

ACBA: Fiction and Prose

Show Board in King Arthur's Court

by Valerie Jump
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In October, 1974, I decided to purchase a Peruvian boar after having Americans and Silkies for several years before that.

I called around to find the best breeders and ran across a judge in Canada, Joan Gambioli, that bred some of the best Peruvians in the US and Canada. When I saw "King Arthur" I knew I had spent my \$ 15.00 well. He was gorgeous. His depth of color was exceptional and the coat was very silky and dense.

She told me that he was not a good show pig because his color distribution was not good. She showed me his face, which was the only red marking on him. At first glance, he looked black and white and the red on his face was enough to make him legally a TSW.

Since I'd never had any good cavies to show before, I thought to myself that it wouldn't hurt to practice wrapping and show him just for fun. After all, he didn't have any disqualifications and I thought he was really beautiful. He was five months old when I got him so his coat was long enough to easily wrap. I read some articles about grooming Peruvians and applied them the best way I could. Six months went by and he started to look really great, so I guess I interpreted the articles correctly.

It now was the time of year for the largest two day show in Oregon. It was the Pacific Northwest Rabbit & Cavy Show. My friend, Lee Arlandson, found out that when long coated cavies are brought to the table, they needed to be on a show board. We didn't know very much about what the dimensions were, so I did my best to make one without ever seeing one before. The dimensions were 16" x 14" x 3" tall. I didn't know how to get the burlap to stay on, so I glued it. No one told me there was a special color, so I chose purple because he looked good on that color.

Now the day came to show the pigs. Lee's daughter, Janice, had a beautiful White American named Jewel and I had King Arthur looking his best. We decided to go together and share a hotel room. We had to travel a long way, started in Medford and I believe the show was in Roseburg, Oregon. This show had over 400 entries and people came from all over—California, Washington, Arizona, Ohio and of course, Canada.

I immediately went around introducing myself as a novice and asked a lot of questions about grooming. There were a lot of

Peruvians and numerous breeders from all over. All were happy to lend me some advice on grooming my Peruvian.

Since judging was done in alphabetical order, Peruvians were last at this 1975 show. The first day, George Bayliss judged Peruvians and they were called to the table.

I groomed my pig on the new board and realized his hair was getting caught on the edges where the burlap was glued on. I had a hand towel that matched the color of the board so I quickly put that over the top to keep his coat from getting caught.

Janice brought him to the table for me as we were not allowed to stand by our pigs while being judged at this show. I heard gasps and clapping. There was such a crowd I wasn't able to see what was going on. Suddenly, people turned around except Janice and Lee. "Congratulations," they whispered and giggled, "he just got Best of Breed!" My mouth fell open and I was in shock! There were over 50 Peruvians on the table!

Lee and Janice were already happy about their Best of Breed win with over 100 Americans. I was ready to take King Arthur back to his cage, but he wasn't done. It was time for Best in Show. Lee and Janice rushed back to get Jewel and King Arthur was still up there. He looked so beautiful on his purple show board. His coat was shiny and he didn't move a muscle.

George was having a very hard time deciding and finally picked Janice's pig, Jewel, for Best in Show and King Arthur went Reserve. I almost fainted! I couldn't believe this pig beat all the other Peruvians and then got Reserve in Show!

I was starting to feel uncomfortable, receiving some glaring looks from some of the breeders. I was worried maybe there was another reason I wasn't supposed to show this pig. We quickly left, but

couldn't go far because we still had another show the next day.

It seemed it took forever, but the next day finally arrived. Marion Wilber was the Peruvian judge the second day. Some of the Peruvian breeders seemed in a better mood, so I felt more relaxed. I didn't ask too many questions and defended my ignorance when I was questioned on my grooming skills.

Judging seemed consistent with the previous day as Janice's American received BOB honors. Now it was King Arthur's turn and I groomed him out on his purple show board. I could hear whispers when I got him ready, but I wasn't sure what it was about. I thought there might have been some concern about my show board. I was certain at the time they were laughing at the poor workmanship that went into the trial and error project.

I stayed away from the table because I couldn't bear to look. I started hearing angry tones from some of the observers and I knew it was because of King Arthur. I was right- he won Best of Breed again! They tried to compose themselves as he stayed up for Best in Show.

Marion was trying to decide. She kept looking at King Arthur. There was another judge beside her and they talked together for a few moments. Then she

announced, "Reserve in Show is the White American sow and Best in Show is the Peruvian TSW boar."

I couldn't believe it...I was so happy! However, my happiness rushed away with concerns that my pig would be eliminated because of his show board! Some breeders were extremely upset and made a formal complaint to the show superintendent. At that time, there were no standards on show boards for ARBA, however in Canada, there was a show board standard. The standard was that the board be 16" x 16" and completely covered with brown burlap. Breeders that lost to King Arthur tried to turn the judgement because of my pig's show board not being standard size and color. It was felt the board had somehow swayed the judging outcome, either by the look of the purple emphasizing his color or that the judge knew who the owner of the pig was. The superintendent explained there was nothing that could be done unless there was a standard for the board.

After that a breeder made a formal complaint to ARBA and a show board standard had to be voted in so this mishap would not happen anymore. Now we know why we have a show board standard.

King Arthur won many shows after that and I made sure he had a proper show board before I entered him again. Who would ever have guessed King Arthur would do so well and his victory compromised by his show board!

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