

First Best in Show

Philo's Blaze of Koko Crater

Although Hawaii was a territory rather than a state at the time, Blaze was the first AKC Best in Show winner and the first world-wide championship Best in Show winner.



Lieut. and Mrs. Albert J. Ashurst's

Philo's Blaze of Koko Crater



THE BEST—Here are the tops in the Maui Kennel Club's all-breed dog show last Saturday, at left, Roger Knox and Judge Forest N. Hall presenting the best in show Home Insurance Trophy and rosette to Philo's Blaze of Koko Crater, golden-brown Basenji, best in show. At right, Major James E. Kessler's Boxer, Hawaiian Sabre Dance, is pronounced best local Maui-owned dog by Judge Hall, who holds the monkeypod

bowl offered by MKC to all major winners Saturday. The Basenji is owned by Lt. and Mrs. Albert J. Ashurst of Pearl Harbor. He was shown by Lyle Vaughn, who is seen in the picture. Blaze was bred by Mrs. Helene Vaughn of Koko Crater Kennels, Honolulu, who is pioneering the barkless breed in Hawaii.
—Maui News photo by Kats Omuro.

Blaze was bred by Helene Vaughn and handled by Lyle Vaughn of Koko Crater Basenjjs. The entry at this show was 80 dogs. This was the first best in show at a championship level show for Basenjjs!

Accompanying article:

History Making Dog Show

Basenji Wins Best In Show Over Fast Field

American Kennel Club history was made in the final rundown of the Maui Kennel Club's all-breed dog show at the Fairgrounds Saturday afternoon when a crowd of more than 2,000 spectators, who jammed the bleachers and completely encircled the large ring, saw Judge Forest N. Hall of Dallas, Texas, pick a Basenji as best in show all breeds, the first time in the United States that this breed has gone best in show.

The grand champion, Philo's Blaze of Koko Crater, is owned by Lieut. And Mrs. Albert J. Ashurst, USN, of Honolulu and was shown in the climax by Lyle Vaughn, who, with Mrs. Vaughn, was the breeder of this sturdy barkless dog from the dark ages of ageless Africa.

Soundness in body and perfect conformation, ideal temperament and an eye-catching flair for showmanship sent Philo's Blaze into the champion's circle after more than 30 minutes of close competition with the five other entrants in the red, white and blue group.

Vying for top honor in the 13th annual AKC show held by the Maui Kennel Club since its first in 1934, were: Mr. and Mrs. E. R. Champion's Ascob Cocker Spaniel, Ch. Crackerbox Cork Tip; Mr. and Mrs. Martin A Amidon's German Shepherd, Karankapiki O'Halekou (CDX); Robert E. Evan's Smooth Foxterrier, Cestria Cobber; Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Chang's Miniature Pinscher, Pa-O-Na-Keiki Prize Package; and Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Kaiser's Standard Poodle, Puttencover Salambo.

Competition was keen and the crowd had its favorites as the six group winners went through their paces, time and again. Finally, Mr. Hall ordered the six to commence the last long march, in a circle around the outer perimeter of the ring. As the dogs moved along, he suddenly pointed to the Basenji and the best in show in Maui Kennel Club history came to a sensational close. Roger Knox presented the traditional Home Insurance Company trophy for best in show.

In “*The Basenji*” in March 1968 Helene Vaughn, then living in Torrance, California, wrote this letter:

From Helene Vaughn (owner of Ko Ko Crater Kennels)

I just received the January “Basenji.” On the cover a dog is believed to be the first male to go Best in Show in the United States. I was the breeder of a Basenji male to go Best in Show at Maui Kennel Club in Hawaii on October 13, 1956. His name was Philo’s Blaze of Ko Ko Crater, owned by Lt. A. Ashurst and shown by my husband. This dog died two years ago. He was ten months of age when he won best in Show.

At that time Hawaii was a territory of the United States; now it’s a state, so maybe the cover picture is correct.

The cover story for the January 1968 cover:

Shown on the cover this month is Ch. Betsy Ross’s Kingola of Ber Vic, believed to be the first male Basenji to win Best in Show in the United States. Kingola won Best in Show under Judge Isidore Schoenberg, at the Queensboro Kennel Club show, Jamaica, Long Island, New York, on October 28, 1967, over an entry of 1,279 dogs.