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Langley show dog Mr. Jones scores another major win

By ROY JACOBSON, SOUTH WHIDBEY RECORD
Updated 10:00 pm, Saturday, February 6, 2010

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In fine four-footed fashion, Mr. Jones keeps on keepin' on in the wonderful world of dog shows.

Fresh from a whirlwind trip to Europe this past fall, the 22-pound Langley champion **Shiba Inus**, a Japanese breed originally raised for hunting in the mountains, has wowed them in sunny California, too.

"He really had to turn it on," said his owner, **Sandi Smith** of Possession Point. "But Jones is a real showman."

For the second straight year, Mr. Jones, whose pedigree name is CH. Dragonhouse Mr. Jones, took best of breed in the recent American Kennel Club/Eukanuba National Championship in Long Beach, the largest-prize-money dog show in the world.

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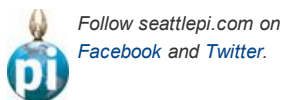
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Show dogs from all over compete in seven categories for \$225,000 in prize money, \$50,000 to the ultimate winner, the "Best in Show."

In winning best of breed and best bred by exhibitor in competition with 19 other Shibas, Mr. Jones pocketed \$400 for his owner.

He then moved on to non-sporting group competition at the show, and though he didn't win in his battle with the ever-popular poodles, he was "called out" for closer inspection by the judge, Smith said Thursday.

"That's a big honor," she said.

Smith said she and Mr. Jones are competing at the big shows against animals with wealthy backers and professional handlers, all in pursuit of Number One.

"For Jones to do as well as he has is amazing," she said. "But he still has to beat those poodles."

But anyhow, there's the notoriety. Mr. Jones' performance in the group competition at Eukanuba can be seen on television tonight.

It will be aired at 8 p.m. on both the Discovery and Animal Planet channels, Smith said.

Mr. Jones' next competition will be the following weekend at the prestigious Westminster Dog Show, which will be televised live from New York City.

Later in the year, Smith and Jones will compete at Crufts in London, known as the world's greatest dog show.

"It'll cost \$3,000 for our airfare just to get there," Smith said. "But it's been a long process to be able to get to go."

Mr. Jones, who's almost 3 years old, is about 2½ feet long, 15½ inches tall. He's wriggly, and he "loves people," Smith said.

Smith has been raising and breeding Shibas for 17 years, and Japanese Akitas before that.

She also takes in rescued dogs. And she runs a "doggy daycare," where customers can drop off their pets for some socialization, or for short-term dog-sitting.

She credits her socialization techniques with helping Mr. Jones cope with the noise and confusion of the show ring.

Smith also has installed a heated pool in an outbuilding, which she uses to provide aqua-therapy for dogs who are suffering physical debilitation, or are recovering from surgery.

Smith and her family, husband Nick and teenaged sons Kevin and Jake, have lived on South Whidbey for five years.

She owns other adult Shibas and several puppies. But these days, it's all about Mr. Jones.

"The puppies keep me busy, but right now the spotlight's on him," Smith said. "He's the hotshot. He's a superstar."

This article was originally published in the South Whidbey Record on February 6, 2010.

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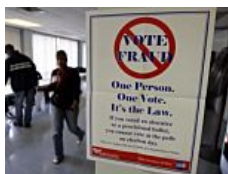
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