

Breeder of the Year

BHCA member Claudia Orlandi received one of the highest honors AKC can bestow when she was named the 2009 Breeder of the Year during a ceremony at the AKC Eukanuba National Championship Show Dec. 13 in Long Beach, California.. The annual award honors those breeders who have dedicated their lives to improving the health, temperament and quality of purebred dogs.

In winning over the other six group finalists, Claudia will be memorialized with a portrait of a Topsfield Basset Hound to be on permanent display at the AKC offices in New York City. All seven finalists received a commemorative medallion during the ceremony, which will be telecast by Animal Planet Feb. 6

"Like other Breeder of the Year winners before her, Claudia represents the epitome of the responsible breeder -- someone who aims to preserve and improve the breed they have dedicated their lives to and who puts the health and welfare of her dogs front and center," said AKC Chairman of the Board Ron Menaker. "She has used her expertise to enhance the breeding programs of other fanciers and sets an ideal example for so many breeders in the sport. This recognition is very well deserved."

Claudia has produced more than 100 AKC champions, with Topsfield Bassets winning over 100 Bests in Show and 500 Group Firsts and holding various Breed and All-Breed records. Prominent Topsfield hounds include Ch Topsfield Bumper Cars, CD, ROM; Ch Topsfield-Sanchu Sports Car, ROM; Ch Topsfield Beethoven; and Ch Topsfield Vision Silver Noodles. Bumper Cars, a National Specialty Winner, is the top Group Winning Basset Hound in the history of the breed with 250 group firsts. Silver Noodles is the top winning Basset Hound bitch in breed history.

Claudia is also dedicated to education, both in BHCA and throughout the country. She conceived and founded Basset Hound University, an educational tool that has been adopted by other parent clubs. She developed the club's educational booklet, "Discover the Basset Hound," widely used at public education events throughout the country. She has served as BHCA member education chair and currently chairs the Judges Education Committee.

She has conducted seminars for breeders and judges, including *The ABC's of Dog Breeding*, *Anatomy Review for Judges and Breeders*, *Hands-On Angle Evaluation in Dogs* and the *BHCA Judges' Education Seminar on the Basset Hound*. She currently judges Basset Hounds, Dachshunds, Petit Basset Griffon Vendéen and Junior Showmanship.