

CV : Margaret van de Weg, Retma Dalmatians

Born in Sydney in 1953, and deciding in early primary school to become a veterinarian, my family know that I always loved breeding animals. I started with budgerigars, then also bred mice and guinea pigs whilst in school. Basically, there was always a menagerie somewhere in my life.

In 1968, I became a dog walker and kennel cleaner for Barbara Grollmus, then a Dalmatian exhibitor and breeder. A short time later Gabogrecan Aquilla was returned to her breeder, Barbara. Aquilla joined our household on a 'breeder's lease' and there has been a Dalmatian with me ever since. Although she was not a great show dog, she was beautifully bred and proved a strong foundation bitch for my kennel, Retma.

I began showing at the end of 1968, when I joined the Dalmatian Club (now of NSW Inc). The showing and breeding bug bit me hard, and I showed (and later bred) my Dalmatians regularly from my teens, throughout my first marriage and until my divorce in the late nineties.

We rarely showed more than a few times a month, due to family and work commitments, and all dogs we owned competed against each other, never being 'pulled out' to help finish one of the kennel mates. My daughters Daniella and Elizabeth were also regulars at shows (Dani with many of the dogs over the years, but especially with her beloved Ch Retma Faranth, and Liz with her beloved Ness). Last year, my husband Bruce and I moved from Sydney to Devonport in Tasmania to take over a Veterinary practice. When my current work commitment lets up, I shall return to the ring with some youngsters.

Since the days of Aquilla, I have bred over 30 Australian Champions for myself and others, including two Grand Champions plus International Champions based in Belgium and Finland, and a few in Malaysia. Many of these won Specialty or Royal CCs for me or for their owners, and many have gone on to produce winners for their owners as well.

Probably the best known Retma dals in Australia were

- Ch Retma Alterezza (co-bred with Derek Johnson), who won Opposite Sex in Show at Sydney Royal in 1986, BIS at the 2nd Dalmatian National as well as 3 BIS at Specialties and numerous CCs and Res CCs at Specialties; her daughter
- Ch Retma Divine Madness CD, who won BIS at the Vic Specialty and also managed to be bitch of the year in the show ring in the NSW point score as well as Brood Bitch of the year, and who produced the Freckled Friend AI 'Media' litter
- Ch Retma Media Madness AI (Ness), and her sister Ch Retma Media Magic AI who both won multiple Specialty CCs and RUBISs, including CCs at National Specialties, with Ness also being a Specialty BIS winner.
- Ch Retma Press Baron (son of Ness), BIG at Brisbane Royal in 1997

Then there were my favourite livers, Ch Copper Penny, Ch Cassiopeia CD and Ch Columbia, who will never be forgotten by me. Cassiopeia (or Amber) lived with Janet and Tony Power and did all her training and CD with Janet, whilst shown by me at breed level.

I gained my breed licence in the 1980s and my group licence a little later. Since then I have also gained the Toy group licence and was the Non-Sporting coordinator for the Judges Training scheme in NSW for two schemes in the later 90's.

I had the pleasure of judging the NSW Easter Specialty in 1992, the ACT Specialty in 1995 and the Qld Specialty in 1995. In 1993, I attended the National Specialty in the USA and judged the Dalmatian Sweepstakes at the breed-supported show the next day in Lexington Kentucky. It has been a privilege and a great deal of fun to have these opportunities over the years.

In the past five or six years I have attended relatively few shows, but I certainly hope to get 'out and about' again in the near future down here in Tassie or to watch a few Specialties 'on the mainland'.