

AN INTERVIEW WITH _____

Debbie Struff

By: James Perry Taylor



Ch. Shadow's Nairobi, SOM, LOM – Sire of 52 Champions

When were you first attracted to Boxers and what attracted you?

My mom bought a Boxer dog when I was a teenager, about a year later she found a local

breeder and bought a Boxer Bitch. We bred them and had our first litter of puppies, I did some research and found a good Breeder in CT that came and evaluated the litter and helped us out. Growing up we

always had a dog or a couple of dogs, my mom is the one that always wanted a Boxer, I fell in love with the breed at that point.

What kennel name did you choose, and how did you choose it?

My Kennel Name is Raklyn Boxers, when I first started I co-bred Boxers with a woman named Tina King. Tina was using the Kennel Name Tamarak, when we bred our first litter we came up with Raklyn. "Rak" was from her kennel name Tamarak and "lyn" is my middle name. Simple as that! My daughter Erin and I have carried on with that Kennel Name producing 26 Champions with several becoming Top Producers.

What changes have you seen in the Boxer from yesteryear?

3. Overall the quality of Boxers is not as strong as it was when I first started almost 30 years ago. Temperments are not as good, toplines are a big problem in my opinion many lack bone and substance.

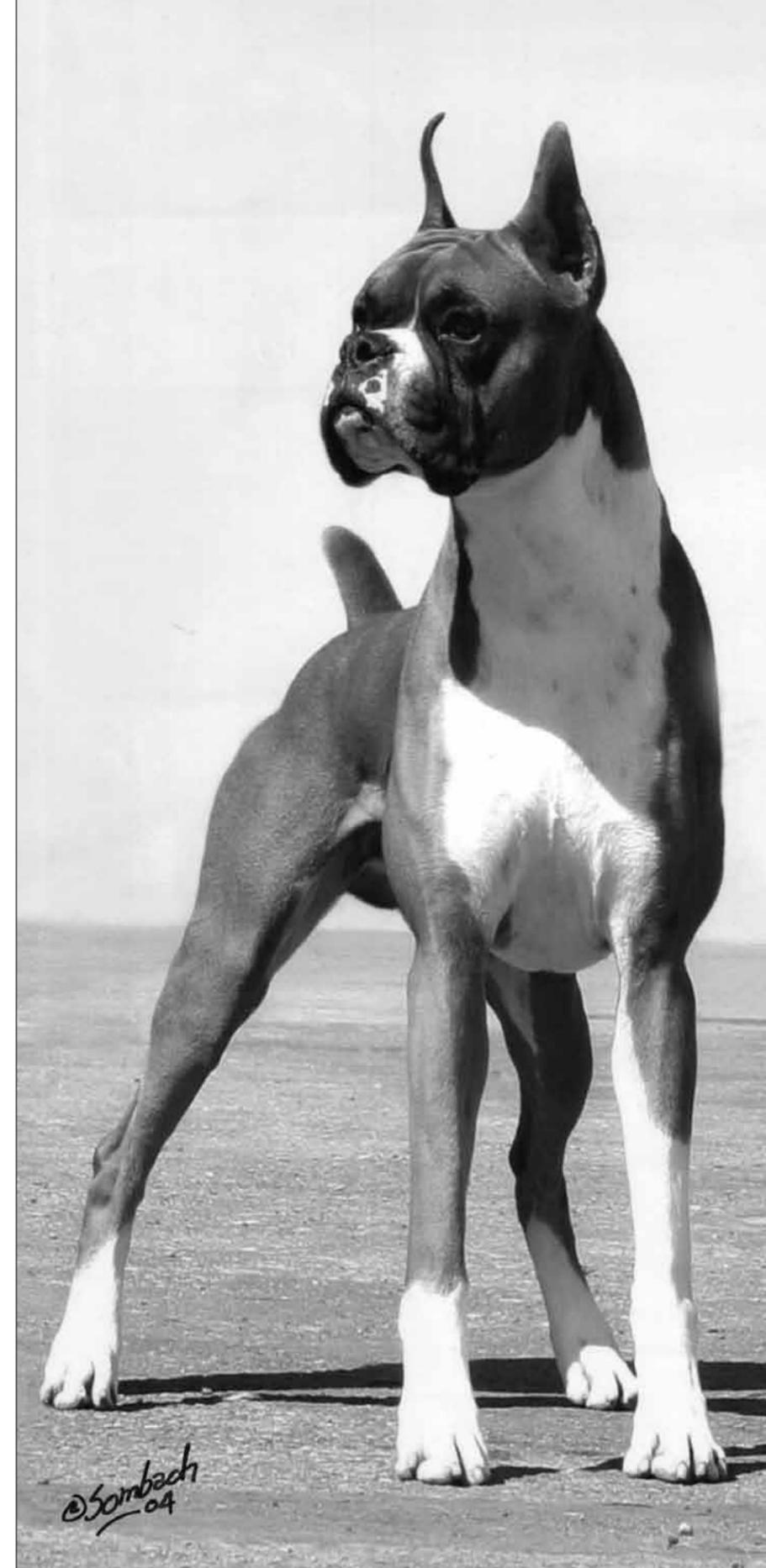
What would you like Judges to focus on when Judging Boxers?

Judges need to focus on the faults that I identified above - shy Boxers should not be rewarded no matter how pretty they are.

How are dog shows & the breeding of dogs different from when you started?

Probably the biggest difference in Dog Shows today are the 4 and 5 day Clusters and the amount of RV's. When I started showing we packed up and moved from show to show each day and most of us drove vans and worked out of them. With regards to Specializing Dogs now it has become a very expensive endeavor - owner handlers with a very nice dogs have a very hard time winning in our Best of Breed ring. The Grand Championship Certificates have given many Breeder/Owner/Handlers the incentive to continue showing their nice dogs once finished which is a good way for breeders to see other very nice dogs.

With regards to differences in breeding we have so much new technology available to us as Breeders such as Surgical Implants, Trans Cervical breedings giving us access to many more good Stud Dogs without putting bitches on a plane. We have new and better health testing tools available to us which is excellent but, I'm concerned that many of the new people in the Sport feel that they can fix all of our health issues in one



CH. Raklyns Stealing The Show, SOM, LOM – Sire of 18 Champions

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or two breedings. By doing that they are losing the quality conformation and breed type. We need to use these tools to help us move away from some of our health issues over time - it doesn't happen overnight.

Other than one of yours, of course, who were/are the 3 best Boxers you have ever seen and why?

Ch. Turo's Cachet - beautiful, elegant brindle bitch with great showmanship.

Ch. High Tech's Johnny J of Boxerton - loved this dog, he was a "Boxer" in my opinion every inch a male and a great Producer.

Ch. Mephisto's Speak of the Devil - I saw Devlin when she was in the 9-12 class at our National and fell in love with her breed type and style. She grew up to be a beautiful bitch that I still love.

Tell us, in your opinion, the difference between a good Boxer and a great Boxer?

The difference between a good Boxer and a great one is Stature, Attitude and Breed Type.

Who has influenced you the most in your Breed and please tell us why?

Tina King was my biggest influence, she taught me the basics of dog breeding. Gave me books to read, we attended seminars on movement, anatomy of the dog and encouraged me to join our local Breed Club. In the New England area there were many



GCH. Raklyns The Bronx MVP At Third, SOMGr – Sire of 20 Champions

very successful Boxer Breeders when I started. I purchased my first show Boxer from Leni and Jerry Kaplan of Hi-Hat Boxers, they also taught me a great deal. In addition we had several top Boxer Handlers in our area at that time including Jane Forsyth, Chic Chiccarini, Chuck Steele and Cheryl Robbins to name a few. They were all very willing to help a novice person.

Has the advent of health testing been for the betterment or detriment to today's breeder's?

I touched a bit on the Health Testing subject above. We need to have and use the tools available to us to remove unhealthy dogs from our breeding stock. However we need to be very careful not to "throw the baby out with the



GCHS Raklyns Elytes Alex in Pinstrioes V Shilo – "Arod" son. 2015 Top 20 Contender

bath water". It takes several generations to fix some of our problems and simply breeding to DNA Results is a mistake.

Please tell us why you are so passionate about your Breed?

I love this breed and am still passionate about breeding the next "great one". Boxers are smart, I love their silliness and how they entertain themselves and make us laugh. They are there to protect the family when it's needed and are simply a great family dog. I often say that Breeding is the only "creative" talent I have, when I breed one of my bitches I



GCHG Lazy K's Dulce de Leche – "Arod" daughter – 2 year Top 20 Contender.

can mentally picture what the puppies will look like and I am usually right!

You have the honor of judging the Futurity at the 2018 National Specialty. How did you feel when you got that call and what are you going to be looking for on that special day?

When I received the word it was sheer excitement yet humbling at the honor to judge the 2018 American Boxer Club Futurity. I will be looking for a ring full of beautiful boxer puppies hoping to find that special one that jumps out at me.