

## **Paula Ercoli**

### **Bella Vita Clumber Spaniels**

*Hi, my name is Paula Ercoli and I am a native San Franciscan now living just outside Portland, Oregon. I have been in dogs, (primarily Sporting breeds) since I was a thought, and have been showing in various aspects of conformation and performance events, as well as breeding dogs for over 30 years. I am in my late 40s and single. I am a theater and liberal arts graduate, and outside of dogs, enjoy films, plays, music, dancing, ethnic food, cooking and life in general. My occupation has primarily been in the customer service and import/export industries.*

*I am of Italian descent so I am very passionate and animated in everything I do.*

*My kennel name is Bella Vita which means "beautiful life" in Italian, and it is where the dogs live better than their humans and they are my masters and I their slave.*

*I have been showing and breeding Clumber Spaniels since 1988 along with x-partner Marla Shelmadine. I currently have a new partner on the East coast, Kathy McGriff, Celtic Clumbers in Rockville, MD.*

*I have owned and bred many top Clumber Spaniels over the years, and my main focus is breeding the all around Clumber; one that not only is a healthy and happy companion at home, and one that preferably lives in a home with children, but can also excel in the conformation ring, excel in performance events, and go work a long day in the field.*

*A few of my most memorable experiences are breeding Ch. Bella Vita the Full Monty owned by Mike Schmitt and*

*Carla Nickerson of Pocatello Idaho, who won this years National Specialty as well as the Pedigree Award two years in a row.*

*I also am the owner of English import AM/CAN CH First Dawn at Tavirosh (Paris) who is the first undocked Clumber Spaniel to finish his championship in the USA, along with several group placements, way before the standard was ever changed, who is also the sire of multiple BIS BISS AM/CAN CH Clussexx Billy Goats Gruff, AM/CAN/AUST/INTL CH Clussexx Life Down Under, as well as grandsire of AM/CAN CH Clussexx Marry Me Bill, and many other top winning Clumbers on 7 continents and in over 18 countries.*

*This year I had the pleasure and privilege to judge Clumber Spaniel sweepstakes at American Spaniel Club, only the second time this was offered at ASC.*

*I am looking forward to doing more sweepstakes in other sporting breeds so as to eventually apply for my judges license. I love discussing dogs, and helping to mentor in Clumber Spaniels, especially when it comes to educating others about the breed, and dogs in general, and helping new people get started.*

*In 60 words or less a brief description of the Clumber and what to look for: Long, Low, Massive, huge bone and rectangular. Tail set level or just below the croup, held out and preferably wagging. A head breed with deep set triangular dark eyes, with some haw showing, broad muzzle and heavy brow, small thick v-shaped ears set at eye level, with a mooshy and squishy cartoon like expression. Reserved, but happy and not shy or aggressive. Scissors bite. Primarily white, but color is really OK. A good strong front with tight*

elbows, and a strong driving rear.

A good bend of stifle and not hocky, with big round, tight feet. The breed should flow in one piece from a long, ample neck to a strong level topline to the base of the tail. Well sprung ribs and deep pronounced sternum, shoulders well laid back.

I am sure this is way over 60 words but these are all the important qualities to look for. Judge the whole dog and look for pluses. Type and movement, temperament and soundness all in one.

1. The most defining physical characteristic of the Clumber Spaniel is its body shape. Long and low, longer than tall, with massive bone, head and features.

2. The behavioral characteristic that most typifies the Clumber Spaniel is that it normally is reserved with strangers, yet at the same time a happy and outgoing dog, neither shy or aggressive, very comical and very vocal.

3. The single biggest misconception about the Clumber Spaniel is that they are a lazy and slow breed of dog that can't move and that requires little exercise.

4. The attribute that lends itself especially in the show ring is like all other breeds, a dog that shows and asks for it. Attitude is everything, along with the ability to keep up with, and out-show and outmove the other breeds it is in

the ring with.

5. The most common judging mistake in Clumbers to me are several. Choosing dogs that are huge and white, over those that are smaller, longer and lower, that may have some more color on them, and not paying attention to movement, especially where a strong sound driving rear is concerned.

6. I would prefer being judged on the move. This is a sporting dog that is required to go all day in the field at a steady pace, so soundness and a strong rear and front are important. A dog that is clean and straight coming and going, has good reach and drive and ample upper arm, not a choppy pitter patter gate, but free flowing and open.

7. To me the greatest concern to breeders today are the health concerns. Although improving, the breed has several health concerns such as hip dysplasia, entropion and cataracts, cervical disc problems, allergies, epilepsy, liver shunts, cardio myopathy, AIHA.

8. The most endearing quality of the Clumber Spaniel is the ability to warm hearts and make you smile. They are natural born comedians and were born to chase the blues away.

9. The three words that best describe the Clumber Spaniel are: Endearing, Entertaining and Unique. 🐾