

Kennel profiles

A Visit with Cinnabar Shelties, Nola and Les Chock

Island of Oahu, Hawaii

BY JEAN AND HEIDI



*BISS Ch. Cinnabar Foxglove In Hi Gear
Bred and owned by Nola Chock, Carolyn Ing and Kim Schive*

On a trip to Hawaii, Heidi and I took the opportunity to find out how a breeder/exhibitor adapts to a tropical island, by visiting Nola and Les Chock of Cinnabar Shelties.

Nola has had dogs all her life, and “Lassie” was her favorite television program. She always wanted a Collie, but the yards in Hawaii are too small. When the Chocks bought their home in 1980, her husband gave her a tri-colored Sheltie puppy for their first Christmas. Tess (OTCH Akirene Summerwynn’s Delight) and Nola started in Kindergarten puppy class the following spring. They did well, and were soon involved

in Obedience. Tess and the second Sheltie, Indy (OTCH Summerwynn High Adventure), eventually became Hawaii’s first and second Sheltie Obedience Trial Champions, respectively. Both were also multiple High In Trial winners.

For the last ten years or so, Nola been more heavily involved in Conformation. She credits the generosity and support of friends in Hawaii and on the mainland, for being fortunate to own some wonderful dogs, finishing six

of them, including several Specialty BOBs and all-breed Group placements. She is now starting Agility.

Nola and Les live in Aiea, a small suburb that once was considered ‘too far’ from Honolulu. Simply because of sprawling population growth, they are now considered ‘in town’, close to major shopping centers, outlets, restaurants, and veterinary clinics. And a straight shot by freeway to and from work. The lot is 6,000 square feet, and much of that is open yard. A flat lot of this size in this location is considered good-sized.

Land in Hawaii is very expensive, and because it is an island state there is a finite amount of resources available. Residential land is limited. On Oahu, much of the land can’t be built upon. There are mountains formed from old volcanos which bisect the island, or the land may be reserved for the military or other government use; for agriculture; also for watershed land (because all the water residents use and drink comes from rainfall). Some land is owned by large estates or trusts dating to the Hawaiian monarchy and only available on a lease basis. Much of the remaining available land is already built upon.



*(L to R): Cinnabar Razzle Dazzle (at 13 years young!),
Cinnabar Caladesi, and Ch. Cinnabar Foxglove In Hi Gear*

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Cinnabar, cont'd.



Hawaii is blessed by gentle and refreshing trade winds, which are usually year-round and quite constant. Trade winds help keep the island air clear and the weather pleasant. The fenced grass yard is open to all the elements - trade winds, rain, and sun. The dogs have the run of the back and both sides of the house, plus a covered patio.

The grass is a hardy variety that can withstand dog urine and wear and tear. During the winter (yes, Hawaii does have a rainy season which they call 'winter') when the days are shorter, the grass is thinner and susceptible to urine burn. Weather can be cool at night. Which is great for the coats.

There is a large mango tree and a tangerine tree for shade and fresh fruit. Chemicals or pesticides are avoided. The yard is hand-weeded, and the dogs are always very eager to 'help'....

Puppies tend to dig holes so the Chocks lay down grass guards to cover the holes until the grass can recover. Nola solved some of the digging problem by installing sand under their Lil' Tyke gym cubes, which doesn't completely stop the dogs from digging, but it discourages them.

The Chocks don't have a vegetable garden (the dogs would always beat them to the veggies anyway) or too many flowering plants (because of

the concern about bee stings). So the plants are either hanging from the trees — mostly orchids and some Pele's hair or hinahina (aka Spanish moss) — or are in pots surrounded by protective screens (fragrant pikake, ginger and miniature roses).

The dogs are not kept in air conditioning unless it is really hot and are crated only to eat, because some finish their food faster than others, and will try to sneak food from the slower ones.

The Chocks do 'scoop patrols' and pick up several times every day. "Dogs raised in a clean environment have fewer health problems and are easier to housebreak." All the dogs (including the males) are housebroken and trained to 'go' only in the yard. New puppies go to their new homes pretty much housebroken.

After work, Nola will spend special time with them or take them out for a walk or to the park or to training class.



(L to R): Cinnabar Caladesi and Lynroc Akirene Dreamgirl



In 1993, Nola finished her second OTCH, and became the first person in Hawaii to own and train two Obedience Trial Champions (OTCHs). At the time, there were just a handful who earned the coveted title because there were only six or so Obedience trials a year.

Pictured: OTCH Summerwynn High Adventure, and (right) OTCH Akirene Summerwynn's Delight

After chores are done, the dogs will have dinner and stay in the house until bedtime. They watch TV together, or maybe do some Agility homework. Then they usually want to go back outside to enjoy the coolness.

A rotation system decides who gets to stay in and sleep in with the Chocks. Some dogs, including most of the show dogs, prefer to sleep outside on the patio, in Sunbrella dog beds or, open crates, where it's cooler. The seniors usually prefer the Chock's bed.

One of the three bedrooms doubles as a nursery. Nola will take time off from work for the first two weeks after a litter is born, and work part time for a while thereafter. When the puppies have had two sets of shots they go to work with Nola for a couple of weeks. There, they are exposed to different people, smells, sights and sounds such as elevators,

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Cinnabar, cont'd.

ringing phones and faxes, and textures. The babies learn to love people, and also to be away from each other. Her office has many willing 'aunties and uncles'.

There is a weekly maintenance schedule – the dogs are bathed in the backyard, and brushed out and trimmed on the patio, which has ceiling fans and is quite comfortable. Teeth are dental-rinsed daily after dinner. Nails are clipped often “because we have laminate flooring in the house.”

The tropical climate means being vigilant year-round against mosquitoes, fleas and ticks. The dogs are given heartworm preventative monthly. “Knock on wood, we don't have a flea or tick problem, but Frontline and Advantage would be what we would use if that happened.” Lyme disease is currently not a problem in Hawaii because Hawaii does not have the host tick.

The biggest disadvantage for breeders is Hawaii's geographical separation from the mainland, being about 2,500 miles and an ocean away from the west coast. It is a big financial and personal commitment to travel to the mainland for dog shows, to arrange a mainland breeding, or to import or lease a dog. And there is a limited number of dog shows so they must show whenever one is offered. The Sheltie breed club currently sponsors three Specialties a year, and they try to use breeder judges. Then there are about a dozen other all-breed shows on Oahu, and several more on the neighbor islands.

The recent relaxation of quarantine regulations has helped to resolve some problems caused by the distance from the mainland. The dogs are now able travel more easily to and from Hawaii and can even bypass quarantine if their owners follow certain documentation and shot requirements. Local fanciers have been able to improve the overall quality of show dogs and breeding stock (either sending dogs out or importing them) and in general, have benefited from increased contact with their main-

land counterparts.

Because of the high cost of living in Hawaii supporting a 'doggie habit' in paradise is not cheap. The island location impacts everything, and is reflected in the higher costs of shipping in supplies, gasoline and travel, vet bills, and dog food. For example, a typical de-bark or hip x-ray or dental care costs well over \$200. A typical trip to the vet includes an automatic minimum office charge of \$40, not counting any medication or tests.

Another disadvantage with living on an island can be the temptation to become complacent, whether it be due to the limited number of shows, or the dogs in competition. Nola feels that their goals as breeders should be to actively work towards the betterment of the breed as a whole, and to encourage sportsmanship and responsible dog ownership.

A 'plus' is that, because of the island location, veterinarians are forced to be progressive in order to better serve their clients. There is easy access to local veterinarians who are better or as good as can be found in any major mainland city, with several excellent specialists, particularly in canine reproduction. Residents also have access to both western medicine and less traditional, more holistic treatments, including naturopathy, acupuncture, and other therapies.

Other pluses include a temperate climate, offering the opportunity to show and train year-round. All the dogs shows on Oahu are within easy driving distance.

Luckily, they don't have many of the more dangerous critters, such as snakes, large spiders, etc. Rabies is non-existent because of the strict quarantine.

Visiting bitches are not a problem because everyone lives here on the island. It is very easy to coordinate a breeding because no one is ever more than a quick phone call and a car drive away.

For the Chocks, the dogs are family first and show dogs second. “I spend all my free time (and money!) on them or doing doggie stuff. I'm active in dog clubs, held/hold several club offices, and was a longtime Kindergarten Puppy class instructor. I have been fortunate not only in the rings but most especially, in the good friendships we've made because of this wonderful hobby.”

Every place has its pluses and minuses, and Hawaii is no exception. Notwithstanding its problems, the Chocks feel that Hawaii is still a beautiful place, and they cannot imagine living anywhere else. They would “miss the mountains and ocean, the food, and the people”. For the most part, the Aloha Spirit is still alive and well. □



12-puppy litter born December 26, 2001 by Ch. Cinnabar Foxglove In Hi Gear x Cinnabar Cachet. The photo took two hours and lots of film, and was shot by a professional photographer, with one person assigned to each puppy ... “it was tiring but fun”!