

Judge's interview

with Ms. Myriam Vermeire

K.B.T.C. – C.R.B.T.



Ms. Myriam Vermeire will be judging during our Belgian Top Terrier Double show, at the OPEN show in the morning, as well as during the CAC show in the afternoon.

Judge's interview with Ms. Myriam Vermeire

BREEDER RELATED QUESTIONS

You have quite a long history as a successful breeder with the Belgian Shepherd breeds. Could you tell us when and how you got in contact with those breeds? What attracts you to these breeds?

A friend of my father had a Groenendaal and it was my dad who fell in love with the breed. After my parents took information with several breeders the decision was made to buy a dog of this breed. So, I got my first male when I was 14 years old. Belgian shepherds are very honest, intelligent dogs who are able to be successful in many disciplines. Whether you want a good companion, a show dog or a working dog a Belgian will make it happen.



Also the other Belgian breeds have a lot of qualities whether as companion, working or hunting dog and to me it was only logical that I also got the passion for them. Belgium has every right to be very proud of their national breeds. I still own some of our Belgian breeds: 3 Tervuren, a smooth Griffon and 2 Brussels Griffons in co-ownership.

What would be your advice for young and upcoming breeders?

Accept to learn from breeders who already have a lot of experience in your own country and abroad, study the bloodlines of the dogs you own and you want to breed with and of course always keep the breed standard in mind.

What is your most favorite dog show, as a breeder?

The French national in August with hundreds of Belgian shepherds coming from all over the world

K.B.T.C. – C.R.B. T.

→→→ MYRIAM VERMEIRE

Dear Mrs. Myriam Vermeire, thank you so much for taking the time for this interview for the Royal Belgian Terrier Club (KBTC-CRBT).

Can you please tell us how you got involved with dogs; both as breeder and judge?

→ I grew up with a German shepherd who was my best friend during my childhood and I always have had dogs since. In 1983 I had my first Groenendaal male and 3 years after my parents bought a female from one of the best breeders. Because she was such a nice female we decided to have a litter with her. Since then I bred one litter a year with different females. I went to my first show in 1983 and in 1986 I started to work as ring steward and at the age of 16 I took my first course general cynology and I also passed successfully the exam. Of course at that time I was too young to become a judge but since then it was my dream to stand in the middle of the ring in future. Once I got the right age I got accepted as a candidate judge, I passed all my exams in a successful way and the rest is history.



→ Ms. Myriam Vermeire will be judging following breeds during our double Terrier Shows on May 4th, 2025:

OPEN SHOW

American Staffordshire Terrier, Australian Terrier, Brazilian Terrier, Cesky Terrier, Japanese Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Valencian Terrier, Welsh Terrier, West Highland White Terrier and the Yorkshire Terrier

CAC SHOW

Airedale Terrier, Cairn Terrier, Dandie Dinmont Terrier, Deutscher Jagdterrier, English Toy Terrier, Black and Tan, Irish Glenn of Imaal Terrier, Irish Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, Irish Terrier, Kerry Blue Terrier, Miniature Bull Terrier, Norfolk Terrier, Scottish Terrier, American, Hairless Terrier, Biewer Terrier, Rat Terrier and the Toy Fox Terrier

JUDGE RELATED QUESTIONS

When did you have your very first judging? How do you look back at that initial experience?

My first show was in 1983 but my first judging was in 1997 and of course I was very excited. It was at the specialty for the Belgian breeds, so a lot of dogs were entered. I felt very honored.

Did you have a mentor in becoming the successful and respected all-round Judge you are today? If so, what is the main thing you embraced and implemented in your career?

Over all those years I've had a lot of mentors: our own all round judges Monique Van Brempt who learned me everything about the terriers breeds, Norman Deschuymere, Liliane De Ridder but also the breeders and/or judges I visited to learn about their breed(s). When judging I still use the back ground information I got from them because not all the breed standards are very detailed. So I'm still very grateful for all their help and support I got from all of them.

Are you mentoring judge apprentices, what is your advice to upcoming judges? What qualities do you admire the most in a judge?

If new judges want to learn it's with great pleasure that I will help them. Upcoming judges know that they can always contact me.

My advice to them is to be well prepared for the exams, the more you know about a breed the better. And of course the passion and the love for the breeds are of great importance.

A judge needs to respect the people who are working for him/her in the ring, the dogs and the person who handles the dog. The exhibitors are our clients and need to be treated in the right way. They pay a lot of money to have our opinion. It is also very important that a judge gives the same amount of time to each dog.

And even when you have a dog in the ring who doesn't really fit into the breed standard you can always find something positive to say. I'm assuming that everyone loves his/her dog and a judge is not there to hurt anyone's feelings.

What makes you choose for the best of breed?

Is it all about breed standards, physical and or behavior? And what makes you choose for a best of group, best in show?

To choose a best of breed of course the breed standard is the most important because this is the description on which I base myself. But also the behavior is of great importance; for example we can't accept aggressive behavior towards other dogs or towards the judge.

On the other hand not all breeds are the same; some are very restraint, some are very playful, some are very sensitive. So it's of great importance that a judge knows the typical attitude of the breeds he's judging and it's very important to approach the dog in the right way.

The group winners and the BIS should be dogs with a typical attitude, typical movement and a real example for the breed.

As an experienced and respected Judge, you have seen Terriers all over the world during international dog shows.

In your opinion, how much has our group 3 evolved over the years? How do you feel about it?

Also in the terrier breeds the standard is of great importance. When I judge terriers of course I want dogs who fit into the breed standard but also the Terrier temperament is of great importance. A terrier should be brave and even a bit arrogant.

In some countries some terrier breeds like the American Staffordshire and Staffordshire Bull Terrier are becoming too light overall and too light in bone.

I always keep in mind that a dog should be fit for function. In some countries I also see bad coats (too soft) or sometimes dogs that are overgroomed or groomed in the wrong way. We also loose in some breeds the right tail carriage and the strong thigh we need in most of the terrier breeds 'A terrier needs to have something behind'.

It's not easy to tell that one country has better quality than the other because all over the world I see top dogs and less good dogs.

OTHER QUESTIONS

We all have witnessed a severe impact of the pandemic to the canine world. On one hand showing and judging halted, on the other hand breeding boomed enormously. Are we still experiencing the impact therefrom; what is your opinion on that?

The pandemic didn't do the dog world any good. When dog shows became possible again people went into the ring and immediately they went back home because they had to. The pandemic is behind us but the attitude of (some) exhibitors changed a lot. We don't have the same coziness anymore which is a pity.

That so many puppies were bought during the pandemic is a pity because some people decided to have a dog because they had time but without thinking about the consequences. After the pandemic people needed to go back to work or could travel again and many dogs went into shelters. A dog is not a disposable product but a living creature which should be part of your family.

In one of our previous newsletters, we published an article about how the Belgian police recently train dogs to detect the Coronavirus. Where do you think dogs can still help people?

Over all the years dogs have been proving that they can help people in lots of ways : dogs who help the blind and disabled people, police dogs, rescue dogs, war dogs, dogs who are searching for drugs, etc. A dog who is well trained and talented is a gift from heaven.

We have recently seen much stricter regulations surrounding the breeding and exhibition of dogs in Austria and in Germany and, like the "Animal welfare-dog ordinance", in which certain breeds are prohibited of exhibiting. Will we experience same evolution in Belgium?

I hope not but the danger is behind the door. Animal welfare organizations have a lot of power nowadays. So I think it's of great importance that the Kennel Club stays in good contact with those people and make them understand that we all want the best for our dogs. The dogs the organizations concentrate on are the show dogs and working dogs but we all know that the welfare problem is located elsewhere.

According to you, what is the next big challenge in the canine world?

I think my answer above is one of the greatest challenges we have ahead of us. A big problem is that the politicians who make decisions about animal welfare and dogs don't have a clue of what they're talking about. So it's of the greatest importance that they are well informed by the right people.

Also the finances for organizing committees become the more and more difficult because everything is getting more and more expensive. The goal should be to work with each other and not against each other keeping in mind the applicable Belgian rules so that our hobby will continue to exist for a long time to come.