

Tentie 'Shakes the Booty' in Agility



Yarraview Shake Ya Booty makes it look easy

A Tenterfield Terrier is a big dog in a small body. That is certainly true of my bold, feisty 21 month old TT, Miranda (Yarraview Shake Ya Booty). I bought a TT because I wanted a hardy, athletic companion suitable for my main hobby which is the sport of Agility. Agility involves a lot of training, dedication and drive. Not all dogs are suited. It is a great outlet for the TTs energy, intelligence and builds confidence. Luckily Miranda loves agility as much as I do!!

For the last 13 years I have owned and competed in Agility Trials with Cavalier King Charles Spaniels so Miranda and I are still very much on a learning curve. A Cavalier will look up at you lovingly and ask "what can I do for you, mum?" A Terrier looks up with a cheeky wag of its tail and says "what will I get out of it??" The spaniel nature is generally calmer and less demanding. The hunting instinct is very strong in terriers so I need to understand and accept this character trait. Miranda may suddenly be distracted by a sound or a smell in the middle of training. If I get frustrated or upset she will switch off so I have to stay happy, positive; keeping lessons fun, short and non-repetitive. Terriers can easily get bored! Many terrier owners have told me that it may be more challenging to run a terrier but the rewards are far greater. To see all your hard work paid off in spectacular runs, that is what I am aiming for.

I began training as soon as I got Miranda as a young 8 week old pup - focusing on bonding exercises. For agility you have to work as a team - one mind. It was just easy stuff; basic obedience, tricks, Miranda learning to follow my hand around a cone, running through tunnels. Not too much; just a few minutes each day. At this age you have to let them be young and have fun first! She had to understand that I was the most important thing in her life (after rabbits, lizards and birds of course!!). Socializing is vital and I took Miranda along to parks, shows, agility trials when I was running the spaniels so she could get used to dogs of all breeds, noises and different locations.

I waited until Miranda was about 9-10 months old before I began "serious" training. I attend an agility club but have

weekly lessons in a smaller group environment. I quickly discovered that Miranda was fast, very fast! I had to re-learn much of my handling to cope with her speed and incredible drive. I began by putting her over some low jumps and linking obstacles. She had to learn to do her "contacts" - i.e. as she descends A-Frames, Dog Walks and See Saws she has to at least have one paw on the contact zone. When Miranda was 12 months old I began teaching her how to weave around poles starting with only two - they have to complete a set of 12. I was very impressed at how quickly Miranda learnt this difficult obstacle, and how fast she was when she finally could do all 12. The TTs are certainly intelligent and very keen.

To compete in an Agility Trial the dog has to be 18 months old but not all dogs are mature enough or ready. To complete even a Novice course of 15 obstacles in the correct order requires much concentration for a young dog. I felt Miranda was ready and she proved to be so. In her very first Trial, she got two qualifications (to gain a qualification the round has to be "Clear" no faults and under course time). After less than 3 months of trialling, Miranda has 3 Novice Jumping; 1 Novice Agility; 1 Open Jumping and 3 Agility Games qualifications - not bad for a little Terrier!

To learn more about Agility you can go to the Dogs NSW website link

<http://www.dogsnsw.org.au/activities-a-events/agility.html>

Article written by Susan Hollows



Miranda weaving - Miranda is trained & run by Susan Hollows