

GABRIELLE SIMMONDS' AND SARA REID'S EUROPEAN MASTIFF ADVENTURE

BY

GABRIELLE SIMMONDS

On researching international shows dates for 2008, I discovered that the Mastiff Club shows for both the German and Dutch clubs would be held on the same weekend in May. My mind started ticking over and I thought how wonderful it would be to meet with many of the Mastiff people that I have corresponded with over the years. Firstly I needed to find out if I had any starters to accompany me as Paul would need to stay at home to look after the dogs (and he had been to the UK in July 2007, so it was my turn for a holiday).

Sara Reid was the person in the right time and place. I am fortunate that she was as Sara ended up organising all our flights and accommodation in several cities. I eventually got my act together and contacted my European email friends to see what could be arranged. I was overwhelmed at what eventuated.

Marc de Wolf has been a regular contributor of photos and results for our newsletter and he attends many of the Mastiff Club shows in Europe. For Sara and I, he was our Dutch Connection.

Sara and I arrived in Amsterdam on Friday morning after a very long flight. Jet lag is not an option for travellers with limited time, so we did the obligatory canal tour which was enjoyable and worthwhile. After limited sightseeing and just a taste of shopping, we returned to our hotel. A little rest turned into several hours sleep. A quick bite to eat and then back to sleep so that we would be in some fit state for the German show the next day.

Marc picked us up at 7am and it was several hours drive to the venue for the show, but we had so much to talk about with Marc that the journey went very quickly. His English is fantastic and he has a great sense of humour, as I had gathered from our emails over the years. Sara and I thought that the car was too clean for a Mastiff car but we later found out that Marc had hired a car especially for our visit. Very special treatment indeed!

At the German show, the entry was lower than previous years with 40 dogs being entered.



***Gabrielle with Conrad
(Germany)***

However, it was an international affair with the judge being John Bromley of Spirithill Mastiffs from the UK and there were a few exhibitors from Denmark

A big thrill for me at this show was to meet Multi Ch. Wileyways Conrad (Imp USA) from Denmark. At 8.5 years old he looked fantastic! As Debbie Hobbs, Paul and I had imported his semen in 2007, I was particularly keen to see Conrad in the flesh and I was certainly not disappointed. I was also very pleased to finally



***Best of Breed, OEMCD
Zondor's Amazing Ofelia (DK)***

**Marc & Petra
with their clan
(Holland)**

meet is owner, Birte Christoffersen, who I had been emailing for many years and who is a MCOV member. She must be very proud of the condition that he is in at this age.

The judging system in Europe is different from our system and also different from that used in the UK. Even at the time of printing the newsletter, I am still uncertain if I have the results completely correct

and I have sourced several people to verify what I have published. As a spectator it was difficult to assess some of the dogs due to the poor handling and the long grass. Obvious double handling was also accepted which was quite a surprise.

On the day, the Danish dogs 'cleaned up' and I cleaned out the Club's shop! It was a great start to our European Mastiff adventure.

Back to Holland to meet Marc's partner, Petra, and all their dogs. What a welcome we received from Sabian, Tequila, Albera, Boss, Beetlejuice and the Great Dane, Luka. Marc had arranged for us to stay at the Three Ducks B & B which was a few houses down the road from Marc & Petra's home. It was the most beautiful home with a superb garden. Sara was in her element and took so many photos to show John how to construct things for her dream garden. Our hosts were just lovely and breakfast each day was a feast.

On Sunday 8th June was the Club show for the Old English Mastiff club of Netherlands. We hoped for a larger entry than the day before and we were not disappointed as the entry was 89, with each sex being judged by a different judge. The dogs were examined by Mr. Richard Thomas from UK (Bredwardine prefix) and the bitches were judged by Mr. Vuorinen from Finland.



Three Ducks B & B, Holland



The MCOV had donated a sash for Best Exhibit in Show and Sara and I were welcomed in the opening speeches. We were made to feel very welcome not only by the committee but attendees. Once again, the Danish contingent was there, but this also included Michael Jensen who I had corresponded with for many years. It was so good to be able to finally meet him in person. I also met Isolde Schmidt who is a MCOV member, but there was little time to speak. Fortunately we would meet one week later in Germany.

Of course, Jody Harrison was there as I knew she would because it had been arranged before she & Bas left Australia, that I would help Jody handle her bitches (Bas had a judging appointment but did arrive later in the afternoon). I was thrilled at the prospect of handling in Europe



Gabrielle and Jody Harrison handling two young bitches bred by Bas Bosch and Jody under their joint prefix, Blazolynns.

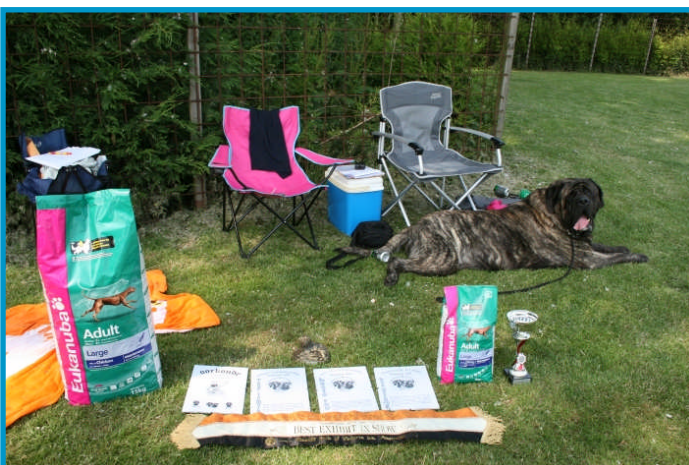
and I had even purchased an opal kangaroo pin to wear that would go with my jacket. I had packed 'the suit' for the occasion and I was ready.

I have to say that I was somewhat overdressed but I was not deterred and the results suggest that I did not scare the judge off. I handled 'Blossom' to 2nd place in Youth Bitch class. Her litter sister 'Eden' was 1st in this class and I then handled her to Reserve Bitch in Show with Jody handling 'Deirphille' (Eden & Blossom's half sister) to Best Bitch and Best Opposite Sex in Show. It really was quite exciting to be part of this. The down side to handling was that I missed most of the judging of the males, however the sexes judged simultaneously was always going to cause problems but I did think that I would have seen more.

Jody had brought along food for lunch but the only problem was that she forgot to tell us. After



***Above: Trophy display in Holland
Below: Best of Breed with all his prizes including sash donated by MCOV***



being in the sun and heat all day, unfortunately, most of the delicacies were too dangerous to eat!

Once again, there was a lot of variation of type and soundness. In general with the bitches, I would say that we (Marstenmoor, Yangerdook & Yanoor) have much stronger heads, heavier bone and more mass. I also expected that uneven top lines would be by far the exception but this was not the case. There were very few dark brindles in both sexes. I noticed some males with heavy bone in the hocks which is not seen that often here and very desirable.

After the show, while Jody waited for Bas to arrive after a judging appointment, we sat in the bar drinking wine and sharing stories. It was quite a multicultural group including a Finnish representative, that being Heidi Rubin.

It was a great day and we returned to Marc & Petra's tired but ready for the analysis of the day's events.

Also, the goods for sale were extensive and I bought quite a number of items to add to both my and Janine's collection. A parcel mailed home the next day is testament to this.

The next morning we were catching the train to Paris. Marc had pre booked this for us and drove us to Rotterdam to catch the high speed train. In reality we would have been quite happy to stay a few more days at the Three Ducks B&B & enjoy Marc and Petra's company and



On the Seine with Anne-Marie Class

dogs, but the show must go on and we had more people and Mastiffs to meet.

Our first European train trip and there was someone in our seats! What had Marc done? Fortunately the persons sitting in 'our' seats were Australian and explained that there were carriage numbers and we were three carriages away from ours. It was at this point that we realised that we had too much luggage (in spite of parcel no.1 being left with Marc for postage back to OZ) and that my case in particular was too large. In spite of the luggage, we did become quite savvy train travellers and managed the metro's in each city.

After securing our luggage in the lockers at the train station, we set off to explore Paris. We started with some shopping (of course) and then an open-top bus tour around the city. Although I had been to Paris before, I was overwhelmed by its beauty and magic (this was soon to be challenged).

Gathering up our luggage from the station, according to the map, the hotel looked like it was just up the road. Well, tourist maps can be deceiving and not necessarily drawn to scale.

We certainly saw some sights that most tourists had not seen in Paris - the 'soup kitchen' caravan, a medical emergency which was probably a drug overdose, and streets that

The sights of Paris - Montmartre & the Eiffel Tower





Monet's Garden. Sara on the famous bridge which features in many of Monet's works.

definitely didn't have the Christian Dior or Louis Vuitton designer stores.

However, we eventually arrived at our hotel safe, if not exhausted and positive that a taxi would be used to return us to the train station on our departure from Paris.

Our four days in Paris was predominantly sight-seeing in this truly magnificent city but I had been in contact with Anne- Marie Class and a meeting had been arranged. Anne Marie judged the Bullmastiff Club of Victoria Championship show in October 2007 and I had spent an afternoon sightseeing with her. She is on the committee of the French Kennel Club and the President of the Bullmastiff & Mastiff Club of France (in actual fact, I think that her interest in Mastiffs is stronger than Bullmastiffs and she currently owns two Mastiffs.)

We were so pleased that she was able to include us in her very busy schedule. She met us

at our hotel armed with metro tickets which we put to good use as well as our feet! We cruised the Seine, marvelled at the Eiffel tower & Notre Dam and absorbed the parisienne atmosphere. We were treated to the most scrumptious meal at Anne-Marie's son's restaurant. Giumme's vegetarian delights were outstanding! I would certainly become a vegetarian if I could be presented every day with creations to the standard that we sampled.

Anne-Marie showed us 'her' Paris and we loved it. The cooler weather was very conducive to walking the many kilometres that we did.

During our stay in Paris apart from sightseeing and shopping and visiting Monet's Gardens, I had been in contact with Corinna Reich to ensure our next destination was all on track. Corinna had organised the next week for us and what a week it was.

We caught the train from Paris to Trier where we were met by Sybilla Nordhues. She now breeds Mastiffs under the prefix of the Celtic Mountain, but her kennel name was of the Burning Mountain (remember the famous bitch Francis of the Burning Mountain).

Trier is the oldest city in Germany and together with Sybilla's partner Chris, we were shown the Roman amphitheatre, the Porta Nigra (Roman Gateway), cathedral and through the old and very beautiful centre of Trier.

The Mosel River, Germany



From Trier, we had a very scenic drive by the Mosel River up into the mountains to where Sybilla and Chris live with three Mastiffs, Paula, Carla & Brianna, Heidi the Pug and Muppy the black terrorist Pug. Brianna & Muppy did a lot of play fighting which was particularly amusing but even more so when Brianna launched herself at Muppy with Sara in the middle between them! Sybilla has not bred or shown a lot in the last eight years as she was on dialysis for seven years waiting for a new kidney. In March 2007 she received a donor kidney and is now able to lead a much less restricted lifestyle.

Pictures of Sybilla's Mastiffs adorn the walls of the local pub, along with some of their trophies. As in many European villages, the pub is the meeting place. We were treated to local 'apple' wine and a variety of peach schnapps which is only produced in this region. Even Sara had some glasses.

On the Saturday, it was Muppy's first birthday and a party had been arranged for her and her litter-mates. Sara and I were put to good use to help erect the shelter as the weather was quite cold and rain was forecast.

After meeting all the Pugs and their owners, there is one thing that I

know for sure. I will never own a Pug. They are crazy! Fortunately we had the Mastiffs to give our attention to and a few more arrived during the course of the afternoon.

Peter and Renate Hoengesberg arrived with 10 year old Simba and his four year old son Jordan, as well as Stefanie Feldle with two year old AJ. Peter and Renate were unable to make the Mastiff walk the next day so it was so lovely of them to make the effort to come to meet us. We were privileged to be able to meet Simba who is just such a wonderful older dog. On the other hand, AJ was just obsessed with Heidi, the mother of the Pug litter.



Sara with the birthday girl, Muppy



(Above left) Peter Hoengesberg with Jordan

(Below left) Simba

(Below) Sara with Jordan and Simba

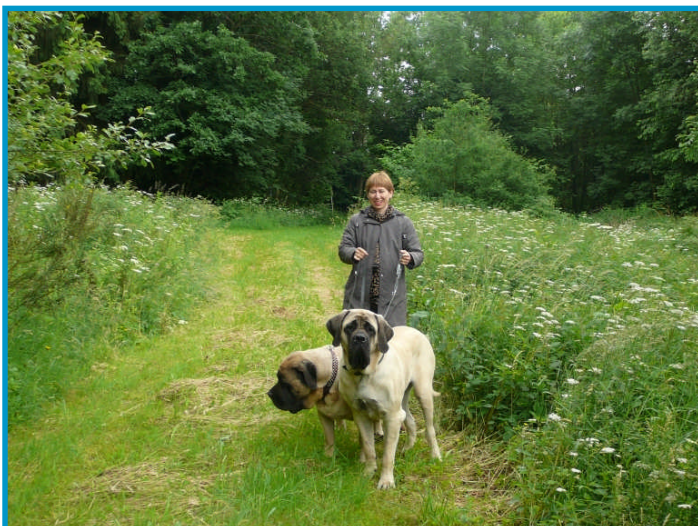




As the day wore on, more of the people from the local village arrived and quite a night ensued. Isolde Schmidt of Seven Oaks Mastiffs finally arrived after a 500 km drive with lengthy motorway delays. She was accompanied by her friend Anne and two three month old puppy bitches that Isolde had bred – Josy and Joy. The puppies were so delightful.

Sara and I were staying in a pensione in a near by village. This was certainly not a tourist area and I was very grateful for Sara's ability to speak German as I would have starved. Her German did not extend to trying to explain to

Sara with Paula and Brianna walking in the woods (Germany)



Mastiff Walk (Germany)



(Above) Puppies Josy, Joy & Sissi Mastiff Walk (Germany)



Isolde, Sara & Muriel

Mastiff Walk (Germany)

Isolde, Sara & Muriel with Rajah Mastiff Walk (Germany)



Gabrielle with Sissi Mastiff Walk (Germany)

the owner that I had almost electrocuted myself when I plugged in my Ipod charger. For this, we waited for Chris and he was very industrious and found the fuse box, reset the circuits and we didn't need to explain anything to the rather stern owner. He couldn't fix my Ipod charger though which was very fried.

After the evening's celebrations at Sybilla's the night before, and Jaegermeister to ward off the cold, a subdued and late start suited us all. The meeting place was the hotel in Hinzert-Poelert



Sybilla with Paula (Germany)

and then the Mastiff walk. All of this was arranged by Sybilla & Corinna. There were eighteen Mastiffs who participated in the walk ranging in age from three months to six years. What fun it was to watch them romping and playing in the long grass in the fields (no

need to worry about snakes like we have to in Australia). Sitting outside at the pub, they were all so well behaved and just laid under the tables.

Sara and I were just overwhelmed by the number of Mastiff enthusiasts who had come along with their Mastiffs to meet us. People had driven from France, Belgium & Luxembourg and long distances within Germany. It was so wonderful to meet people who love their Mastiffs and see the dogs all interacting. It is certainly an afternoon that I will remember as a great Mastiff experience.

This was also the first meeting with Corinna. I was nervous about this as we had such a great email friendship and recent phone calls also supported this. We had corresponded for over eight years. She was just as I imagined.

In the late afternoon, we farewelled everyone especially Sybilla & Chris. Their hospitality had been tremendous and we will always remember meeting their dogs and their friends.

With Corinna & Willi Graf's new US import puppy, Sissi, at my feet in the car, we left Ger-



*(Above left) Willi's home in Le Hohwald
(Above) Willi and Comtessa*

many with Corinna for a considerable journey to Willi's home.

Although German, Willi lives in the holiday village of the Le Hohwald in the Alsace region of France. What a place to live!

Willi loves life and his Mastiffs. He lives on his own with five Mastiffs: Tinkabell, Tuscany, Comtessa, Duke & Sissi (Corinna's dog, Benito was also there on holiday). After a rather late arrival, we were given a big welcome and enjoyed many glasses of Cremant (sparkling white wine) and another local (very good!) Riesling. We also enjoyed Willi's cooking as he had prepared a traditional meal of smoked pork and potato salad (hot). Everything was great – until the homemade schnapps. It nearly blew our heads off and I even declined a second glass which I don't do often.



*(Above) Corinna with Benito and Sissi
(Below) Tinkabell and Tuscany*

Corinna had planned quite a sight seeing schedule for us over the next few days and did we see some magnificent scenery, tasted fabulous foods and drank more good wines. The weather was quite cold but this didn't deter us and was especially good for Sissi as she was 'on tour' with us even in the restaurants. We toured two regions on the two days that we were with Corinna and Willi. Firstly was the Alsace region with vineyard after vineyard and picture postcard villages, and breathtaking mountain scenery.





*Haut-Koenigsbourg
Castle, Alsace, France*

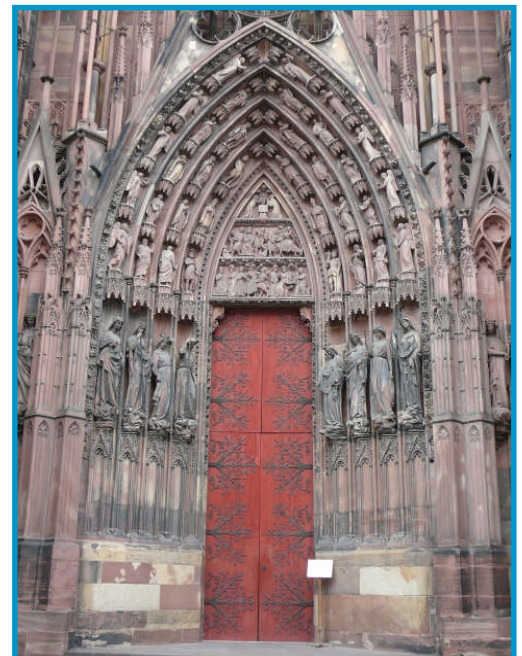
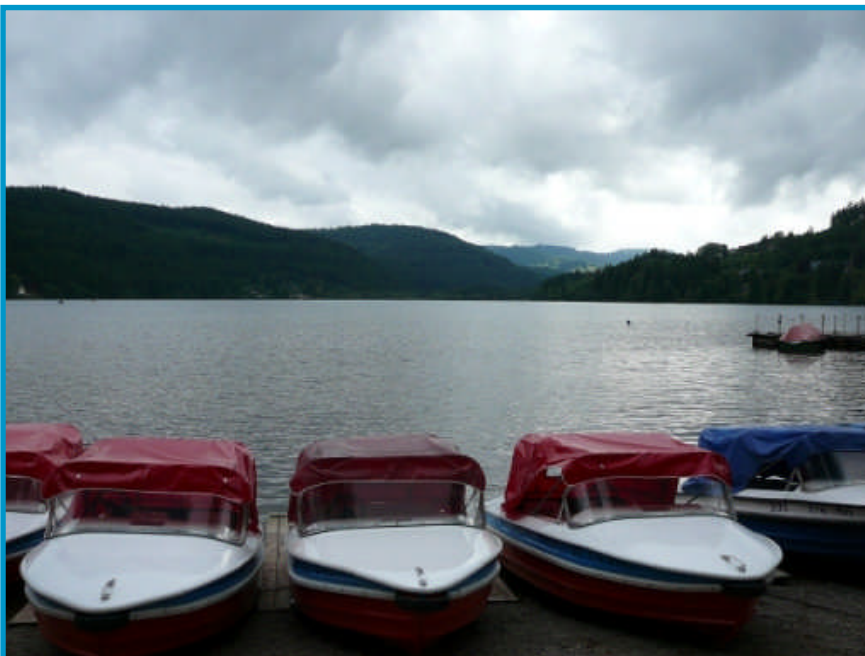


Our first stop was La Montagne des Singes (Monkey Mountain) which is home to hundreds of Barbary Macaques. They are certainly in charge in this large pine forest reserve. Our next stop was the impressive Castle of Haut-Koenigsbourg. Since its construction in the 12th century, the Haut-Koenigsbourg castle has been a constant witness to both European conflicts and rivalry between lords, kings and emperors.

We spent a long time exploring this castle and marvelling at its construction and restoration. We enjoyed lunch in the medieval town of Riquewihr. Lunch was tarte flambé (thin delicious pizza) with speck. It was delicious! Both Sara and I certainly plan to return to the Alsace region for a more extended stay. There is so much more to see and wineries to visit to



*(Above) Sissi 'on tour' with us in the beautiful town of Riquewihr, Alsace
(Below left) Lake Tit, Black Forest Region, Germany
(Below right) Strasbourg Cathedral, France*

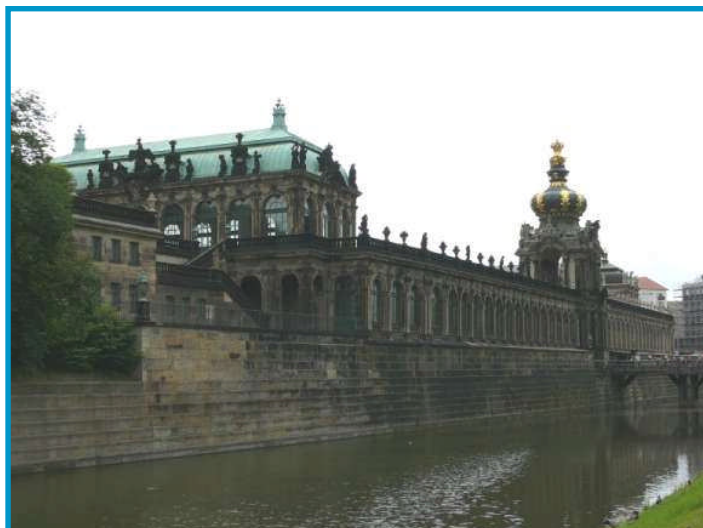


taste more Riesling that the region is famous for.
The next day we set off at a reasonable hour for Strasbourg.

Our stop included the Gothic Strasbourg Cathedral which houses the Astronomical Clock and morning coffee.

The Black Forest region was very beautiful also. We visited the tourist area of Lake Tit but the weather was not too conducive to being

outdoors. Fortunately, there was a restaurant with a fabulous view where we could order Black Forest cake and we could not resist. It was great! We did hold back the desire to purchase a cuckoo clock though. On Wednesday 18th June we reluctantly farewelled Willi but promised to one day return to this most beautiful region. Corinna drove us to the train station on her way back to her home in Germany. It was very sad to say good-bye but it was so wonderful to meet and we were heading to Leipzig (formerly in East Germany) for another adventure. Corinna had arranged for us to meet and stay with Uta Naumann of Cheese Hill Mastiffs. This was where Sara's German that I had told everyone about would be used the most (my French was very lacking but the deal was that I would look after France and Sara would look after Germany). After quite a long train ride with cases that were just getting heavier and heavier in spite of parcel number two having been sent home, we were met with by Uta and her brother in law, Karsten. Right from the start, we clicked and I knew that this was going to be more very memorable days.



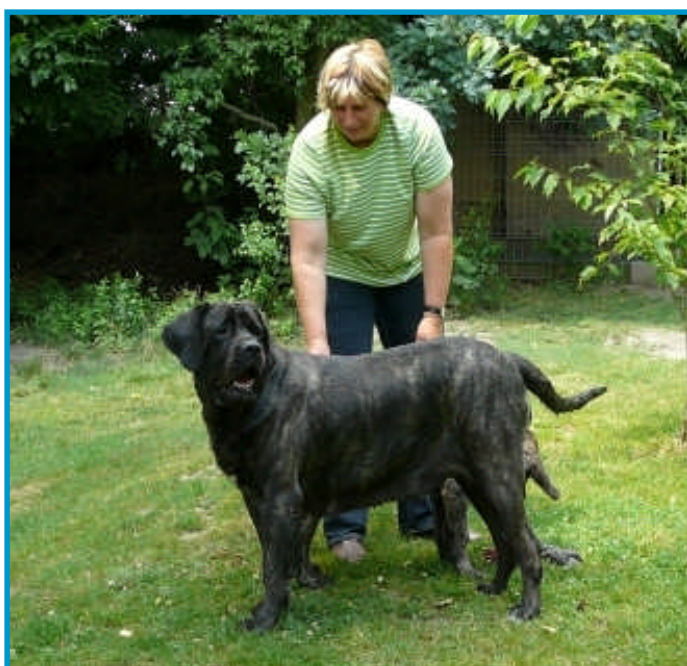
Dresden

Karsten's wife, Gabi, joined us for dinner and after Uta left us late in the evening, the four of us joined in the European World Soccer Cup excitement in the bar district. There was quite an atmosphere. Karsten and Gabi spoke very good English.

The next day, Uta had arranged something very special for us and this was to visit the historic Green Vault (Grünes Gewölbe) in Dresden. I believe a few strings were pulled to secure tickets for this spectacular and limited exhibition. The treasury in the Green Vault, created between 1723 and 1730, represented the realisation of August the Strong's vision of creating a Baroque synthesis of arts as an expression of his wealth and power as an absolute ruler. The extravagance and magnificence of



***Peppels & Rosie
Mastiffs of the Cheese-Hill (Germany)***



Uta with Dolce



Karsten, Uta, Gabi, Anna, & Oma Naumann



Karsten, the German BBQ expert



many of the precious items cannot be imagined. We were very privileged to view such a treasure chest.

Uta's sightseeing tour also included the Meissen porcelain factory and museum of extraordinary pieces and the historical sites in Leipzig. We also had some time for some shopping and of course this included shoes. By this stage, I have to say that I was very anxious to meet her Mastiffs. I had been perplexed by the kennel name of "the Cheese Hill" but it soon fell into place when we went to her home. Her home adjoins a cheese factory where she and her family make a specialised local variety called Sauermilchkaese (goats' milk cheese). Finally, we met Douglas, Rosie, Peppels, Dolce and Elfirede (yes, I was happy as four of the five were brindle!) and her two Shar Peis, Lady and Bella.

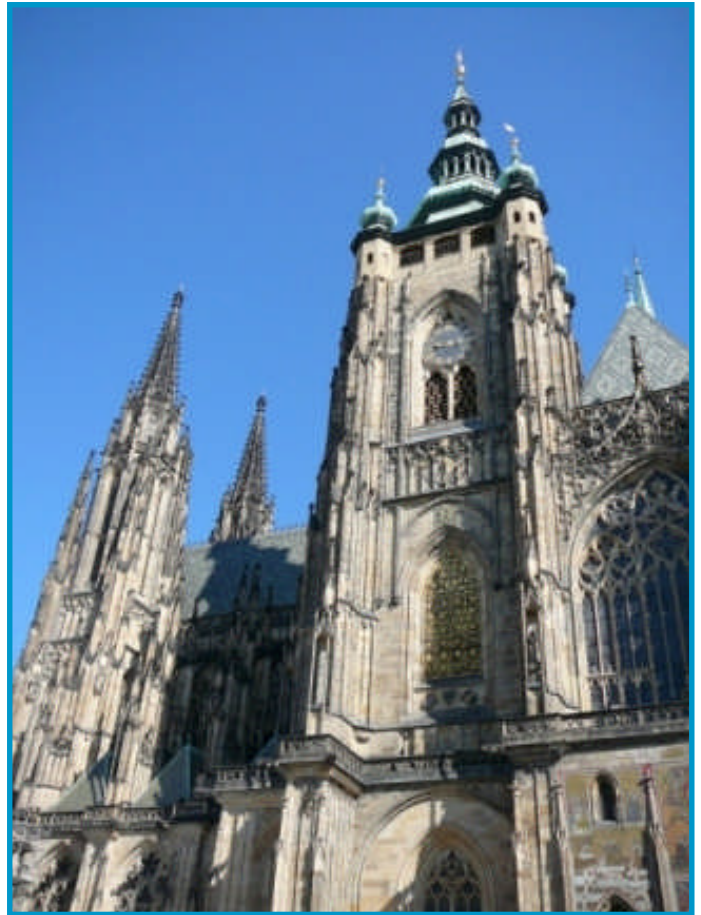
We looked at photos, pedigrees and websites and the language barrier was not a communication barrier at all. Uta has such a great sense of humour, as well as great dog sense!

Sara and I were so welcomed by Uta and her family. Her gorgeous daughter Anna helped to translate along with Sara, and we had a sensational BBQ at Oma Naumann's home, superbly cooked and presented by Karsten and Gabi. It was so beautiful relaxing outdoors in the warm evening, sipping more great wine and picking fresh strawberries and raspberries. The strawberries were the best ones that I have ever tasted in my life.

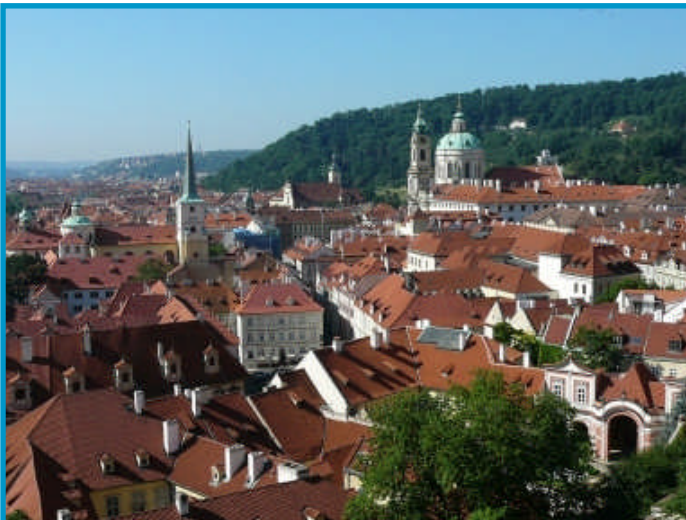
So, once again it was time to leave our new friends. When we left France for Leipzig, we were a little apprehensive about our next few days as I had never met, spoken to, nor emailed Uta. I should never have been worried as we now have a new friend and family that will be for life.

Our holiday continued to Prague. Prague is a very old and beautiful city and we spent many hours at the Prague Castle and meandering through the

***Picking strawberries at Oma Naumann's.
The best I have ever tasted!
Variety Mieze Schindler Senga Sengana***



Church, Prague Castle

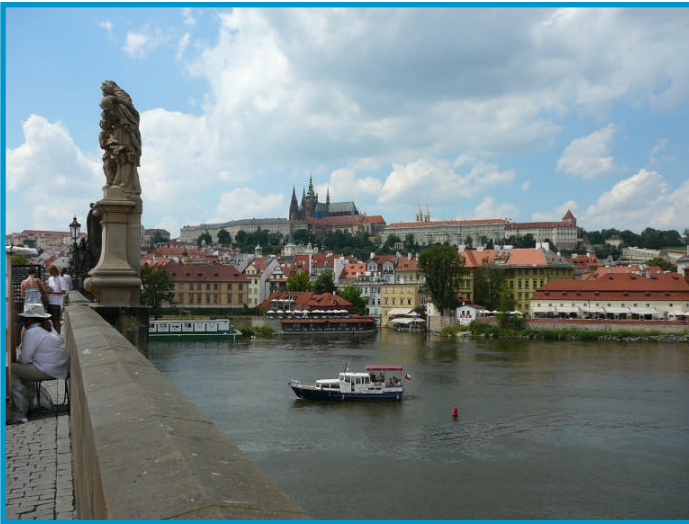


tiny back streets. It was here that we found an antique store and we were drawn in because there was a French Bulldog's head on the sign. Sure enough, the very old dog was there in his basket, and we had an interesting time trying to communicate in English, German and French to the owner who was originally from Belgium. We checked out all the dog pieces and Sara even made a purchase for the Canine Museum.

I made my greatest shoe purchase in Prague: a pair of Pierre Cardin knee-high boots marked down by 50%! Once again, we had great fun trying to communicate with the sales assistance - this time a rather handsome young man who certainly fitted the Cardin image.

The boots came complete in their own 'Pierre Cardin' large carry bag. Well, 'Pierre' was given royal treatment during our travels and ensured our special treatment.

When we left the hotel in Prague, I went to place 'Pierre' in the luggage compartment of the taxi, but the driver swiftly took him from my hands, and made a comment that essentially meant he was impressed and this was expensive. 'Pierre' rode on the front seat of the taxi. On the flight from Frankfurt to Singapore, a completely booked airplane and a difficult cus-



Prague



*Enjoying a Singapore Sling
at Raffles Hotel
(Looking rather exhausted!)*



tomter seated behind us meant that the flight attendant needed to move 'Pierre'. The attendant was quick to tell me that he would ensure the security of my package. On our arrival in Singapore (many hours later!), the attendant told me that he would get my package and 'Pierre' was safely presented to me. Who says that names don't count for anything?

Our stop in Singapore was only 24 hours but we did fit quite a bit into that time. Mandatory is a Singapore Sling at the famous Raffles Hotel. It cost a fortune but did taste great and the setting was great.

Getting around in Singapore is a pleasure with such a fabulous train underground. It did not take us long to work it out and certainly saved lots of walking.

We did some shopping - the night market and the imitation brand watches (which have since failed) and checked out luggage for our next trip. It will be smaller and lighter next time. I suppose my Singapore shopping 'piece de resistance' was the fabric that I bought in the tailor's store in the hotel complex. I probably could have bought the same fabric cheaper in another part of the city, I was very pleased with my purchase which cost \$AU55 and has now been made into a fabulous jacket that I where for dog showing and have compliments every time I wear it.

Our trip was made so special because of the people and dogs. So many people extended hospitality far beyond what we could have ever imagined. We are very touched by how we were welcomed and sincerely hope that we can return this to you one day. Just remember that Australia is a great place to visit, and that more importantly, Melbourne hosts a Formula 1



**OLD ENGLISH MASTIFF CLUB NEDERLAND
CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW**

8th June 2008

Judges: Mr. R. Vuorinen (FIN)

Mr. Richard Thomas (UK)

(Bredwardine)

www.oemcn.nl



BEST OF BREED (CAC)

Sir Boeff van de Summes Mansio

Owner: A. Behrami

Breeder: B.H.G. Geuns

DOB: 14th May 2005

Sire: Oastmoor Hermes

Dam: Roxy van de Summes Mansio



BEST OPPOSITE & BITCH CAC

Bardolynn's Deirphille (BLG)

Owner: B. Bosch & J. Harrison

Breeder: B. Bosch

DOB: 21st January 2004

Sire: Fr. & Int. Ch. Ramses de la Montcient

Dam: Bardolynn's Baron's Aurora



RESERVE DOG CAC

**CH. Snooze Zantos
(DK)**

Owner: G. Andreassen

Breeder: J. Skytte

DOB: 27th August 2001

Sire:

Multi Ch. Wileyways Conrad
(Imp. USA) (DK)

Dam: Hugedogge Anna Fleur
De Lis

**RESERVE BIT. CAC
Blazolynn's Lady Ae-
gle (BLG)**

Owner/Breeder: B. Bosch & J.
Harrison

DOB: 29th June 2007

Sire: Storm Golden Baubles
Around Domas (Imp. USA) UK

Dam: Bardolynn's Baron's
Aurora of Blazolynns





**OLD ENGLISH MASTIFF CLUB
DEUTSCHLAND CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW**

7th June 2008

Judge: Mr. John Bromley (UK)
(Spirithill)



BEST OF BREED (CAC)

Zondor's Amazing Ofelia (DK)

Owner/Breeder: I. M. Serena

DOB: 02.12.05

Sire: DK Ch. Wileyways The Thunder Rolls

Dam:

DK Ch. SV Ch. Huggedogge Isn't She Lovely

**BEST OPPOSITE SEX &
BEST MALE (CAC)**

**DCH Jordan S. from the
Burning Mountain**

Owner: P & R Hoengesberg

Breeder: S. Nordhues

DOB: 20.09.03

Sire: Erebor's Xantho

Dam: Billa from the Burning Mountain



**RESERVE BITCH &
YOUTH
BITCH CAC**

**Zondor's Beloved
Savannah (DK)**

Owner/ Breeder: I. M. Serena

DOB: 09.08.07

Sire: Am. Ch. Windfalls Dark Cloud of
Reign

Dam: DK. SV Ch. Huggedogge Isn't
She Lovely

RESERVE DOG & CAC
Bobbel vd Steinheide

Owner: C. Bardenbacher

Breeder: C. Steinkamp

DOB: 20.08.05

Sire: Dragaon v.d. Cathalijanda

Dam: Santmichal Freya (Imp. UK)



**BEST BRACE
DK & SE. CH.
Woodmarks
Jackson
The
Huggedog
(Imp. USA) (DK)
&
Huggedogge
Queen Mary
(DK)**

Owner: B. Christoffersen

