

2013 CANE CORSO FORUM

By Joe Hovorka

When, what and how were you first attracted to the Cane Corso?

I began my fascination with this breed back in 1999 after seeing an ad in the DuPont Registry. The ad featured a Cane Corso. I had never heard of the breed or seen anything like this dog before. My fascination was instant and I knew I had to learn more about this magnificent animal. I started researching the breed with every free moment I had. Having had experience with large dominant dogs in the past such as Rottweilers and Dobermans this dog seemed like the perfect combination of both. Again I knew had to learn more. By 2001 I found myself ringside at my first Rare Breed Dog Show. Seeing these amazing dogs in person far exceeded my expectation and anything I had read or seen in pictures; they quickly captured my heart. I knew after this first show that this was the breed for me. In my wildest dreams, I never imagined that when I bought my first Cane Corso it would lead to anything like this, and that I would be sitting here today answering interview questions for The Working Dog Digest.

Who has been your biggest influence in the breed and why?

I struggled with this question more so than the rest simply because the person that has



Liberty's Sammy The Bull

influenced me the most over the past 10 years is not actually in the Cane Corso breed but probably has as much experience with the breed as anyone in the USA today. That person is Claudia Chance Nicosia, also known by hundreds of dog enthusiasts throughout the Northeast as CC. CC has had direct contact with the Cane Corso practically since their arrival here on American soil. CC has always had a no nonsense approach to breeding, training,

showing, and the maintaining of dogs in a breeding program at an extremely high level. Although at times her methods and candidness took some getting used to. As I look back it was the perfect recipe for me for rapid growth and development with my dogs. CC will never be one to tell you what you want to hear. She is known for her brutal honesty. Again looking back I would not have wanted it any other way. No matter how many times I would call her day or night with what amounted to one ridiculous question after another CC was always there when I needed her. She has shared with us some incredibly high times with the dogs as well as some incredibly low times. She would show up in pajamas in the middle of the night on a moment's notice, in the days when we still lacked the confidence to whelp a litter alone; each time literally living and dying with every breath of every puppy born. I'd like to think we have learned something over the past ten years from her yet still today, CC knows instinctively when I'm calling her for something serious. Although clearly over the years the number of panicked calls has steadily decreased make no mistake the first person I will call when I need help will always be

CC. Without her we would simply not be where we are doing the things we are doing. Thank you for everything you have done and continue to do Claudia Chance Nicosia (CC).

What would you like to see judges pay more attention to when judging the Cane Corso?

I think all things considered the judges have done a pretty fair job in judging the Cane Corso in these first two years in the AKC. Going forward I guess I would like to see more attention being paid to overall balance and soundness. These are after all working dogs bred for a purpose and first and foremost they should exhibit clearly the ability to move effortlessly and perform as a working dog should. I would also like to make it clear that I am against classifying or referring to the Cane Corso as a quote "Head Breed." I think it leads to having too much emphasis being placed on the head. However, with that being said I would still like to see a bit more attention being directed to correct head type with proper proportion. With the Cane Corso being as new as it is to the AKC I think it's fair to say that the future of our breed and where it is headed in the years to come will rely heavily on what we see happening in and around AKC show rings throughout the country.

What would you like novice people to know about the Cane Corso?

With the popularity of this breed exploding as is seen today it is more important than ever before for breeders and owners to be that much more responsible and

diligent. I would like to see the new people out there considering this breed to do as much research as possible not only to make sure they select the right dog and the right breeder but also that they make sure they fully understand and are completely compatible with everything it's going to take to own, train, and ultimately be successful with a Cane Corso. These dogs are descendants of Roman Gladiator dogs and are a true guardian breed by nature. In the proper hands the Cane Corso can live and adapt to almost any environment. Placed in the wrong hands they can quickly take over a household and thus become a nuisance to their owners, the community, and anyone else they may come in contact with. The Cane Corso is best placed with those with prior experience with large, dominant breeds.

What is the difference between a good Cane Corso and a great Cane Corso?

There are many good Cane Corsos out there worthy of a championship as well as a place in a breeding program. A good Cane Corso should meet the standard, exhibit strong breed type, possess correct temperament, with sound powerful movement, and be certified healthy. A great Cane Corso should possess all of the above while always presenting itself in the most positive manner possible, both in and out of the show ring. A truly great Cane Corso does all of this while consistently reproducing itself and even improving upon his or her qualities in its offspring. As we all strive to produce the next great Cane Corso, we should all look with greater emphasis towards preserving what is

truly one of the few functional, utilitarian molosser breeds left.

Why are you so passionate about your breed?

In answering this final question I could easily fill an entire page. There are so many reasons why I am so passionate about the Cane Corso. This breed has a way of getting into your system very quickly and rarely have I seen people own just one. The Cane Corso is the perfect combination of loyalty, presence, and intelligence. They're incredibly athletic, muscular, and strong in body, mind, and spirit. They are willing to put their life on the line for their family and will always make sure you are reminded that you are what they live for. As breeders we should all feel a certain responsibility to protect the breed for future generations. This breed is my passion and it is my mission to do everything in my power to maintain the health, temperament, structure and type of the Cane Corso while always striving to improve the breed. A breeder friend of mine who was visiting from Brazil once said to me in his broken English "Joe it's the cultivation of animals, it is very difficult my friend". As I look back now at what he said truer words could not have been spoken. After ten plus years I continue to spend every waking moment striving to learn more while continuing to move forward with my goals and vision. As I said this breed is my passion and my life and I can't not possibly imagine my life without the Cane Corso!