

Views From Breeders Around The World

Kickie & Chris Norrby – Villa Rosas Wheatens, Sweden

1. What first attracted you to ISCWT?

Their lovely temperament and the wonderful coat did totally capture our hearts immediately.

How many years have you been involved with the breed?

29 years; since 1985.

Are Wheatens your original breed?

No, we had Afghan Hounds, Smooth Collies and Bouvier des Flanderes when we saw a Wheaten for the first time at an International show in Malmö in March 1985 but since 1999 we have only had Wheatens.

2. In your opinion which is the best wheaten owned or bred by you?

It is hard to pick one since there have been so many wonderful dogs with their own personality during the years, like "Mister" our first homebred Wheaten to become champion.



"Niska" Maroc Iniskea, our first Irish import (from Mary O'Carroll) who all our dogs still go back to, she was the queen of Villa Rosa.



"Kelda" Villa Rosas Key-Way (their daughter)



Villa Rosas Key-Way EU Winner 95 with Anthony Killykeen-Doyle



Villa Rosas Paddy who we sent as adult to USA and he was the first Swedish Wheaten to become American Champion,



Villa Rosas Jill Na Lausitz our first Irish Champion,



Villa Rosas Lion of the Day the first Wheaten to be a certified game tracker.



He was used as farm and hunting dog on moose (elk) and other game. Or any of all other very special dogs we have owned, bred and/or sent to wonderful owners around the world. But if we have to pick one it must be "Mister" Villa Rosas Big-Wig.

He had the loveliest temperament you could think of and he was to sire many more litters than planned because of his lovely temperament and he charmed everyone. He raised all our puppies during all his life and taught them everything. He sired his last two litters when he was 11 years and died of Borrelia infection. Three months before he died he participated in a breed specialty as a veteran and was 2nd best veteran and 4th best male at 14 years old!!

This is from his web page: <http://www.villarosa.se/Villa-Rosas-Big-Wig.html>

"Mister was our first own bred Wheaten to become Champion, but it lasted until he was 3 years until he got the last cert (CAC) He was also our first Wheaten with red/harsh coat as a pup and we kept him since he looked so different. When he was about 8 months old pup he won his first show, the breed specialty in Stockholm under Anthony Killykeen,-Doyle as judge. He ended up as BIS puppy!

Silky so called Irish coat was not popular so it was a very hard time to show him. As intermediate he won one cert (CAC) and CACIB under Michael Kirby. As adult, when the coat had grown out the wins started and he ended up with 10 national and international champion titles and was one of the highest Champion titled dogs in the world ever at that time.

He also had a wonderful temperament and raised a lot of puppies. It was also because of his lovely temperament he was used as stud many more times than planned. When those unwilling bitches that didn't want to breed the planned male came and were introduced to Mister to check if they really were in heat they totally changed and offered themselves so their owners felt ashamed ;-)

There are many well known children, grand- great-grand etc. by him. For example the following 4 generations MULTI CH Villa Rosas Key-Way, MULTI CH Villa Rosas Paddy, CH Kaler Toy-Boy of Villa Rosa and MULTI CH Villa Rosas Lochlainn."



CH Kaler Toy-Boy of Villa Rosa



MULTI CH Villa Rosas Lochlainn

In November it is 10 years since he passed away, but we still remember it as it was yesterday.

INTUCH VDHCH NORDUCH SUCH FINCH DKCH DCH LUXCH KLBCH

VILLA ROSAS BIG-WIG "MISTER"

dob 27 August 1989 dod 10 November 2003

3. Other than those you have been personally involved with, which two or three Wheatens would you describe as the best ones you have seen and why?

When I (Kickie) first met Newgrange Con of O'Rian, when visiting Dan & Hannah Ryan, I fell in love. What a beautiful dog and what lovely temperament. I wanted to bring him with me. Later on Mary O'Carroll, kennel Maroc, bred him to Maroc Princess and we got Maroc Na Sionna from that combination. He has had a big influence in our breeding and is sire and grandsire of many successful dogs.



Maroc Na Sionna



We have a young male now, Villa Rosas Aldor Snygh, who has the same lovely temperament as his GGGG sire Con had.



Like many other people in the breed we have always admitted Geijes Kilmore, a wonderful dog, as close to the standard as you can come. Another lovely dog we have met is Mac Dara Hot Shot. I (Kickie) saw him for the first time when judging at the breed specialty in Stockholm many years ago and made him BOB. He became the dog who stands for the interpretation of the Swedish extended standard in 2008.

Except for the above mentioned dogs there are some top winning dogs we just have seen on photos but who we admire and would love to meet in reality.

4. What kennel within or outside of the breed has impressed you and why?

In the breed is of course the work of Maureen Holmes and the Holmenocks kennel most impressive. There is unfortunately no one today who is so dedicated to the breed as she was.

5. If you could incorporate just one dog from the past, into your breeding programme, who would it be and why?

We have been trying to do that all the time with new imports from Ireland and other countries going back to the old lines so they do not disappear. So far we have never bred from a dog we haven't met since we think the temperament is so important, but it would have been exciting to meet and use for example Firecrest and/or Silver Wheat.

6. Who has been your greatest mentor in the breed?

When it comes to Wheatens Maureen Holmes have helped us a lot and we had many phone calls (collect-call) and letters exchanged in the 90-ies. We also met a few times Tony Killykeen-Doyle and Ethine Cleary was also among the peoples who have helped us a lot as did Dan Ryan.

Maureen Holmes always said to us: "Breed for the standard and not for the pedigree!" We have tried to follow that during the years.

And Tony Killykeen-Doyle always said: "The coat has nothing to do with nationality, it's just quality!"

Wise words from wise people.

7. Since you began in Wheatens have you seen many changes within the breed?

Oh yes!

If yes please explain.

The breed grew like an explosion in the late -80ies to mid -00 in Sweden. Many dogs, who shouldn't have been bred, were bred and the type and temperament got really bad in some lines. The dull and woolly coats were very popular and the war of coats started then and is still going on.

In the show rings in Sweden only the woolly coated dogs won and the judges liked the over angulated ones with very short backs, the so called American type. The original Irish type of dogs had a hard time in the show rings and the few breeders got fewer since they wanted to win at shows and started breeding the American type of dogs instead.

Today the quality over all is improving, but still many are breeding for coat, pedigree and show winning more than for the standard.

8. Do you believe the quality has improved or declined since you first became involved?

We think the quality over all has improved closer to the FCI standard. You do not see so many dull and woolly coats today and the construction over all is closer to the standard today. Not so many over angulated dogs, not so many straight shoulders and super short backs and not so many huge and leggy dogs today as it was some 10-15 years ago. When it comes to details there are still a big difference. In the type of heads for example one can see everything from big and wide like Glen of Imaal to narrow elegant like Kerry Blue and strangely enough they are very often trimmed with machine clippers on the sides which really takes the true Wheaten expression away. The ear size and carriage is improving but there are still a lot of dogs with big flat hanging hound ears. Many adult dogs in the show rings are still missing the natural shine in their coat.

9. What in your opinion is the greatest hurdle that is now facing the breed?

All the mixing of coats and type!!! As long as the judges and breeders can not accept the true type of the breed and the coat the FCI standard describes, the breeding and discussions will focus on what type is winning in the show rings at the moment, instead of breeding for the standard, the diversity of the breed will continue, unfortunately as it has been for so many years already.

10. What needs to be done to protect the breed into the future?

We think the Irish Wheaten Club needs to give strong guidelines how to interpret the FCI breed standard. We also think that Irish judges need an extra lesson in how to judge the native breeds when judging abroad since that is VERY important for judges from other countries to look for. Since it mostly is the winning dogs in the show rings who are setting the standard for the type for the breeding, the judges from the native country is of big importance for the future breeding.