC-USA in Louisville, never did I believe that Steve would continue to agree to show his “Elvis” side at several other CKCSC shows. He insists to this day that Elvis only comes out to support the breed and to pacify Priscilla (i.e., me!).

His routines change each time and most of them are developed on the flight to the show. And even though I might be familiar with his upcoming schtick, when coupled with his quick wit, he makes even me laugh.

With his support of my love in showing Cavaliers, Steve has undoubtedly been placed in the running for Best Husband Category (much to his delight, of course).

At left is one of the pictures used by Elvis to show his involvement in dog showing. In his remarks to the audience at this CKCSC National Banquet, he suggested that “sleeping with the judge” could be beneficial in the show ring.



1) Maibee Montrose, one of the top stud dogs in the history of the breed. **2)** Ch Maibee Just My Imagination, “Jenny.” **3)** Ch Maibee Milan. **4)** Ch Bentwood High Class. **5)** Ch Lanola Santana of Maibee. **6)** Ch Bentwood Starstruck. **7)** Ch Bentwood Leading Lady. **8)** Ch Bentwood ForestCreek Rob Red. **9)** Ch Maibee Agent Cody. **10)** Ch Bentwood Chloe of Forestcreek.