

53rd annual Show Dogs of the Year Awards celebrate the best of 2007.

By Evangeline McMullen

n the chilly weekend preceding the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in New York, industry professionals gathered for a celebration of the best of the dog world. For the 53rd year, Purina ProPlan's Show Dogs of the Year Awards recognized the industry's finest, lauding not just the top canines, but also the people who made a significant impact on the dog world both inside and outside the show ring.

Presented by Dogs in Review, the ceremony kicked off with drinks and hors d'oeuvres at the Grand Hyatt, continued with dinner, then moved on to the highlight of the evening - the awards.

Four industry achievement awards were meted out: Steven R. Hansen, DVM, earned the Hartz Veterinarian of the Year Award; the Irvine Animal Care Center in Irvine, Calif., was named the Frontline Shelter of the Year; Cesar Millan walked away as the Panasonic Trainer of the Year; and the Cardinal Groomer of the Year Award went to Christian Manelopoulos. Additional accolades went to the five Winkie recipients: Terry Miller, Outstanding Breeder; Kaz Hosaka, Best Professional Handler; Tom Coen, Best Owner-Handler; Maxine V. Beam, Judge of the Year; and Louisville Kennel Club, Show of the Year. Recognizing those who embody the very best of the sport, the Anne Rogers Clark Hall of Fame announced its newest inductee, breeder-handler Wendell Sammett.

The year's most successful dogs received recognition for their superior number of Group Firsts: Toy Poodle Ch. Smash JP Win A Victory, English Springer Spaniel Ch. Karmadi's Madam President, Akita Ch. Redwitch Reason To Believe, Sealyham Terrier Ch. Efbe's Hidalgo At Goodspice, Standard Poodle Ch. Brighton Minimoto, German Shepherd Dog Ch. Kaleef's Geneva Aeval-Achtung, and Beagle Ch. K-Run's Park Me In First. Golden Retriever OTCH Tanbark's Something's Burnin UDX14 took home the award for obedience.

Shelter of the Year

The Frontline Shelter of the Year faced a trial by fire in 2007 and passed with honors.

The Irvine Animal Care Center, located in Irvine, Calif., found itself in the thick of the wildfires that ravaged Southern California last fall. But cool heads prevailed at the center. Although it already housed more than 300 animals, the shelter took in 94 additional animals, from dogs and cats to birds and livestock. Every single one was returned safely to its owner.

"We are honored to be recognized for the work that we do for homeless, abandoned, and abused animals," says Director Ron Edwards, "The City of Irvine Animal Care Center is an incredible facility."

Not only did the center provide exceptional care for animals in its local area, but it also extended help to shelters farther afield that were overwhelmed by the numbers of evacuated animals. The center picked up 20 dogs from the Escondido

Veterinarian of the Year

Few will forget 2007's infamous pet food recall. Steven R. Hansen, DVM, certainly won't.

A board-certified veterinary toxicologist and senior vice president of the ASPCA's Animal Poison Control Center, Hansen received the Hartz 2007 Veterinarian of the Year Award in recognition of his role in the ASPCA's response to the recall. Hansen spearheaded the organization's efforts to provide the public with coherent information, by combining content from the ASPCA's proprietary database, AnToxT, with clinical information from Bergh Memorial Animal Hospital and testing informaSteven R. Hansen, DVM, left, holds his Hartz Veterinarian of the Year Award.

tion from veterinary diagnostic, corporate, and FDA laboratories.

"There is little in life more rewarding than seeing people come together on behalf of animals," Hansen says. "The pet food recall crisis is a perfect example of this type of collaboration. The ASPCA is dedicated to improving the well-being of companion animals, a mission echoed by veterinarians and pet parents alike."

The ASPCA echoed the tribute to Hansen.

"I, along with the entire organization, am very proud of this recognition of Dr. Hansen's leadership during last year's unprecedented pet food recall crisis," says Ed Sayres, ASPCA president and CEO. "His expertise and farsightedness, combined with our communications expertise, were the reason our organization was able to help the American public and their pets cope from day to day."

The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, located in Urbana, Ill., opened its doors in 1978, and the facility operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Staffed by 30 veterinarians, its medical professionals include 12 board-certified toxicologists/veterinary toxicologists and 13 certified veterinary technicians. In 2007 the center handled more than 130,000 cases.

"Working for animals is truly a critical cause, and I share a common purpose with my colleagues at the ASPCA and others in animal welfare," Hansen adds. "We all strive to make a difference in the lives of animals."

Humane Society, which lay in the direct path of a fire and came under threat of evacuation.

"The support of the City of Irvine and the Community Services Department, our community, donors, caring volunteers, and compassionate staff help to make our programs so successful," Edwards adds. "As one of the nation's most progres-

sive public animal shelters, we are blessed to be able to find new homes or reunite pets with their guardians for 90 percent of all animals that enter our facility."

In operation since 1982, the five-acre shelter has adopted out and returned more than 50,000 animals to homes.



"Helping homeless, abandoned, and abused animals is my passion and life goal," Edwards says. "I know that I share the same passion and life goals with so many others in our program. We all have a huge place in our heart for the animals we provide care for at our shelter and beyond."



Trainer of the Year

To his fans, he is known simply as the Dog Whisperer. But the Panasonic Trainer of the Year is no gimmick - he's the real deal.

"I always say that I rehabilitate dogs and train people," Cesar Millan explains.

Through his wildly successful TV show, Millan has brought canine behavior modification to the masses, educating people to be better dog owners through the use of positive training and communication methods. Not only has Millan worked on improving existing dog-human relationships, but through The Cesar and Ilusion Millan Foundation, he has helped rescue, rehabilitate, and place abused and abandoned animals in new, nurturing environments.

Although not able to accept his award in person, Millan thanked the awards committee for the honor.

"It fills me with gratitude to be chosen for this award, and it inspires me to continue helping humans discover how to solve their dogs' behavioral issues," he says. "Together, we can help create balance with our dogs and in our lives."