

## NWRRC Member Profile: Debbie Brower, Member since 1995

Debbie Brower is the breeder behind Jesmyster Ridgebacks and recent past president of the NWRRC. Her dogs are well-known throughout the US but particularly here in the Pacific Northwest, where Debbie and her Jesmyster RRs are consistent winners in all that she does with them: conformation, obedience, agility, rally, fastcat, trick dog and lure coursing. Debbie is an AKC CGC evaluator, a RRCUS ringside mentor for judges and has taught obedience since the mid-90's in the Tri-cities area of WA. Her favorite classes to teach are STAR Puppy Classes. In addition to being a member of RRCUS, Debbie is an AKC Breeder of Merit and has been highly involved in our club since she joined in 1995. Debbie and her husband Jim live in Kennewick, WA, and have a working sheep farm and a number of other farm animals. They're also recent foster fails of "Wingnut," a rescue Ridgeback from a Midwest puppy mill.



*Debbie and Drew, GCH CH Jesmysters Tux & Tails, CGC BCAT. Debbie & Drew have also earned distinction as NOHS Bronze!*

**Growing up:** We had farm dogs growing up – mostly mutts from a neighbor dog's litters. Our dogs were workers around the farm vs pets. I grew up in the country and all of our animals had a purpose or a job to do. I went on to earn my BS in Animal Husbandry at Washington State University, Pullman (which is known as Moo U), where I also met my husband Jim.



*Debbie and Jim with the original Jesmyster, "Jessie," on the left*

As an adult with my own family, our first purebred dog was a Rottie. The breed was very popular in the 80's and almost impossible to win without a handler. I had shown livestock since my teens and had no interest in paying someone to have my fun. It is such a thrill to win with your own dog and especially so when showing one you bred. The Rotties had some significant health issues, though, so I searched for a breed with similar qualities, but healthier

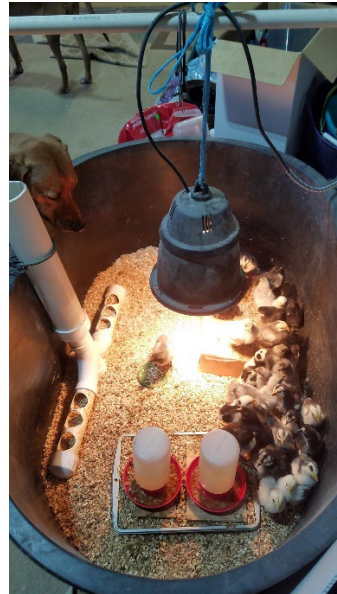
and less popular. Since this was before the internet, research was done at dog shows talking to people in person, making phone calls to breeders, and meeting the dogs. Information was gathered by going to dog seminars, visiting with breeders of other breeds, trying lots of new things. My Jesmyster kennel name actually comes from our Rottie, "Jessie."

**Ridgebacks:** I first became aware of Ridgebacks while at a dog show and got my first Ridgeback, Kate, in September 1992. Kate was bred by Karen McClelland and Lois Hunter of Hataki Ridgebacks. I was surprised with how sensitive Ridgebacks are and being hounds, learned that they needed a different training approach than what I had been used to. I bred my first litter in 1996 and the dogs I am currently showing are generation seven.



Ridgebacks really can do anything and everything. Effective training is characterized by consistent rewards and using your tone of voice effectively. If you are the leader of the pack and "love on" them (have a good, fair, loving relationship), they will listen to you better. Do I have 100% control of them all the time? Of course not! (insert Debbie laughing). If I am lucky enough to catch them "thinking" about doing something, stopping them can work. If they have already engaged in something, good luck stopping them.

With the livestock, we teach at an early age - most of the time this works - to leave the sheep alone. However, I did have a couple, Roman and his dam, Alice, that would help me gather the sheep or even the chickens instead of chasing them. (If you look closely at the picture on the right, you can see a Ridgeback intently examining the chicks in the upper lefthand corner!)



**Advice for New Breeders:** Study anatomy more, and with Ridgebacks, how canine anatomy pertains to our breed standard and what our dogs were bred to do. Why did those individuals that started our breed think those things were important? Study Your dog. What are its strengths and weaknesses? Study other dogs (what they bring to the table). Do NOT breed to a dog just because they are winning. Does the dog have just a pretty face or does that dog also have a brain to go with it?

**Advice for New Ridgeback Owners/Puppy People:** This is a friend for you for the next 10-15 years. If you teach him /her the rules from day one, with love and CONSISTENCY, they will give you all they have and more. Ignore them and they will be a liability. They Want to be part of your pack for Life, not until they are replaced by a move or a new child. They will communicate with you using their eyes, tail, body language. If you observe, they will let you know their needs.



*Proud breeder moment: "Grace" GCh Ch Jesmysters Red by Flash, CGC, ROM, winning an AOM at the 2010 RRCUS Specialty*

***Don't be afraid to try new things. Our breed can do so many things. Debbie Brower***