

Owning an Appenzeller, or any dog for that matter, comes with its challenges. Both Astro and Hek presented differently as youngsters....Astro being reactive to people, and Hek the complete opposite. I learned so much about Appenzellers from Astro and while he and Hek were very different in personality, they are both so highly intelligent and willing training partners. Astro was still so willing to learn and please up until he passed last August. We miss him very much.

Hek was a little lost after Astro left us and it took several months for him to be himself. New behaviours appeared! One morning after I woke, I went to the living room to get Hek up and outside...his cozy bed in front of the fireplace; he was not to be found! Walking around the house, I called but no Hek! Back in the living room there he was curled up on Brett's chair! My dogs were never on the furniture in our house. Our bedroom is off limits to the dogs due to Brett's allergies...and yet, there has Hek, proud as can be on the comfiest chair in the house. So what to do now? I could have fixed the situation, making sure he didn't have access to the furniture, so we compromised. One piece of furniture only...the rest is off limits. Hek sits with me on the loveseat, and often sleeps there, but no other furniture. For now..... When we're on the road, which we are a lot, Hek is NOT allowed on the bed if Brett is with us....Allergies, and Hek respects that. When it's just Hek and I, he sleeps with me.

After a couple of months we got back to training and I introduced Hektor to a new sport...Nosework! We we still doing Rally Obedience classes and Rally Free, but I wanted something for him where we would work independently, without the distraction of other dogs. We took two sessions of classes over the winter and early spring, and he enjoys it very much, albeit he is still a little exuberant with the scent articles....the boxes are his nemesis...he's a bit of a box-destroyer much to the chagrin of our instructor.

In between, we continue our agility training and are beginning to compete at the Novice level. Hek is three now, and gaining more confidence and control in the agility ring. In Rally, we are competing at the Excellent level, and we are now venturing into formal obedience now that he is more comfortable in a trial environment.

Hek also became a daddy in April of this year. He was bred to Desta, a lovely black tri female from Deroche Appenzellers in British Columbia and sired five gorgeous puppies... three Havana Brown and two black tri coloured. We plan on repeating this breeding in the future.

Our journey in Conformation has been remarkable for the Appenzeller in North America. Very few judges have ever seen an Appenzeller, let alone judge one. I'm very happy I chose this path for Hektor and his breed. While the Appenzeller is not recognized by the CKC and fully recognized by AKC, we have other venues such as IABCA and UKC. Hektor got his UKC CH in the US last summer, and continues to rack up Championship titles in the International shows. He's garnered numerous Group placements in both venues, and most recently, a Reserve BIS, which is a huge accomplishment for a rare breed! I'm so very proud of him. It's a huge amount of work preparing a dog for the show ring but I wouldn't have it any other way. He is a joy to train, and I see many wonderful things in his future. The Appenzeller really can do anything including a BIS!

