
Meet the Breeder: Pamela Geoffroy & Sheila Lund

Eldorado Basenjis

responds to The Basenji

How did you get started in Basenjis?

Eldorado: Prior to showing and breeding basenjis, we showed and bred Arabian horses for 30 years. During this time, Pam's daughter Rosalie became interested in Saddleseat Equitation, so we purchased a Morgan horse for her to show. When Rosalie saw the movie "Good Bye My Lady" she thought that a good reward for winning the Morgan Grand National would be a basenji. Naturally, she won. At the time we were breeding Dalmatians, so to find a basenji we contacted Susan Coe, who wrote the book "Out of Africa to You." It was our great fortune that Susan, Akuaba Basenjis, had a puppy bitch for us to show. She was a stud fee puppy from a litter bred by Kim Byrd, KISA Basenjis. Lizzie became Ch. Akuaba's Busy Body From KISA. Kim showed Lizzie at two national specialties for us and did a superb job. Lizzie was awarded Best in Puppy Sweeps in 1993 in St. Louis, Missouri and Best of Opposite Sex in 1994 in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Allentown was the first national we attended and we were hooked. We have not missed a national specialty since.

Why did you start breeding? When?

Eldorado: Coming from horses it was a natural progression for us to go from showing into breeding. While at that nationals in 1994 we decided to look for a stud dog for Lizzie's first litter. We really liked the new brindle color and, with the help of our mentor Susan Coe, we decided to breed Lizzie to the half-Avongara dog Kibushi Get Sirius. Our first litter was born the summer of 1995 and produced two champions for us. We also purchased Ch. Sunkis Dream Weaver to Eldorado (Jade), a brindle and white puppy girl. Lizzie and Jade were the foundation for Eldorado Basenjis.

What persons influenced you most strongly?

Eldorado: The person that has influenced us the most with our basenji breeding program is Susan Coe. She was there at our beginning, and we still appreciate her input on our breeding program today. Susan has been a wealth of knowledge for us and a true friend. Another person that has had influence on us is Kim Byrd. She has helped us out with learning to present a dog, and will always be a great friend to attend shows with. Andrew Sawler has always been a great support for us at the shows and is a wonderful resource to bounce ideas off of. Laurie Stargell, who now lives in Colorado, started on the East Coast, and we still manage to meet up at least once a year at the national specialty and talk about breeding ideas.

What is your chosen kennel name?

How did you choose this name? Why?

Does it have a meaning?

Eldorado: Our kennel name is Eldorado Basenjis. We choose the name as we were looking for something that was a mythical place. Some of the other names we thought of were Eden, Xanadu, and Valhalla and we decided on Eldorado, the City of Gold. Eldorado won out because it better fit our horse background than the other names we had come up with.

What have you seen improve in Basenjis over the years?

Eldorado: The biggest stride that has been made in basenjis over the past 15 years has been basenji health. Gene diversity was greatly improved with the introduction and the use of the 1990 registered foundation stock from Africa. The Basenji fancy is in the process of adding more African foundation stock to continue to expand the gene pool. Also, the new marker test for Fanconi syndrome, one of our more trying genetic problems, has been recently developed. This will help all of us eliminate Fanconi syndrome in basenjis.

What do you think today's Basenji breeders need to pay attention to?

Eldorado: There are three things that concern us in the majority of basenjis we have seen lately:

- ◆ We need to work on fronts in general they need more fill between the front legs and more shoulder layback with a smooth transition from neck into shoulders. To obtain front fill upper arms need to be the same length as the shoulder with a return of the upper arm. These features will allow free-flowing, effortless movement.
- ◆ Toplines are another problem we are seeing an abundance of in the ring today. When the balance is off something has to compensate and the topline is the most vulnerable. A dog that is balanced front and rear with a strong topline, high set tail and shelf is without a doubt the prettiest sight to behold gracefully moving around the ring.
- ◆ Feet should be compact with thick pads not just because they are prettier that way. There is a purpose for well made tight feet. A good foot leads to less stress on the hound that needs to work all day. We used to see a problem with a hare-type foot but what is seen lately is a big, round and flat foot. They actually slap the mats at indoor dog shows.

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What dogs you've seen or owned stand out as outstanding examples of the breed and why?

Examples of the breed:

Eldorado: When thinking about outstanding examples of the breed, the first dog that comes to mind is **Ch. Akuaba's Tornado, JC (Nate)** he was at the top of his game when we entered the breed. Our foundation is based on two of his daughters. He was an outstanding producer of elegant dogs with strong toplines that were high on leg and square. Nate was a showman and he passed it on to his get. He is still the top-producing stud dog of all time.

Another dog that we loved was **Ch. Akuaba's The Yodelman (Yodel)**. He was a stunning tri-colored dog that exuded elegance on the move. He had a long neck and that true basenji carriage.

A dog that we appreciate is **Avongara Imba Tena (Fido)**, a descendent of the 1990 Registered Foundation Stock imported from Africa. When looking at him, he was not an ideal basenji, but what he produced was very impressive. He produced structurally sound fronts and a long effortless stride that is not common. He also produced the combination of a nice topline, tailset, and shelf that provides the necessary drive for effortless gait. He has eighteen champion children and is the only Avongara on the Stud Dog Honor Roll.

Examples of our own dogs:

Ch. Akuaba's Busy Body from KISA (Lizzie) who gave us a great foundation has twelve AKC champions putting her on the Brood Bitch Honor Roll (Lizzie pictured winning Best in Puppy Sweeps).

We have continued on with several of Lizzie's champions. Her first litter produced **Ch. Eldorado's Adonis, JC (Donny)**, our first to finish from the bred by exhibitor class, and he is on the Stud Dog Honor Roll.

Lizzie also produced **Ch. Eldorado's Mercedes Benz (Ben)**, a one-half Avongara male, who finished with ease from the bred by exhibitor class. In the African Stock Exhibitions, Ben was also awarded Best Puppy in 2000 and Best Adult in 2001.



Margarete



Sean



Sir



Lizzie



Donny



Ben

Credit: George Woodard

We got **Ch. Eldorado's Mirror Mirror on the Wall (Margarete)** when we doubled on Lizzie daughter **Ch. Eldorado's Barcelona (Onyx)**, a one-quarter Avongara tricolored bitch.

Another Onyx descendent is **Eldorado N Akuaba Never Say Never (Sean)**, who was Best Bred by Exhibitor and Reserve Winners Dog at the 2008 Nationals.

His litter brother **Am & UKC Ch. Eldorado N Akuaba Never Surrender (Sir)** is owned by Kim Byrd. Sir is a typical red boy with dreamy eyes. Look for him in the ring as a special in 2009.



Serena



Monroe



Credit: Umi Rapiti Photography

Calvin



Zephyr

MBIF DC Eldorado's In Jokuba Style, MC, LCX1 (Calvin) finished his AKC and Canadian conformation titles by the time he was eight months old. At that point his owner, Russella Bowen-Wilkerson, decided to give him a shot at lure coursing. In 2008 he was number one AKC lure coursing basenji and number twenty-one AKC lure coursing hound. Calvin defeated more basenjis in one year, than any other basenji had defeated ever.

MBIS Ch. Eldorado's Echo of the Wind (Zephyr) he is a product of careful blending of African and domestic stock. He is proof that with a lot of hard work and fortitude you can produce a multiple Best In Show winner four generations out of the bush.

Ch. Eldorado's Echo of an Icon (Jimmy) earned an Award of Merit at the 2008 Nationals.

Examples of our own dogs: (continued)

Our other foundation bitch **Ch. Sunkis Dream Weaver to Eldorado (Jade)** is also on the Brood Bitch Honor Roll with seven champions.

Among her offspring that we bred on from are **Ch. Eldorado's Halcyon (Mariah)** and **Ch. Eldorado's Hocus Pocus (Serena)**. Both of these half-Avongara girls did us proud. Serena is on the Brood Bitch Honor Roll with ten champions to date.

Serena's daughter **Ch. Eldorado's Ooh La La (Monroe)** has been a favorite of ours from the day she was born. She has all the great qualities from Nate and Fido. On the move she is our ideal with outstanding side gait and she maintains a level topline at all times. She has produced well for Eldorado and is on the Brood Bitch Honor Roll. Some of her noteworthy children are:



Jade



Mariah



Echo



Jimmy

BISS Int/Am/Lux/Swe/Dt (VDH) /Dt (Klub) Ch BKD Klubsieger '08 Ch. C-Quest's Echo of Eldorado exported to Germany is making new owner Noel Baaser proud.

We are looking to our future with Monroe's daughter **Ch. Eldorado's Akuaba With One Look (Judy)**. Littermate **Am & UKC Ch. Eldorado's Look Smart at Kaleonahe (Dapper)** is proudly owned by Kyle Cabral, a new comer to basenjis. **Ch. Eldorado's Made You Look, JC (Jules)** owner handled to her title, is starting on her performance career with owner Jane Johnson.



Judy

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What do you feel are your most significant achievements with the breed?

Eldorado:

- ◆ Pam's work on the BCOA Native Stock Committee to open the AKC studbook again, to further gene diversity, has been very rewarding.
- ◆ We have also worked on two successful national specialties, in 1998 and 2006, as trophy chairs. We worked very closely with the chairperson on all aspects of planning and implementing the national specialty.

When it comes to breeding there are several accomplishments that we are proud of.

- ◆ We have fifty-nine champions to date, with all but one being of African descent from the 1990 registration of Foundation Stock.
- ◆ Several of our dogs have excelled in Rally-O, Obedience, Lure Coursing & Agility with the help of their dedicated owners.
- ◆ Also, we have several bitches on the Brood Bitch Honor Roll.
- ◆ We have been fortunate enough to export and import dogs to and from several different countries.
- ◆ Lastly, dogs that we have bred have earned their championships in eight different countries.

What advice do you have to a new breeder getting started?

Eldorado: Our advice to new breeders getting started is to do a lot of research and find a breeder who is willing to mentor you. Attend as many dog shows as you can, and decide what appeals to you. Once you have an idea of what you like in a basenji, buy the best stock you can find. It is a lot easier to breed from quality dogs, than it is to try and breed up to quality. Know your dog's virtues, so you don't lose them. Always remember, not everything can be fixed in one breeding, therefore always strive to improve on a particular feature with each generation.

Anything else you would like to say?

Eldorado: It seems as if there is a constant debate within our breed: movement vs. type. It is very clear in our standard, that movement is part of type. An excerpt from the AKC breed standard supports our point, "The wrinkled forehead, tightly curled tail and swift, effortless gait (resembling a racehorse trotting full out) are typical of the breed." Movement is an important part of the definition of a typical basenji, separating them is a disservice to our breed. In our opinion, a basenji without correct movement is not typical similar to one without wrinkles or without a curly tail. A basenji with good reach and drive appears to be going in slow motion compared to one who is taking short strides that appear to be going fast. The dog with the short stride is usually working harder than the dog with the longer stride.

Any other information you would like to provide?

Eldorado: Basenjis are our love and we hope we leave the breed in better shape than when we arrived.

Thank you!

