

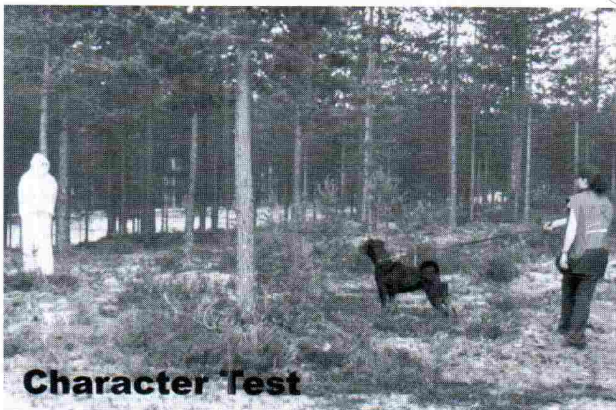
Rottweilers in Finland

by Tina Finn



Finland may be a country of thousands of lakes, but it is also a country of dogs! At the end of 2004, the Finnish Kennel Club reported approximately 500,000 dogs in their registry, 400,000 of which were purebred. It can be concluded that with the population of only 5.2 million people, every fourth Finnish household owns a dog. Being also known as a country for high taxes, some local authorities have curiously enough discovered a way to cash in on the popularity of dogs by enforcing a "dog tax". This tax originates from the 19th century and may be applied by local authorities. The amount of tax varies from 30–50EUR per dog. Dogs serving the country in the police force, customs or border guard patrol, or those having achieved results in working trials are eligible for exemption from this tax.

The Rottweiler is placed 14th on the list of most popular breeds in Finland with 620 registrations in 2004. The majority of these Rottweilers live in the house as family members. The official breed club, Finnish Rottweiler Association, was founded in 1946. Today it has approximately 3200 members, 12 local subdivisions and three independent local Rottweiler clubs operating under its umbrella. These clubs organize training and trials nationwide. An annual Rottweiler championship attracts working Rottweilers in large numbers – this year 43 Rottweilers with their handlers will



Character Test

participate in the Championships that includes all classes in tracking, search, and IPO/SchH. It is the event of the year for the working Rottweiler and a gathering place for the breed enthusiasts from around the country.



Search Dog at Work

BREEDING AND BST

In 2004, registered Rottweiler litters amounted to 64, with an approximate litter size of 6 to 8 puppies per litter. 17 imports were also registered. The code of ethics as set by the official breed club requires that both parents have official HD/ED statements and have been tested for eye defects (HC, PRA and RD). Although these health tests are mandatory in order to have litter registered, no restrictions are applied regardless of the result of such tests. No working or show titles are required. A breeding suitability test as well as character test are recommended, but not required. The breeding suitability test, which currently includes only evaluation of appearance and movement, is either accepted, accepted with reservations, or failed. Of the 88 Rottweilers tested for breed suitability last year, 68% were accepted, 26 % were accepted with reservations, and 5% failed. The reason for failure was typically problems with bite, size (too big/too small), limping, and white markings.



An unofficial German style ZTP (with bitework) with an ADRK judge, has so far been organized only twice in Finland.

SHOWS

Finnish Rottweiler Club holds two annual breed specialty shows. In 2005, the main show was held in southern Finland with 168 Rottweilers taking part. The judge for the dogs was Mr. Dirk Vandecasteele (Belgium), while bitches were judged by the respected Finnish special judge Mr. J.A.U Yrjölä, and puppies by also a Finnish special judge Marja Kurittu. For Best of Breed, Mr. Vandecasteele appointed Finnish bred Heizelwood Tika (sire:YUG, RO, HU CH, WW,01, IPO II Bronco o.d Dragicevica – dam: Heizelwood Mona).

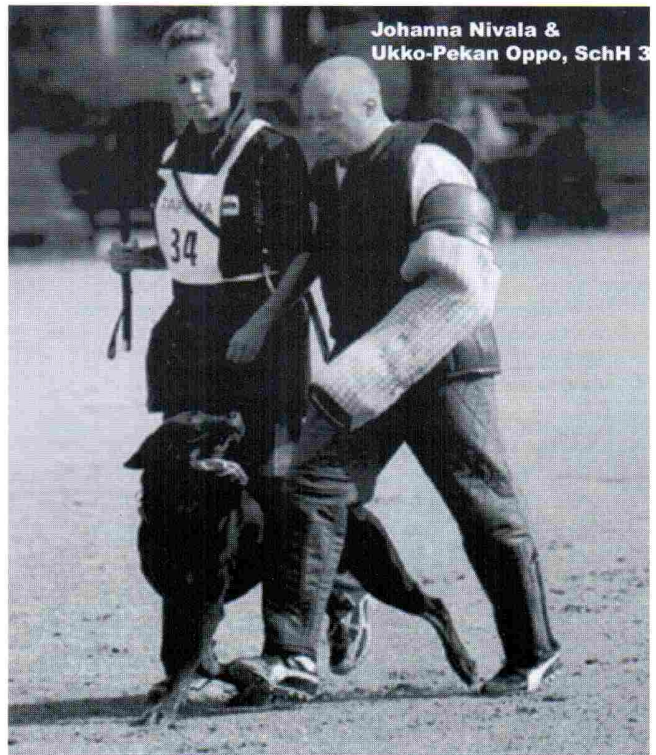
WORKING ROTTWEILERS

Finland has a very active working dog trial front – in addition to IPO/SchH, the country has a variety of national trial forms, such as tracking (in the woods), search, search and rescue, obedience, messenger and guide dog trials, as well as skijoring. One has to pass BH test (Begleithund) prior to competing in any of the actual working trials. In 2004, 36 Rottweilers competed in the III class in a working trial – three of those in SchH III.

Most Rottweilers training for Schutzhund train at selected GSD clubs due to the limited number of helpers that know and appreciate the qualities of the Rottweiler. Regardless of limited training possibilities, the interest for SchH is continuously growing amongst young Rottweiler owners who think nothing of 200km drives twice a week to a good, certified helper, willing to train their Rottweilers. Rain or shine, snow or no snow, training continues throughout the year except when the weather is so cold it stiffens all muscles, human and canine! The general recommendation

is that no training is held when the temperature goes below -10°C . Regardless of the limited number of Rottweilers competing in IPO/SchH, Finnish Rottweilers have done well in the international arena. Most recently, Ms. Terhi Kaalamo and Finnish-bred SchHIII, IPO III, FH, HK II* Heizelwood Lucky won the European Championship held in Diest in 2003 and placed 5th in the IFR WC in La Coruna, Spain in 2004.

Mrs. Johanna Nivala & FIN CH& FIN WK CH, SchHIII, IPO III, JK III** Ukko-Pekan Oppo placed 31st in an all-breed World Championship Slovenia 2001, and was best Rottweiler. The pair also won the Nordic IPO Championship in 2002.



FWRC

The Finnish Working Rottweiler Club was established in 2005 as an independent club operating under the Finnish Working Dog Association. FWRC was formed to cherish and help maintain working qualities of the breed-standard Rottweiler and to enhance the status of the Rottweiler as a versatile working dog in Finland. The club began its operation by producing high-quality seminars led by such internationally known Rottweiler trainers as Ismael de Vos (Belgium) and Oliver Neubrand (Germany), both members of their national IFR WC teams, respectively.

Note the following titles;

HKII – Search class II

JK III– Tracking class III