

CRUFTS-When Dreams Come True

Can dreams come true? It began last summer when Linda, Laila's breeder and my friend started talking about the possibility of bringing her back to the UK to show under breeder judge Willemine van Deijl who was the judge this year for Crufts. I thought she was



was joking at first. But as time went by, Linda said "I have entered her now, you have to come." I talked it over with my husband Ron, and he was all for it. Oh My! We are going to England to show at the 2013 Crufts, the world's largest dog show. I could hardly believe it. Until my ticket was all set, I really never thought it would happen.

Our journey to attend began back in January. To bring a dog into the UK you must meet all the rules in the Pet Travel Scheme on the DEFRA site. (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/pets/pet-owners/#a>) Laila already had an EU pet passport from her last adventure back to the UK in 2010 when she had her first litter. So all that needed to be done was to update her rabies and get a health certificate and we were all set with the paper work.

We arrived at Detroit Metro airport 3 hours ahead of our flight. The dog has to be checked in as well as myself. The folks at the Lufthansa counter were extremely helpful and very easy to work with. I always put a flyer on her crate with her photo, whom she is flying with and the destination.

Once her airline crate was checked by security she was loaded in her crate and I had to say goodbye. Laila will ride in the temperature controlled cargo area. 8 hours later we land. We chose to fly into Germany, as it is much easier to bring a dog into the country.



Good friends, Cindy Fellows and Gary Huskey are meeting us at the airport to make the drive to the UK. After collecting my luggage, Gary & I wait for Laila's crate to arrive at the oversized baggage area. And there she is, tail wagging and happy to see me. In the past you had to show her paperwork at the vet's office, but on this trip I am told to just exit, so we did.

Cindy drives us; it is a 5-hour drive through Germany, Holland, Belgium and into France where we are to board the tunnel train at Calais, to ride into the United Kingdom. We show our passports, including Laila's and we are all cleared to board the train. The train is not very big inside and has several cars, which carry automobiles, campers, and semi's or lorry's as they are called in the UK.

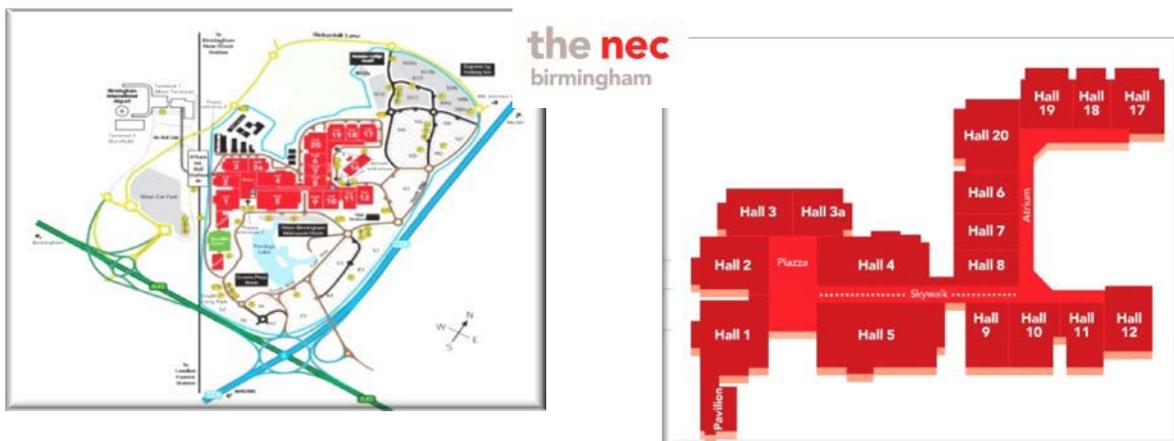


You drive in and the cars line up. It takes approximately one half hour to go under the channel and we arrive on the other side. The door opens and we just drive out. Now here is the scariest part, driving in the UK. My friend Gary was supposed to do the driving in the UK.

Unfortunately, he is tall and the driver's seat does not go back far enough. So that leaves me. I had been to the UK several times but never driven. It seems daunting on the wrong side of the road, especially in the rain and fog! But it has to be done and switching drivers, we are off.

Ok, so it's not so difficult on the M25 (expressway) left lane is the slow lane, and the traffic is way over there across the guardrail. It is raining and getting foggy to add to it all. Then, we have to exit and oh my, how many roundabouts do they have? They are a little tricky to maneuver. Sure we have a few in my area but we go the other way around. With all three of us we managed to make it to our friends, Andrew and Linda Lester's house around 9:30 in the evening. It has been a long journey so far as we left Detroit last evening at 5:30. Saturday we wake to a day filled with lots to do to get ready for Sunday. We will be at the NEC all day. We gather all our gear, chairs, crates etc. packing coolers with our picnic for the day, and grooming dogs. I thought we were supposed to rest up? We meet friends for a lovely Indian dinner and then off to bed. I can hardly sleep and my mind goes over what tomorrow will be like.

Sunday, we wake early and pack the cars and we are off at 6 am. It is about one hour away and it seems we get there in no time. Crufts is held in the NEC which is located in Birmingham. It is a series of several halls (red) that seem to go on and on.



We are one of the first to arrive in our group and find our benching area in hall 3. Set up all our stuff and now we are ready to wait until the start of the show.

Grooming begins and it is a frenzy of brushing, sprays, dogs up, dogs down. Red ones, black ones.



Finally the time has come, the show starts. Each variety is shown in a separate ring. There are 112 Tervuren entered. In the UK they offer the following classes; Veteran Dog, Special Puppy Dog, Special Junior Dog, Post Graduate Dog, Limit Dog, Open Dog and Good Citizen Dog. The same classes for the females. You are hoping to win the Challenge Certificate or CC for your variety and sex. The Tervuren ring begins and I was attempting to watch all the male classes, but with my nerves on end, it was difficult to concentrate. There are many beautiful dogs. I am so glad I do not have to make that decision as it would be difficult to pick just one. The winner of the dog CC was Ch Domburg The Out Law owned by: Mr N A & Miss C Stone & Theobald.



The female classes begin and Laila is in the open class which is last. Cindy & I watch the first few classes of females. Then it is time to groom Laila. I don't know about the rest of you but at the big shows I still get that feeling in my stomach that I ate something bad.





Laila is ready and will be handled by her breeder and co-owner, Linda Collins Lester. It is a very nice open class with many beautiful dogs. It is a real nail biter and I can hardly keep still. I am trying to take photos and watch all at the same time. The judge; Willemine van Deijl of di Scottatura kennel goes over each dog and then moves them down & back and around. Just like here in the US. She looks over her line up and makes her final choice for the class win and Laila gets 1st in the open class. Now comes the lineup of all the bitch winners from the previous classes. Again, it is a beautiful class. Anyone could be the winner.

Our Judge, Willemine goes up and back and makes her choice for the bitch CC. It is U Ch UAGI Domburg iCandy, my Laila. I am overwhelmed and the crowd seems as pleased. There is lots of clapping and whistling from all around the ring.



Next is the challenge for best of breed. The judge looks over her choices for best of breed.



It is between Ch Domburg The Out Law and UCh Domburg iCandy. I am somewhat out of site so I am trying to look over the top of others to watch the final decision of our judge. Oh my, she is headed toward Linda & Laila and it is all over. Laila wins Best of Breed Tervuren! So many cheers and clapping, people hugging me from all sides. I cannot believe it! I am so honored. Someone has run out to get champagne. It is a whirlwind. Everyone is congratulating us. Domanique, Linda's daughter, gets the huge picnic ready for all and I can't think of eating as I cannot stop smiling. I cannot tell you how exciting it all was.

But wait there is more to come. Now we pack up all of our things. And we move to hall 5 where the group will be judged. This is not an easy task as we have lots of people and stuff to move, and it is quite a distance away. I cannot



go with Linda and Laila to the collecting ring, so we send them off with all our best for a great showing in the group. We buy our tickets and head into the large arena. In England, it is called the pastoral group and today it is a very large collection of beautiful dogs. And here they come.



All 4 varieties of Belgians are there. The group judge is Jeff Luscott. It is Laila's turn. She is examined by the judge. Then he moves her just like at the shows here. It seems to take forever as there are so many dogs to be gone over. Many of the dogs in this group have won multiple groups and best in shows. What an honor to have my dog stand among them all.



The judge makes his cut down to ten dogs and Laila makes the cut. Our group of friends are so supportive, and they are clapping and yelling. You can hear us all on the Crufts YouTube video. Now comes the final decision who will win and place in the group. The judge chooses the Australian Shepherd to represent the Pastoral dogs for Best in Show. Laila & Linda got a good look, but that was all for us today. I have to say I was thrilled to have made it that far. To come all this way and end up in the group was certainly more than I ever expected.



Thank you to all my friends and family for your support. I could not have done it without you all. Especially to Linda who started me on this journey 6 years ago by sending me this special gift. She has been Laila's biggest fan and supporter and my dearest friend. She was the one who made this all happen for us. What was just a dream turned into "A Dream Come True".
Nikki

Photos courtesy of; Linda Lester, Mont'Alves, Eli Andrea Foss Baldersheim, Gary Huskey & YuilaTitovets

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TERVUEREN It was a great honour to judge the Laekenois and Tervueren at Crufts. In the Tervueren there were 130 entries in total. I was surprised about the high quality of the dogs. In the Tervueren youngsters, I found a lovely puppy dog. Excellent in type, short body with excellent coat and colour, expressive head with high set ears which makes the expression perfect with the dark almond shaped eye. There were several excellent plus dogs and then you can judge then on details, like details in the head, the typical beautiful expression, chizelled heads with good parallelism. I like short bodies in the males with a nice arched neck. It was not easy too choose; so the dogs had too present themselves till the end and they did. There was amazing quality in the bitches with a stunning class of open females. Dominant in this class was my BOB dog. She catches your eye directly, presented herself till the top, a lovely silhouette, in perfect condition. She was so bright with such a good movement. This was one of the bitches that I am so pleased to have judged her at least once in my lifetime. She represented the breed at Crufts like I wished. I was happy to see her shortlisted in the ring of honour. **VD** I Delator Eastern Surprise

The clips are the judges write up and critique for Laila by Willemine van Dejl.

ed body, good mover. **OB** I Ch Domburg Icandy. CC and BOB. Outstanding female, catches your eye. Excellent type. Lovely silhouette with correct substance and in perfect condition. Lovely expressive head with dark eye, excellent well formed ear, good mask, well chiselled head. Good parallel. Excellent reach of neck with short body, excellent angulation and excellent mover. 2