

## THE FROSTING ON THE CAKE

What is 'the frosting on the cake', other than that which is obvious? The term is commonly used to describe any finishing touch - something which is not inherent to that which is beneath it, but rather, an enhancement - usually visual.

So-o-o-o, for the purposes of this article, consider the abundant coat of the Pekingese, as well as that of other coated breeds, to be 'the frosting on the cake'.



Pansy Puppy in Show Ipswich KC - Ormalu Pekingese

If one were to see a beautifully frosted and decorated cake, the logical assumption would be that a delectable dessert is under the frosting. Think a bit further...it could be entirely possible to frost a cardboard box...or a metal container...the possibilities are endless. The appearance would be identical to the real cake, but getting past the frosting would disclose very different realities.

Over time, I have been told by a number of Judges that they considered the Pekingese to be one of the most difficult - if not THE most difficult breed to judge, because the Peke is unique.

Of course, there are some similarities to other breeds, but nothing is really close. If Judges, who presumably are educated about the breeds they judge, find this breed

difficult to judge, even when going over them thoroughly in the show ring, how much more difficult must it be for the casual observer to evaluate a Pekingese.

Yet, all this being recognized, too many admirers of this delightful breed often are mesmerized by the abundant, exquisitely groomed coat of the show Pekingese, seeing nothing else. If one is simply observing, enjoying the visual representation, so be it; HOWEVER, if the observer is seeking a dog to show or a dog for breeding, a disastrous mistake could be in the making. If the clear vision of the person observing is being clouded by seeing only the coat, and buying/breeding decisions made with such a mindset, the long-term ramifications are mind-boggling.

How often do we see breeders/exhibitors running to breed to dogs which they have seen only in costly ads which sometimes are not reflective of the dogs' true appearance and quality? Do national rankings and advertisements alone mean that a dog is THE special one which will enhance a breeding program? Look beyond appearance. If possible, see the prospective stud dog or addition to your own dog family in person; weigh its pros and cons, evaluate how closely the dog meets its Breed Standard, and when appropriate, see what the dog has produced.

Bottom line? Be sure you know what's beneath 'THE FROSTING ON THE CAKE'.

Jacqueline Ragland

JA-LING PEKINGESE

Carlsbad, California

(First published in the AKC Gazette, June, 2012)