

Meet Your Breeder

C-Quest Basenjis ~ Cindy Russell

Q How did you get started in Basenjis?

I was already involved with dogs when I first fell in love with Basenjis. I was a Rottie owner working as an assistant to handler Mary Lou Hatfield when I first took notice of the breed. I got my first Basenji in 1993, joined the local and national breed clubs, and immersed myself in the breed.

Q Why did you start breeding? When?

After showing and finishing my first Basenji, I had begun to develop a mental picture of breed type and character. I wanted to produce puppies which were a reflection of this image. I was eager for the whole experience: the planning, the pouring over pedigrees, raising the puppies. It has been as rewarding as I hoped it would be!

My foundation bitch, Brandie, Ch. Rafiki Mass Expectations, JC, arrived from her breeder/co-owner Michelle Gaghan in 1994. She is on the BBHR with 8 champion children. Brandie turned 15 on 12/17/09.

Below: Brothers, sired by Ch. C-Quest's Just Push Play out of Ch. Reveille Accord, breeder Damara Bolte.

All six of the pups in this litter finished, with 3 Group winners among them. Ramses was Best of Breed at the 2008 BCOA National Specialty under breeder judge Jon Curby owner handled by Kelly Wisch. "Button" is a multiple group winner and is currently the #3 Basenji, All Breed, with handler Jane Lodge.



Ch. Rafiki Mass Expectations, JC - "Brandie"

Q What persons influenced you most strongly? Why?

Michelle Gaghan was an important influence. Through Brandie, Michelle provided me with a foundation of health, temperament and breed type.

I have great respect and admiration for Damara Bolté, Reveille.

A talented breeder, peerless handler, and longtime BCOA board member/officer, Damara's record of excellence and professionalism stretch back more than fifty years.

On so many levels, Damara is the model.



Ch. Reveille Push The Limit To MV - "Ramses"



Ch. Reveille Push Button - "Button"



Ch. Eldorado's Echo of the Wind - "Zephyr"

Littermates, sired by Ch. C-Quest's Soul Driver out of Ch. Eldorado's Ooh La La bred by Pamela Geoffroy and Sheila Lund.

Zephyr was handled to his title by Sheila and speccaled by Mike Work. Zephyr is a multiple All-Breed Best In Show winner. Cindy finished Echo in the States before sending him to Noel Basser in Germany where he has won multiple Specialty and All Breed Bests In Show, owner handled by Noel. All five pups in this litter finished.



Am. Int. Ch. C-Quest's Echo Of Eldorado - "Echo"



DC C-Quest Jokuba Hide And Sneak - "Hunter"

Q. What do you feel are your most significant achievements with the breed?

I hope my most significant achievements are yet to come!

It was certainly a thrill to see Ch. C-Quest Jokuba Hide n Sneak win Best of Breed at the 2009 BCOA National Specialty. I co-bred Hunter with Russella Wilkerson and Kristen Marshall.

I am very proud of Logan, Ch. C-Quest's Soul Driver, and Player, Ch. C-Quest's Just Push Play. Both are on the SDHR.

Logan has sired 20 champions, including dogs whose National Specialty wins include Best of Breed, Best of Opposite Sex, Winners Dog, Winners Bitch, and several Awards of Merit.

Included among Player's 9 champion offspring is another National Specialty Best of Breed winner, out of an all-champion litter of six. Best Bred-By Exhibitor at last year's National was also a Player puppy.

I am gratified that so many people, both breeder/exhibitors and pet owners alike, have come back for a second C-Quest puppy. For me, that is a significant achievement.

Q. What do you think today's Basenji breeders need to pay special attention to?

Lately we have been seeing lots of bad feet and incorrect, rectangular outlines, with long bodies, short legs, or both. Fronts and top-lines remain a problem.

However, I wouldn't single out one issue for special attention; all dogs have faults. I am less concerned with this fault or that, than I am with a generic, common look, which lacks Basenji type.

In terms of overall quality, the breed seems to be at a weak moment in its history. We see too few sound-moving dogs, too few strong top-lines/tail sets, and too few Basenjis that exhibit the fine details of breed type.

I would hope that, as breeders, we don't become so kennel-blind that we find ourselves more impressed with a mediocre dog of "my" type than with an excellent dog of 'her' type.

Our standard allows for some variation within its description of correct breed type, and breeders might very well have differing interpretations or priorities. This is as it should be.

Sired by Ch. Jokuba - Asia's The Reign Of Freedom x Ch. C-Quest's Keep The Rhythm, bred by Cindy Russell, Russella Wilkerson and Kristen Marshall. A group winner, "Hunter" finished as a puppy shown by Cindy, then went to live with Russella who showed him to Best Of Breed at the 2009 BCOA National Specialty under breeder judge Teresa Gavaletz. Both "Hunter" and his littermate "Legacy", Ch. Jokuba C-Quest Sneak Preview At Omar, are currently ranked among the Top Ten Basenjis, All Breed.

Q. What advice do you have to a new breeder getting started?

Take advantage of opportunities to observe lots of Basenjis. Attend the National Specialty, affiliated club specialties. Train your eye to look for quality. Look for virtues before flaws and let the standard be your guide.



Ch. Ankhu Steel Magnolia - "Shelby"

Sired by Ch. C-Quest's Soul Driver out of Ch. Jerlin Ankhu Patton Leather, bred, owned and handled by Carrie Jones.

Shelby was Best of Winners and Best Bred By at her very first show, a specialty. She went on to earn multiple group placements, breeder owner handled by Carrie.



Ch. SkyHi's Daredevil - "BuddyLee"

Sired by Ch. C-Quest's Soul Driver out of Ch. Akuaba's Saboteur.

As a ten month old move-up special, BuddyLee was Best of Breed at the 2001 National Specialty under Breeder Judge Jeraldeen Crandall. The following year he was Best of Opposite Sex (to Ch. Klassic's Rooty Toot Toot), under Australian Breeder Judge Doreen Duffin. Buddy Lee was breeder owner handled to these wins, as well as multiple Group wins, and Top Ten rankings for several years, by Laurie Stargell.

Q What dogs you've seen or owned stand out as examples of the breed and why?

Many of the best Basenjis I have seen were never specialed and therefore are not widely known.

One very well known dog I will single out, because I bred to him twice and he figures importantly in my line: Simba, Ch. Reveille Boutonniere, JC. This is a dog that would have looked right at home in any era, so classic was his type. I liked his lovely headpiece, good front assembly and correct size.

I also greatly admired Ch. Akuaba in Gingham, a brindle and white bitch of beautiful breed type, excellent proportions, movement and carriage.



Ch. Akuaba In Gingham - "Gingham"



Ch. Reveille Boutonniere, JC - "Simba"

“It has been humbling to have people I admire and respect incorporate my dogs into their breeding programs.”

Q. What have you seen improve in Basenjis over the years?

My years in the breed are comparatively few; others might bring a broader perspective to this question. Temperament seems improved. Better, more up-to-date training methods are a part of that improvement. The breed’s participation in a wide variety of performance events is growing, which is a good thing.

I cannot say that I have seen widespread improvement in terms of conformation/breed type.

We can all look forward to improved Basenji health, thanks to the Fanconi marker test.



Ch. Rafiki’s Heart and Soul - “Cindy”



Kibushi The Oracle - “Wags”

Sired by Ch. C-Quest’s Soul Driver out of Avongara Luka.

“Wags” was Winners Dog and AOM at the 2009 National Specialty handled by Stan Carter for Breeder/Owner Jon Curby. He is the first half African to win a major award at a National Specialty.

Q. Your chosen kennel name is C-Quest. How did you choose this name? Why? Does it have a meaning?

When I first began showing Basenjis, my parents drove me to the shows; each of our first names begins with the letter ‘C’. Hence, C-Quest, in honor of Mom and Dad and all the time they spent travelling to the shows with me.

Left:

Sired by Ch. C-Quest’s Soul Driver out of Ch. Rafiki’s Dawn’s Early Light, bred and owned by Michelle Gahgan.

A multiple specialty winner, Cindy was Winners Bitch at the 2006 National Specialty under breeder judge Cheryl Myers Egerton, handled by Cindy Russell.

Q. Anything else you would like to add?

I would like to express my gratitude to the breeders who have sent such beautiful bitches to be bred to my boys. It has been humbling to have people I admire and respect incorporate my dogs into their breeding programs.

The days of large breeding kennels producing many litters a year are a thing of the past. In today’s world, it is more important than ever that we work together on behalf of our breed and the sport. Competition in the ring is healthy; outside the ring we are all playing for the same team. It is our responsibility to share information, ask good questions, give honest answers and breed the best dogs we can.