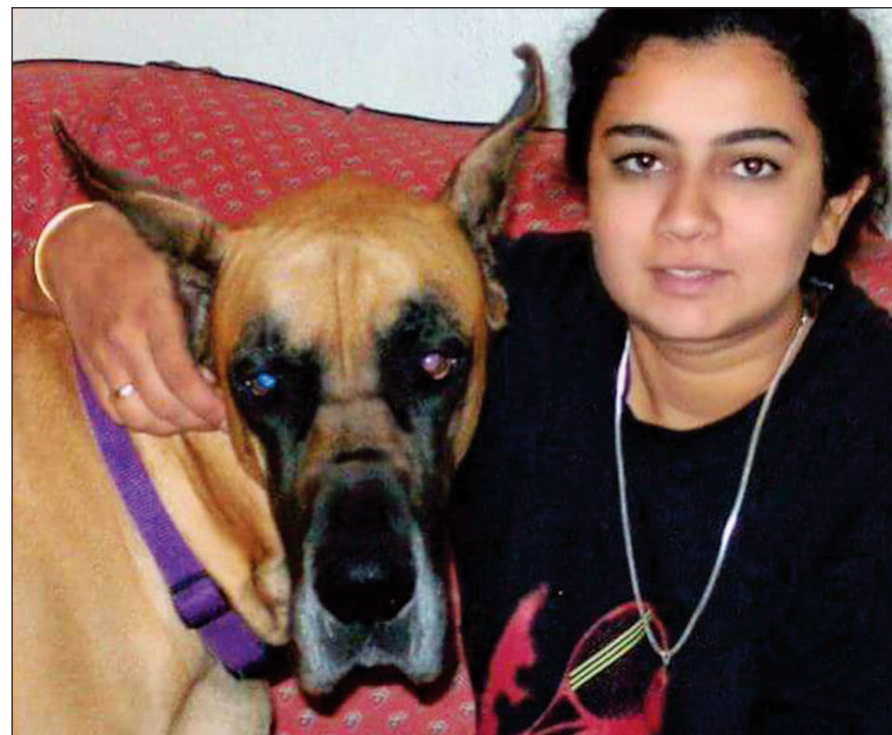


Kennel Interview with Ms. Gauri Nargolkar, Danehills Kennel



C.V. SUDARSAN: Dear Gauri, Thank you for agreeing to give the Indian Kennel Gazette the Kennel interview and share your expertise and knowledge on the Great Dane breed. Let me start by asking you the question as to what made you decide to keep Great Danes among the various other options that you have had?

GAURI: Thank you so much Sir. Truly honoured and thrilled to be doing this interview. Since childhood I have been enamoured by this breed - "the Apollo of dogs", by their size, majesty and nobility and have always wanted to have a Dane.

CVS: Tell us how and when did you embark on breeding & exhibiting Great Danes?

GAURI: My mother is an avid dog lover and she was the one who bought a brindle bitch puppy from Mr Mukund Ogale who owned the then famous Danedom Kennels.

This was in 1986 and I was in school at that time. Our first breeding was when we bred this bitch, in 1989, to Ch Clausentum Jasper. Jasper was a gift to Mr Ogale from the world famous Dane breeder Ms Jean Lanning of Clausentum Kennels, England. Our kennel Danehills was registered in 1988 and the very first puppy born went on to become a Champion – Ch Danehills Velvet.

CVS: Can you remember your first Great Dane and which year was this and what was his name? What is that attracted you towards the Great Danes?

GAURI: My first Dane was the brindle bitch puppy from Mr Mukund Ogale that I mentioned, in 1986. Her registered name was Ch Danedom's Star Appeal. Her call name was Sheba.

The regal appearance of the Dane, the strength, dignity, elegance, size and sheer majesty, their ability to guard the house



C.V. Sudarsan

yet be gentle companions were the traits that attracted me to this beautiful breed.

CVS: Can you remember your first show and where was it?

GAURI: Yes, I vividly remember my first show. It was the Poona Kennel Club's Championship show in 1987 and we exhibited Sheba. You judged it, along with Mr Partha Sekhar Chatterjee and Mrs Leela Ratnam. Our very first C.C. was awarded by you.

CVS: I remember you as an exhibitor under me in Pune some 25 years ago presumably when you were in your teens. Would you able to re-collect that show and tell us something about it?

GAURI: I think the show you are referring to is the one where I was handling Ch Danehills Georgia Pacific. "Gary" as he was fondly called was a multiple line up winner and one of the top winning BI dogs at that time. He was a very showy, rich fawn dog and I thoroughly enjoyed handling him throughout his show career.

CVS: Obviously you have had a great innings with Great Danes starting from almost your childhood. Could you share your experiences?

GAURI: So many experiences to share! Its been a fairly long innings starting from my childhood as you rightly mentioned. Having spent more than 30 years in the breed you could say I grew up with Danes and can't imagine my life without them. I used to accompany my mother to shows as a child and then slowly these Danes became a part of my life. Breeding, whelping, rearing, handling, travelling to shows all over India, winning, losing and now judging – I would say its been very fulfilling and yes, making some amazing friends along the way.

CVS: You have had several Great

Danes till now. Where was your foundation stock from?

GAURI: We started off initially with the puppy bitch that we bought from Mr Mukund Ogale, out of the Clausentum dog. He had imported Danes from the Clasuentum Kennels, U.K. and Dundane Kennels, USA. However, due to my school and college studies I was not able to devote much time to breeding and showing dogs for a few years and those bloodlines didn't remain. I was also not satisfied with the quality of Danes and the gene pool available in India for a few years after that although I did breed a few champions but they didn't have the "look" I wanted. In 2001, Mr Nagaraj Setty had a Dane bitch who was from the famous Amasa kennels of Australia, bred by Ms Denise Bennett. I liked her very much and he was kind enough to let me have her. I consider her to be my real foundation bitch and most of the Danehills Danes today go back to her. Her name was Amasa Regent Dvine Rite and we called her Betty.

CVS: I am told your Kennel name is "Danehills". Does it have any special significance and when was it registered?

GAURI: Danehills is a combination of the words "Dane" and "hills". Dane, for the breed I love and Hills because my kennel is situated on hills overlooking the city of Pune. Our prefix was registered in 1988.

CVS: I have known you to be exhibiting Great Danes successfully for a long time. Would you like to tell us something about your achievements in the field of breeding & exhibiting Great Danes?

GAURI: I have bred 85 Great Dane Champions till date which includes 76 Indian Great Dane Champions, 7 American Champions (Co Bred with Ms Francette Lass, Lagarada Kennel – USA), including 2 American Grand Champions, 1 Canadian Champion who finished her title at 6 ½ months of age and 1 Philippines Grand Champion. A puppy bred by Ms. Francette Lass and me, Am Ch Lagarada Danehills Winds of Change was also Best Puppy Bitch and Reserve Winners Bitch at the Great Dane Club of America's National Show in Phoenix, USA 2015. BISS Am Gr Ch Lagarada Danehills Star Struck Titan was in the Top 10, GDCA for two consecutive years and ended 2015 as the

No.1 Owner Handled Dane in the US.

Danehills bred Great Danes have won All Breed Best in Shows 26 times and Best in Specialty Show 9 times including 3 Nationals, with multiple Line-ups, Best Puppy and Best in Show BI awards. Danehills has won the Bhat Trophy for the Dane of the Year – Bred in India on 5 separate occasions and Dane of the Year 4 times. Am Gr Ch/BIS BISS Ch Lagarada Danehills Starman was reserve Dog of the Year All Breeds in 2016-17.

I would like to add that none of this would have been possible without the help and guidance of my mentor Francette Lass and the support and blessings of family, friends and well wishers. I also take this opportunity to thank you for all your advice

and encouragement over the years.

CVS: What is the present strength of your Kennel. Do you have any other breeds other than Great Danes and if so could you name the breeds?

GAURI: The present strength of my kennel is 15 Danes, not counting puppies of course. Yes, I do have other breeds since I had to breed and show breeds in different groups in order to be eligible to apply for my all breed judging licence. I did not part with those dogs and I have Labradors, Gsd, Boxers and Beagles in addition to my Danes.

CVS:: How many Great Dane Indian Champions have you bred till now and how difficult a journey was it? Could you tell us something about this?



Gauri :I have bred a total of 86 Indian Champions out of which 76 are Great Danes. It was an exceedingly difficult journey as it takes a lot of sweat, blood and tears to breed, rear, show these giant dogs. Due to their sheer size, this breed is very difficult to rear and maintain in top show condition. Also, to keep a bloodline going for so many years and keep enhancing it with the addition of new blood every few years is an arduous task. I am extremely grateful to my mentor for allowing me access to her bloodlines, to all those who helped along the way and of course to the owner of my puppies who have reared and shown Danehills puppies successfully.

CVS: Apart from having bred Indian Champions, I am told that you have bred several overseas Champions. Could you throw some light on this?

Yes, I have bred 7 American champions (co bred with Ms Francette Lass of Lagarada Great Danes) which include 2 American Grand Champions. One of them was in the Great Dane Club of America's Top 10 rankings for 2 consecutive years, a multi Specialty winner and was also

No 1 Owner handled Dane in the US. In addition to these I have bred 1 Canadian Champion (she finished at the age of 6 and 1/2 months) and 1 Philippines Grand Champion.

CVS: What are your major wins / achievements in the breed of Great Dane apart from breeding champions?

Gauri : Apart from the champions, one of the bitch puppies that Fran and I bred – Am Ch Lagarada Danehills Winds of Change won Res Winners Bitch and Best Puppy Bitch at the GDCA National in Phoenix, 2011 at the age of 9 months from amongst a huge entry of bitches.

BISS AM Gr Ch Lagarada Danehills Star Struck Titan was in the Top 10 in the GDCA rankings for 2 consecutive years and No.1 Owner Handled Dane in the US.

His full brother AM Gr Ch/ BIS BISS Ind Gr Ch Lagarada Danehills Starman was Dane of the Year in India for 2015/16/17 and ended up as Res Dog of the Year for 2016-17.

Danehills Danes have won the Bhat

Trophy for Dane of the Year 4 times and Dane of the Year (BI) 5 times. Danehills bred Danes have won 26 All Breed Best in Shows and 10 Best in Specialty Shows apart from multiple line up placements and best puppy in show wins.

CVS: Having been seriously involved in the breed since 1985, how come you thought of becoming a breed specialist judge quite late?

Gauri : You are right. Actually, I applied for life membership of the KCI quite late too. On hindsight it was an inadvertent delay.

CVS: Can you tell me something about the popularity of Great Danes in the Western part of India?

Gauri : The popularity of Great Danes has increased tremendously not just in the Western part of India but in the South too. With access to the internet and social media people are more aware of the trends in breeding and showing in countries abroad, are familiar with top winning Danes there and aspire to replicate the same here. The import of some good quality specimens in the past and also the fact that Danes recently have been winning board placements also increases the popularity of the breed.

CVS: You seem to be spending a lot of time with your dogs. What do you do as a profession? Could you tell us something about yourself?

I am a Computer Science graduate from Fergusson College, Pune. I am a partner in a catering firm with my brother Rohit. Being a family owned business I confess I do take the liberty of taking time off to attend shows and pursue my dog related hobbies and my brother is very supportive. Dogs in general and Danes in particular are my passion.

CVS: I find you to be an avid exhibitor. How do you find time to concentrate on you kennels and exhibiting your dogs all over?

Gauri : Like I mentioned, dogs are my passion to the point of being an obsession so I make it a point to spend quality time from my schedule for them. My family is extremely supportive of my passion. I am also helped by my friend Mahesh Amale in exhibiting my dogs all over and we also



own some dogs in partnership.

CVS: Who manages your kennel? Do you do it yourself or do you have kennel hands to help you out and if so how many kennel hands do you have at the moment?

Gauri : I manage my kennel with the help of my friend Mahesh since we own some of the dogs in partnership. I have 3 full time kennel boys who live on the property to take care of the dogs plus a dedicated handler.

CVS: How involved is your family in keeping dogs? Could you tell us something about them?

Gauri : My mother, as I mentioned is an avid dog lover. My parents are doctors and own one of the oldest gynaecological hospitals in Pune. I have a brother who owns the catering business with me and a sister who is a post graduate in French. They are both dog lovers.

CVS: What is your marital status?

Gauri : I am single....may I add happily! lol

CVS: How difficult is it to maintain a Great Dane? Does the breed require constant grooming and massaging to keep it in show condition? Do you involve yourself in the grooming and preparing of the dog for shows?

Gauri : Being a giant breed, Great Danes require a lot of care as far as exercise and nutrition are concerned. They may be prone to a lot of health issues if not properly cared for especially during the growth phase. Being a short coated breed

they do not require constant grooming, but a certain level of grooming and correct supplementation is required to maintain the coat in optimum condition. We do massage our Danes regularly for better blood circulation. Yes, I am involved in every aspect of my Danes' conditioning.

CVS: How tough or resilient is the Great Dane as compared to other working breeds like the Mastiff, Dobermann, Boxer, etc.,?

Gauri : I think the sheer size of the Dane predisposes it to certain conditions that other smaller sized breeds may not have to deal with. Otherwise a well bred, well reared Great Dane can be quite resilient though they have a very short healthy span of life. Most Danes age very fast after 6-7 years of age and unfortunately do not have a large life span.

CVS: It is normally said that there are three types of Great Dane, one the English type, the American type and the European type. Can you tell us the vital differences in the standards of the three types?

Gauri : I would say the type is one with different styles that have evolved over the years in different countries as per the influential bloodlines prevalent there and the individual preferences of the breeders based on variations in interpretation of the standards. In my opinion, all the standards describe the same dog. The essence is the same in all three standards with very minor variations. One variation would be that the FCI standard now has an upper limit for height – 90cms for males and 84cms for females.

CVS: How important is the head for the Great Dane? Would you say that the Great Dane is a head breed?

Gauri : I would say that the head is a very important part of the Dane. I feel it is the hallmark of the breed and defines the breed. It is a distinguishing factor as the head of a Dane is unique and unlike the head of any other breed.

CVS: Can you guide us a little about the health and maintenance of this breed? Are Great Danes prone to any type of disease or difficulties?

Gauri : Rearing a Dane well is rather difficult as it is influenced by nutrition, environmental factors and exercise. Dane puppies can very easily go “wrong” in their growth phase and after a certain age the fault can be irreversible. Many people make the mistake of over supplementation and excessive exercise for a Dane puppy. Then imagine a 80kg a cow hocked adult Dane with poor bone structure! Danes are prone to a lot of Bone diseases during their growth phase like, HOD (Hypertrophic Osteodystrophy), OCD (Osteo Chondritis Dissecans) and Panosteitis if reared incorrectly. They can also be prone to bloat (GDV), DCM, Wobblers

CVS: What is the best food that you would advocate for a Great Dane? Presuming that you give your dogs dry dog food, what is the brand of dry dog food that you prefer?

Gauri : I would recommend a Super Premium Quality dry dog food for the simple reason that it would have good quality ingredients and would also be balanced as far as the vitamins and

minerals are concerned. One would also know the protein and fat percentages and those of other nutrients in the food. It is also very convenient to feed and you can control the calorie intake of the dog. A good quality home made diet is excellent but only if one knows to formulate the exact composition, proportions and how to correctly supplement it.

My dogs are fed on MERA dry dog food, imported from Germany.

CVS: Several breeders in India feed their dogs with different kinds of meat / chicken, tripe, etc., and some of them have their own recipe. Do you have any such recipe and if so what may be its composition?

Gauri : Before the introduction of dry dog food to India, we used to feed a home made diet and had our own recipe which mainly consisted of meat, tripe, rice, eggs, small quantity of vegetables, broken wheat and curds. Sometimes cottage cheese – paneer would also be added. Of course, this had to be supplemented with vitamins and minerals.

CVS: Great Dane being a smooth coated dog, I presume would not require a lot of care, attention, nutrition and food supplement for good maintenance of coat. Could you tell us what type of supplements do you give your Great Dane for development of good bones and substance, and proper maintenance of coat?

Gauri : I do think bone is genetic and can only be enhanced a bit by correct

nutrition. I use a supplement that contains a mixture of Omega 3, 6 and 9 in the correct ratio for maintenance of the coat. The source of the Omegas is also important. I have got excellent results with Winner Plus supplements made in Germany.

CVS: Do you believe that extra supplements and medicines are required for a good development of bone and substance or would you say that it is all in the genes?

Gauri : It is mainly in the genes. Supplementation and medicines would enhance what is naturally there.

CVS: At what age do you believe in breeding your bitches and what age should you start using your male on stud?

Gauri : I don't like to breed my bitches before they are 2 ½ years old since Danes have a long growth period and are not fully mature before that to bear a litter. With males, start them at 12 -14 months with one mating, then 2-3 more till they are two and then they can be used at stud more frequently after that. It is important not to use males for mating too frequently before they are fully mature too.

CVS: I am told that you have several dogs in partnership in the US and exhibit your dogs in the US. Could you tell us something about this? Does such partnerships with overseas partners work out favourably considering that you are several thousand miles apart?

Gauri : I have been most fortunate to have had the opportunity to co own

and co breed Danes with one of the most successful and knowledgeable Dane breeders in the US and a very dear friend, Francette Lass, who owns the world famous Lagarada kennels. Fran very generously allowed me to co breed Mora – BISS Am Ch Lagarada's Forever More ROM HOF, one of the most beautiful Dane bitches I have seen. Mora was bred to Ripley – BISS Am Gr Ch Castle Creeks Believe It Or Not v Sheron. This breeding produced 6 puppies, out of which there were 3 American Champions, 1 Canadian Champion and the other two were pointed with a couple of Best Puppy in Shows. Best Puppy Bitch and Reserve Winners Bitch at the GDCA National at Phoenix, Arizona in 2011 was out of this litter. We again co owned a bitch out of this litter called Suri – Am Ch Lagarada Danehills Written in the Wind and bred her to Fran's Hall of Fame dog BISS Am Ch Lagarada's Aspen Gold HOF (frozen semen breeding). Out of this breeding came 4 American Champions - Am GrCh / BIS BISS Ind Ch Lagarada Danehills Starman, BISS Am Gr Ch Lagarada Danehills Star Struck Titan, Am Ch Lagarada Danehills Rockstar and Am Ch Lagarada Danehills Star Quest.

I have had a wonderful experience with my overseas partner and continue to do so. We have recently co bred another litter. I think for any partnership to flourish you have to be like minded and your wavelengths need to match. Needless to say trust and respect are an integral part of any partnership without which no partnership will work even though you may happen to live in the same town.

CVS: I am told that maintaining a dog overseas can be prohibitively expensive and that too Great Dane being a large breed. Your experiences would be appreciated.

Gauri : It is very expensive especially when you are showing the dog. Cost of the puppy, boarding, vet bills, cropping, handler fees, gas bills, motel bills, show win photos, advertisements etc. all add to the expenses.

CVS: It is said that professional handlers in the United States are very influential and do control quite a few shows. Is this true?

Gauri : It is true to an extent and I think that is because they are very good at what

they do and it is known that they will not take on a dog unless they know the dog has the quality to successfully compete in the ring.

CVS: Is it true that once the dog is used at stud it tends to mature faster and that the same is applicable in bitches?

Gauri : That may be true in some cases. However, like I said a young Dane who hasn't yet finished growing should not be used at stud frequently. That would hamper his growth.

CVS: What is the normal size of a Great Dane litter? Do Great Dane have normal litters or is C-section common among Great Dane?

Gauri : I've had one puppy litters and one of my Danes has sired a litter of 17, so it varies but on an average I would say they have medium to large litters. Age of the sire and dam, their nutrition and health levels would also affect litter size. Danes mostly have normal litters. I have never had to do a C section on any of my Dane bitches so far.

CVS: Talking of breeding, do you follow any particular breeding program like line breeding or inbreeding. If so could you tell us something about this?

Gauri : It would depend on the individual animals and what traits I am looking to strengthen, incorporate or eliminate. I have done all three, in breeding, line breeding and outcrossing with favourable results, however I prefer to line breed. Outcrossing does become necessary at times to introduce new blood. Inbreeding could be a double edged sword if not done judiciously and one has to study the bloodlines thoroughly before attempting it. Novice breeders should definitely not attempt it.

CVS: With your experience could you tell us what are the advantages and disadvantages of inbreeding? Do you think our kennel control should introduce any laws against inbreeding?

Gauri : If done intelligently, inbreeding can fix traits to produce excellent dogs who become homozygous for those traits. It can however double up on bad traits as well. Deleterious genes which are not visible in heterozygous individuals are expressed in the inbred offspring. Careful



inbreeding can be planned after thorough genetic testing of the desired individuals to be inbred on.

I do feel that there should be some rules against very close or repeated inbreeding as it can have a disastrous outcome if attempted by novice breeders.

CVS: As a breeder with a lot of experience, what are the possible defects that may entail from inbreeding?

Gauri : Too much inbreeding can lead to reduced fertility in males and females, compromised immune systems, small litter sizes and higher mortality amongst puppies as well as neurological problems.

CVS: How intelligent are Great Dane as compared to other working breeds like the Dobermann, Rottweilers, Mailinos, etc., Can Great Dane be trained for Obedience trials and have you tried your hand in training a Great Dane? Why is it that a Great Dane is seldom used for Police work?

Gauri : I have seen a lot of Danes trained for Obedience and even Agility. However, I have never tried my hand at training a Dane for Obedience. Danes are extremely intelligent and sensitive dogs. Danes being seldom used for Police work would be due to their sheer size. They would be very difficult to manoeuvre and transport, at least in India.

CVS: Can a Great Dane be a watch dog and how trustable are Great Danes with people including children?

Gauri : Danes make excellent watch dogs and can guard your property very well. I can safely say that an intruder would be making a serious mistake if he broke into my house. A well bred and reared Dane can be completely trusted with children. We've had our Danes around my brother's kids when they were babies and the Danes have been extremely gentle and protective of them.

CVS: How do you transport your Great Danes when you travel from your kennel at Pune to other shows, especially in other states? How difficult is it to transport Great Danes and are they good travelers or tend to be troublesome?

Gauri : I prefer to have the Danes travel by road. That way we can stop when required and they can be walked and fed. Only a couple of airlines accept dogs on their flights within India and do not accept the extended crates because of their size. So, the Danes are much more comfortable travelling by car than cramped up in a small crate. Most of my Danes have been very good travellers and do not cause any trouble at all. We also get them used to travelling by car by taking them on shorter trips first.

CVS: Most of your Great Danes I have seen had been cropped. Do you yourself crop the ears as some experienced breeders do and if not who does the cropping for you?

Gauri : I never attempt any surgical procedures myself and entrust the job to trained veterinarians.



CVS: At what age do you have your Great Danes cropped and how difficult is it to get their ears fully erect? Do you crop the ears long or keep them at a reasonable size?

Gauri : Puppies are cropped at around 55 days. Ear taping is an art and I was fortunate enough to learn it from one of the best in the business – Fran. Mahesh is also excellent at taping. We do long crops to match the head size. We've had the ears fully erect on a puppy in 4-5 tapings and a couple of times it has taken us upto a year of constant taping to get the ears up. It all depends on the ear set and thickness of ear cartilage. Thicker the cartilage, more difficult it is for the ears to stand.

CVS: It is normally said that Great Danes with long cropped ears tend to look more attractive. Your views on this?

Gauri : I agree that Danes with long cropped ears definitely look more attractive. Having said that, I also love natural eared Danes with a correct ear set.

CVS: I see quite a few Great Dane puppies with tapes around the ear being

shown at shows. Up to what age are you allowed to tape your Great Dane puppies ears and have them exhibited?

Gauri : Puppies with tape on their ears are not allowed in the ring. The tape should be removed while exhibiting.

CVS: When taping your dog's ears, do you do it yourself or seek the help of others?

Gauri : I do it myself or my friend Mahesh Amale does it.

CVS: Great Danes being a large breed, I am told are prone to rickets. Have you had this problem in your kennel?

Gauri : I have never faced this problem in my kennel.

CVS: During the course of my judging, I have seen a lot of Danes which looked cow-hocked even as they are young. Is it possible to set right this problem?

Gauri : It is possible to set this problem right with treatment involving optimum nutrition and correct exercise, if treated

at an early age. Once the dog gets older it becomes an irreversible and permanent problem.

CVS: Great Danes being a heavy breed, how do you prevent them from going from cow-hocked? Is this problem hereditary or is it due to lack of calcium?

Gauri : Feeding the right kind of balanced food is of paramount importance. There should be no extra supplementation and definitely no extra calcium. The right environmental conditions also play a major part along with age appropriate exercise.

CVS: It is normally said that when you give a good brand of dry dog food, supplements and extra calcium are not required. Do you agree with this and if not what are the extra supplements that you give your Great Dane puppy?

Gauri : I totally agree. When feeding a good, balanced dog food extra supplementation especially extra calcium is a strict no no. Danes puppies undergo a very rapid growth period and anything in excess can cause too rapid growth and skeletal malformation. I only give supplements for joint support, skin health and sometimes Vit C. I also use probiotics.

CVS: I have heard a very experienced Dobermann breeder telling me that he used to feed his puppies with raw beef though feeding raw meat to a dog is not advocated in India as it could lead to several problems. Your comments on this would be appreciated.

Gauri : I know of many breeders abroad who feed a BARF (Biologically Appropriate Raw Food / Bones and Raw Food) diet and their dogs do very well on that. Personally, I would not try it here unless I was certain that the meat is parasite and pathogen free. Unfortunately we do not have stringent checks for that at the moment.

CVS: I am told that breeders overseas only give raw meat to their dogs. Have you heard of this and if so what may be the reason for this?

Gauri : I don't think that is the case. A lot of breeders abroad do feed kibble since it is a balanced diet and convenient to use. Yes, like I mentioned, many do feed raw too but the quality of the meat there is very good and it is safe to feed raw. I do feel

however that someone feeding their dogs a raw diet should have in depth knowledge of canine nutritional requirements and should be able to supplement the diet appropriately otherwise it could lead to disastrous results and I have seen many cases where this has happened especially in giant breed puppies.

CVS: It is said that Great Dane Dogs are prone to joint infections. I have seen Great Danes with huge lumps almost to the size of a tennis ball at their knee's. I am sure you must have also seen this. Should this be surgically removed and if done, will it re occur?

Gauri : The lumps on the elbows (bursitis) or hygromas occur due to infection and inflammation of the bursal sac and that happens due to repeated trauma to that area. The best way to avoid it would be to provide soft bedding for your Dane. I would avoid any kind of invasive surgical removal due to its proximity to the joint. The joint may get infected and then treatment and recovery could be a very long process. We have successfully treated bursitis with our homemade topical solution made with a mix of homeopathic medicines without the need for any steroid injections or invasive treatment.

CVS: Coming to breeding of dogs. At what age do you breed your bitch first and how often and how long can you breed a bitch? Do you agree with the current rule that bitches after 8 years should not be bred? If so why is it that males above 8 years can be bred and till any time?

Gauri : I would not breed a bitch before she is 2 ½ years of age and not after she turns 6. During this period I would probably breed her 3 times at most. I would say no breeding after 6 years of age should be the rule for giant breed bitches. Gestation, whelping and lactation is far more stressful for a bitch than a breeding is for a stud dog. An older stud dog if fit and healthy can be used at stud. The actual whelping process gets more difficult as the bitch ages and could lead to a lot of complications.

CVS: Talking of breeding, do you believe in following the genotype or the phenotype. Which you think is more important and relevant for successful breeding?



Gauri : I believe both, phenotype and genotype, are equally important for successful breeding. First thing that you see in a dog is the phenotype and if those features are what I would like to incorporate in my breeding program then I study the genotype.

CVS: Do you believe in showing your own dogs or do you employ the services of a professional handler to handle your dogs and if so why?

Gauri : I have shown my dogs for many years, from the age of 12, but now employ the services of a professional handler. I have a dedicated professional handler, Prashant Malwade, to handle my dogs and he's been doing so quite successfully.

CVS: A lady handling a Great Dane is not an easy job. Have you had any bad experiences in the process of handling a Great Dane?

Gauri : In spite of their massive size, Danes are the easiest dogs to handle. If you see, most of the Dane handlers abroad are ladies. Danes are very sensitive and gentle dogs and when trained well are quite biddable.

CVS: We have started licensing handlers in our country as being done overseas. What is your opinion on this? Do you think that this would be wise move and would it enforce a certain amount of discipline as envisaged?

Gauri : I think it is important to be current with the activities that are prevalent worldwide in the canine field and incorporate as many as practically possible in our system. Yes, I do feel it's

a very positive step to license handlers and will certainly inculcate a sense of discipline and accountability.

CVS: I am told that Handlers these days demand a lot of money and it is also said that some of them demand to be given suits to be worn when exhibiting. Do you think that the handlers give the owners their money's worth?

Gauri : I think it would depend on the individual handler and owner. The overall quality of handling in India has definitely improved over the last few years. If a handler does his job well, in a professional and courteous manner then it is well worth it. I also believe that handlers should be appropriately dressed while handling so if they are handling a top winning dog and demand suits then I don't think owners should mind.

CVS: When you breed a litter what is the ideal age to pick the puppies and who does the picking? I mean whether you do it yourself or do you consult your friends or others?

Gauri : I watch the puppies closely from the time they are born, through the weaning stage and make my first evaluation at 6 wks. I make my final pick at 8 weeks. I pick them myself and do consult my mentor Fran Lass or take Mahesh's opinion, especially when deciding between two or three equal puppies.

CVS: How confident are you that when you have chosen a good Great Dane puppy at 4 months, he will grow up in the same fashion or are they likely to change for good or bad at 10 months?



Gauri : Fortunately, so far I have been pretty consistent with my selection. What I have picked at 8 weeks is more or less what I have got at 2 years although Dane puppies do have a tendency to go through very ugly growth phases. I think it is extremely important to know the bloodlines you are dealing with and it does help if you have actually seen some of the dogs in the pedigree. Having a good mentor is paramount. Of course, a lot can go wrong in the period between puppyhood and adulthood with incorrect rearing and Danes can change for the worse very quickly.

CVS: What according to your opinion is an ideal Great Dane? Has the breed undergone a change over the period of years and has the change been for good or bad?

Gauri : An ideal Dane is one that is the epitome of the Great Dane standard. The Great Dane is the Apollo of dogs. A Dane that has breed type, balance – both static and dynamic, correct conformation and soundness in mind and body. There should be a combination of strength and elegance with a look of dash and daring. I think the breed has changed for the better on the whole though some areas do need more improvement, like front assemblies. What has decreased however is longevity, in my opinion, and that is very disheartening.

CVS: You cannot deny the fact that there is a substantial amount of difference between the American Great Dane and the European Great Dane. What may be the difference and why is it that the European judges do not prefer the American Danes?

Gauri : There are some beautiful, typical Danes in some European countries

but sadly there are many in other European countries that some people refer to as “hypertype”. The breeders of these exaggerated animals have deviated from the standard to a large degree and are producing mastiff like clumsy dogs that do not resemble the Great Dane as defined in the standard, whether it is the FCI standard or the American standard. One only has to look at the Danes that were bred in Germany till perhaps a few decades back to realize that they were not very different from the “Apollo” that the standards define. Some of the current European Danes look more like Sumo wrestlers than Apollos and that is not the dog the standards describe.

Actually when we were showing Starman – an American import - he was awarded Best in Shows and line ups by many European judges including a Best in Specialty! These are a few photos of European, especially German and French Danes and they look quite similar to American Danes. The unfortunate deviation towards the Mastiff look is a fairly recent phenomenon.

CVS: What has been your all time favourite Great Dane? Has any Great Dane which you considered as the ultimate dog outside our country influenced your breeding programme.?

Gauri : Its so difficult to name one, I can name a few – “Travis” – BISS Ch Lagarada’s Aspen Gold HOF, a beautiful dog and a top producer, Ch Lagarada’s Forever More – Mora, BIS BISS Ch Lobato’s Anything Goes – Emmie and BIS BISS Ch MJM Maitau’s Eye Candy – Eva.

Travis has influenced my breeding to a great extent. I would always rate a dog that produces as good or better than he/

she is higher than a dog that only looks good but hasn’t produced as well.

CVS: How essential is a good climate for the good growth of a Great Dane and is the Pune climate suitable for the breeding of Great Danes?

Gauri : Danes do well in a cool, dry climate. They do not do take heat and humidity well. Most Danes hate rain. The Pune climate is alright for most part of the year. We do have heavy monsoons and two months of heat though.

CVS: In a big litter you could have show quality puppies as well as some pet quality puppies. What you do with the pet quality puppies?

Gauri : I place the pet quality puppies in companion homes where they are loved and cared for for the rest of their lives.

CVS: What do you do with your senior citizens at your kennel? Do you look after them till their very end or try to find good homes and house them, or euthanize them like some people do overseas?

Gauri : My senior citizens live with me till the end. In fact we take extra care of them and make sure they are happy and comfortable. I have also bought back Danes – you could say rescued - from people who did not look after them as promised, so those Danes live a very happy life with us too.

CVS: Do you let your Danes breed naturally or artificially inseminate them? It is said that many people do a progesterone test before attempting to inseminate or mating a bitch. Is this required and do you agree this is necessary?

Gauri : In India, our Danes breed naturally but with monitoring of course. In the US almost all the breeding are done via artificial insemination using chilled or frozen semen. I think it is essential to do several progesterone tests to find out the correct day for mating a bitch and know when she is ready. I have been doing progesterone tests for my bitches for the last 20 years.

CVS: It is said that you have sent your bitches to US to have them bred. This must be quite a herculean task. Could you tell us something about this?

When you send your bitch to be bred abroad, do you choose the male or leave it to them to decide?

Gauri : No, actually I have never sent my bitches abroad to be bred as I feel its too much of a risk and too stressful for the bitch. I have bred in the US, in partnership with Fran Lass and the litters have been born at her place in Colorado. Both of us decide on the stud dog to be used.

CVS: Obviously the bitch when bred abroad would litter overseas. How do you bring back the puppies? Do you bring the entire litter or select a few and bring them down. What age do you think would be the most ideal time to select your puppies and bring them down?

Gauri : We, Fran and I, usually pick one pup and then I bring him/her down. When to bring the puppy to India would depend on whether we want to show the puppy to his / her title in the U.S. or not. In Starman’s case, we kept him in the US where he finished his American Championship and Grand Championship before coming to India. A few of my earlier males were pointed in the US but I brought them to India before they finished their championship there.

CVS: Don’t you think it would be wiser to have the bitch brought down in whelp and whelped in India?

Gauri : I would be anxious about the stress the bitch would go through over such a long journey so I am personally not in favour of doing that. I am aware that many breeders in India have done that very successfully but its just my thought process and something I would not be comfortable doing.

CVS: Up to what age could a Great Dane male be used as a stud?

Gauri : Till he is healthy and able to mate and successfully reproduce.

CVS: It is always said that when you concentrate on breeding quality dogs and being choosy about whom to give your puppies, one tends to financially end up on the debit side . Do you agree with this?

Gauri : Oh I totally agree with this!

CVS: Most of the reputed breeders who are seriously involved in breeding

and exhibiting their dogs have confessed that they have been losing a lot of money continuously. Have you ever made a balance sheet on the working of your kennels and do you think it is pertinent to continue when you keep losing financially on your kennel?

Gauri : I have never made a balance sheet for my kennel. This has just been a sheer passion for me. If I ever attempted to make a balance sheet, I doubt if it would be a very healthy one. Lol! It is certainly not prudent or logical to continue if it is not financially viable but then passion overrules logic. I would be very happy to break even... if that ever happens.

CVS: How many dogs have you imported till date and how many of them have been Great Dane?

Gauri : I have imported 14 dogs till date out of which 8 have been Danes.

CVS: What is the size of your family and are your parents supportive and also equally interested in dogs. You being a lady have they ever objected to you breeding and handling Danes?

Gauri : My family consists of my father, mother, brother and sister. My siblings are married with two kids each. My mother shares my love for dogs. My brother and sister are also dog lovers as are their children. My family is very supportive of my passion for dogs and have always encouraged me to follow my passion and wholeheartedly supported my endeavours.

CVS: Do you have any other hobbies apart from dogs? Are you involved in any other sport?

Gauri : I love reading and listening to music. I’ve played a lot of sport in my school and college days including competitive tennis, basketball, table tennis and athletics.

CVS: Which part of Pune do you



live in and what is the extent of your kennel accommodation including your Kennels?

Gauri : My kennels and house are on 1½ acres of land within city limits. Each dog has an individual 8ft x 8ft kennel and an 8ft x 15 ft run. We have coolers and A/Cs for the summer months and ensure that there is an ambient temperature throughout the year. We also have a residence in Aundh, Pune.

CVS: What would you consider good sportsmanship? Do you think the present day exhibitors are sportive enough to take a win and a loss in the same manner?

Gauri : Good sportsmanship would be to win with grace and lose with dignity. It would also be to appreciate a good dog even if it is owned by someone else and acknowledge that your dog got beaten by a better specimen on a particular day. After a show, at the end of the day you take the same dog home. Of late one gets to see a lot of unsportsmanlike behavior in and outside the ring. The quote “Sports do not build character, they reveal it” seems to be very apt for the dog world. Lol

CVS: How sporting are you and do you take your losses with a smile or react when your dog is put down?

Gauri : I believe in following ring





etiquette and have never reacted adversely to an unfavourable decision. It is only human nature to feel disappointed if your dog loses to an inferior specimen but it is the judge's decision on that day and should be respected and taken in a sporting manner.

CVS: You are aware that the KCI now has a Sub-Committee to look after the special projects and thereby have signed an MOU with the Tamil Nadu Veterinary University for the purpose of developing and introducing DNA testing facilities, Artificial Insemination and Hip & Elbow scoring. How important would this be to the Indian Dog World?

Gauri : Yes and I thank the KCI Committee for including me in the Sub Committee. I think this would be of paramount importance to the Indian dog world especially now, post the government's decision to impose a ban on the import of dogs. This would pave the way to promoting better breeding practices and breeding healthier dogs which is the need of the hour. Introduction of AI would provide breeders with an access to a wider gene pool and would positively enhance breeding programs.

CVS: Now that you have become an All Breeds Judge, do you find the exhibitors sportive enough to take a defeat in the right spirit?

Gauri : I am happy to say I found most of the exhibitors very sporting and accepting of the judge's decision. Of course, there are always exceptions to the rule and those are the people who are obsessed with winning at any cost.

CVS: It is also said that certain exhibitors adopt unfair means to achieve success at any cost. Is this a healthy situation?

Gauri : Far from healthy Sir, I would say this is a toxic situation and one that needs to be dealt with swiftly and stringently.

CVS: As a breeder cum exhibitor, you hear of stories when exhibitors tend to take a defeat too seriously and misbehave. What is your opinion on this and what do you think should be done to such people? Should the KCI be more stricter in this regard?

Gauri : . "Love the dog first and the sport second". I don't recollect who said that but I read it somewhere and found it to be very apt.

If people did view this as a sport these situations would not arise. Cut throat competition and the obsession to win by any means I guess, has led to such situations. Competition is great but it has to be healthy. However, having said that, any kind of misbehavior is not acceptable and should not be condoned. Yes, I do feel the KCI should be stricter in this regard.

CVS: Has there been any unforgettable incident that you would like to highlight in the process of your breeding and exhibiting?

Gauri : There have been a few, so difficult to pin point just one. Winning Best in Shows, Danes of the Year with my home bred Danes. Winning in the US, especially at the GDCA National with the Danes co bred by me. However I think the icing on the cake was Starman going Reserve Dog of the Year. That was a journey I will never forget.

CVS: It is said that an American bred Great Dane are well coated and strong in movement though he may be quite exaggerated in many ways. How acceptable are such dogs to you?

Gauri : Any kind of exaggeration is not desired. I do feel though that there are different bloodline styles within the general style prevalent in a country or continent. I would always prefer an overall balanced dog.

CVS: Dogs imported from overseas have lot of bone and substance as compared to dogs bred and brought up in India. What may be the reason? Do you think climate plays a role?

Gauri : I think bone is genetic. Having said that, I feel the climate, environmental conditions, nutrition, exercise all play a role in the overall growth and appearance.

CVS: How many overseas shows have you visited till date and which country do you think has the best Great Danes. Which is the show that you have enjoyed most and do you think is very popular?

Gauri : I have been visiting the Great Dane Club of America's National shows almost every year since 2006. That is the show I enjoy the most as its thrilling for me to see hundreds of Danes of different ages under one roof. . It is very popular with the Dane fraternity in the U.S. and also watched with great interest by Dane fanciers worldwide. I also enjoy connecting with friends and fellow Dane breeders there.

I do believe that the US has the best Danes in the world at the moment. I've also seen quite a few all breed shows in the US., World dog Show and the Impact show in Thailand.

CVS: Is there a possibility of you judging a Great Dane specialty in the US in the near future?

Gauri : I was voted in the list of top ten judges to judge the 2021 GDCA National show in Myrtle Beach, USA and I am very thankful to those who voted. It would indeed be a huge honour to judge the National someday. I have been invited to judge Danes in Australia in July this year.

CVS: What do the overseas breeders think about Danes in India? Would they be fussy about sending dogs to India and would they need references should a lay man approach them for a puppy?

Gauri : Well the overseas breeders that I have talked with, who have judged in India or have watched the Danes being shown in India, seem to commonly comment about the lack of depth in the classes and also the almost total lack of representation of the other colours apart from fawn and brindle in our rings.

Breeders overseas are very selective about sending dogs to India. They are very particular about the homes where they place their puppies even in the U.S so they definitely and very rightly want references when sending puppies to India.

CVS: What would you consider an ideal exercise for a Great Dane? Have you ever used a treadmill to exercise the Danes as practised by several overseas breeders?

Gauri : It would depend on the age of the puppy/dog. Dane puppies' joints are not as strong as they look and any kind of excessive exercise could be very

damaging. Short walks and free runs are adequate exercise for a growing Dane puppy. I only start really working them out when they are 2 years plus. Till then they are still growing and have to be carefully nurtured. No, I have never used a treadmill as I fortunately have adequate space where they can run free and exercise themselves.

CVS: Have you ever produced defective puppies in your breeding and if so have you ever attempted to breed the same bitch once again? It is commonly said that non-compatibility of genes could be responsible for producing defective puppies. Would you agree with this?

Gauri : Fortunately I've had a very high percentage of healthy puppies in my litters but sometimes puppies can be born that do not thrive and that could be due to a variety of factors and could happen in any breed. A bad bite can crop up sometime. Before ruling any bitch out of my breeding program I would breed her to a different dog and see the result as defects are usually caused by a combination of recessive genes and it would therefore be unfair to blame the bitch alone.

Congenital defects in puppies are caused by a combination of recessive genes or environmental circumstances like exposure to specific infections, chemicals or drugs in pregnancy.

CVS: Do you believe in importing dogs to improve the gene pool and if so, do your imports come from US or other countries?

Gauri : Yes absolutely, the gene pool and available choices in India as far as Danes are concerned are quite restricted. I do believe in introducing new blood through imports to introduce certain characteristics through particular bloodlines. Barring one bitch who was from Australia, all my imports have been from the U.S.A.

CVS: Germany being the origin of Great Danes, what is your impression of the dogs in Germany and other parts of Europe? Why has the popularity of Danes gone down in Germany? I am asking this question because we seldom hear of Danes being imported from Germany?

Gauri : There are some beautiful

danes in some European countries but sadly there are many that some people refer to as "hypertype". The breeders of these exaggerated animals have deviated from the standard to a large degree and are producing mastiff like clumsy dogs that do not resemble the Great Dane as defined in the standard. Im not sure if the popularity of the breed has gone down in Germany or if the Mastiff resembling dogs that are being produced there don't appeal to breeders who want to follow the standard and therefore simply won't import the "hypertypes" or breed to them.

CVS: Have you ever tried using European dogs with your American bred dogs and if so what has been the results?

Gauri : No, I have never tried using European dogs with my American Danes.

CVS: I have seen you exhibiting your dogs. How much do you enjoying exhibiting your own dogs and have you ever felt any disadvantage when showing against a professional handler?

Gauri : I used to enjoy handling my own dogs very much but have stopped since the last few years. The disadvantage when showing against a professional is that an owner being more attached to the dog has his/ her emotions involved and that excitement and nervousness can communicate to the dog. It takes a lot more for the owner handler to overcome these emotions and show their dog well.

Usually professionals tend to be less emotionally invested in the dog and can therefore concentrate on the task of showing the dog and getting the best out of her.

CVS: Of late there has been a spurt of foreign handlers employed to show dogs in our country. What is your opinion on this? Have you hired any foreign handler to handle your dogs?

Gauri : I welcome the advent of foreign handlers in our rings. All of them are professional handlers and I think our own handlers have had to improve a great deal in order to compete with them. We did have a few handlers who were very good but they were few. Now, the overall quality of handling has definitely gone up in India. We see our handlers dressing more professionally too. I think foreign

handlers have raised the bar and any kind of positive competition is welcome. I have never employed the services of any foreign handler to show my dogs in India. In the U.S. of course, my dogs have been shown by American professional handlers.

CVS: It is said by most dog lovers that these foreign handlers have taught our handlers not only as to how to dress up, but also how best to present the dogs that they are handling. Do you agree with this?

Gauri : Yes I agree and in order to compete successfully with the foreign handlers, our handlers have had to raise their game by a few notches which is always good for the sport.

What is the success of your breeding?



Has it been merely hard work or a scientific approach or just mere luck? Which you would consider as the best Dane you have bred till date?

Gauri : It has been all three plus the blessings of the Almighty, the love and support of my friends and well wishers and the help and advice of my mentor Fran Lass.

Best Dane bred by me? Its very difficult for me to name just one. Two bitches called Ch Danehills Mystify Me and BIS BISS Ch Danehills Rave Review come to mind.

Mystify Me was not shown much but she was extremely well put together. She had just one litter and produced extremely well with 4 champions in the litter. Rave was a showman and commanded attention in the ring, winning multiple Best in Shows and the lone Specialty she was entered in. Amongst the best I have co bred, I

would consider Am Gr Ch / BIS BISS Ch Lagarada Danehills Star Man, BISS Am Gr Ch Lagarada Danehills Star Struck Titan, Am Ch Lagarada Danehills Wind Ryder, Am Ch Lagarada Danehills Winds of Change and Am Ch Lagarada Danehills Written in the Wind. BIS Ch Danehills Zen Master was a showman too. I'm very excited about a current breeding that Fran and I have done in India. I have retained 3 puppies out of that breeding and they seem to have some potential.

CVS: The terminology brood bitch is often used by breeders. What is the actual meaning of the term brood bitch? Are there any advantages that you derive from breeding from a brood bitch?

Gauri : In common terminology a brood bitch is a bitch used for breeding. As a breeder I would say a brood bitch is one that has good breed type and consistently produces as good as or better than herself (of course, the sire's contribution can't be ignored) and is an asset to a breeding program. She should also be a good helper and dam.

CVS: The FCI Standard insists on full dentition. How much importance do you give to full dentition while judging Great Danes? It is said that in US and UK full dentition is not a must. Can you tell us something about this?

Gauri : The AKC standard also prefers full dentition and I like to follow the standard but a missing tooth is not a deal breaker in the US if the dog is overall of a high quality. I would never put down a superior dog to an inferior dog just because he had a tooth missing.

CVS: Have you at any time regretted having kept Great Danes? What would be your advice to novice exhibitors and breeders who are interested in promoting Great Danes?

Gauri : I have never regretted keeping Danes. To the novice breeders and exhibitors I would say please do your homework if you want to be serious, ethical breeders of any breed. There are no shortcuts to success, one has to pay their dues. Find a good mentor who would be willing to guide you and stay with them. Follow the standard and not fashion. Always remember that the Danes you see today are the result of endless hours of blood, sweat and toil put in by breeders before you so do your best to preserve the breed as it took the breeders before us years of hardwork to bring it to the level it is today.

Sadly, I also see a lot of young aspiring breeders become self proclaimed overnight experts after breeding just one or two litters. My humble advice to them would be to watch and learn from accomplished breeders who are willing to mentor and guide you. Rome was not built in a day. Most importantly "Love the dog first and the sport second".

CVS: What you think of puppy mills in India? Do you think our Kennel control should exercise some amount of control over the puppy mills and if so how do we implement this?

Gauri : I think puppy mills are inhuman and should be strictly clamped down upon. We should do our best to stop these puppy mills. This menace could be brought under control by implementing the Approved Breeders' Scheme to encourage good breeding practices and conducting random checks on breeders.

CVS: How do you visualize the sport in the next 10 years? Do you think the Kennel Club of India needs to step up in formulating more stringent rules to make the dog game cleaner and more just?

Gauri : I see the dog game becoming very professional and competitive in the next decade. Yes, I do think the KCI needs to step up in formulating more stringent rules to make the game cleaner and more enjoyable.

CVS: What has been your ambition and have you achieved it? Most successful breeders have a mentor and try to emulate them. Do you have any such person and if so could you tell us something about him?

Gauri : I have achieved a few of my goals but still have a long way to go. My mentor is Francette Lass, Lagarada Great Danes. She has played a major role in my life as a friend and breeder and continues to inspire me.

CVS: What has been your most happiest moment in the dog world. Do you believe in superstition and if so are you superstitious of anything?

Gauri : There have been many happy moments. The first time I handled a dog bred by me to a BIS win, the first time a dog co bred by me became an American Champion, winning Best Puppy Bitch with a bitch co bred by me at the GDCA National, getting my judging license for Great Danes and all breeds, Starman winning Res Dog of the Year.

I am not superstitious by nature or as far as I am concerned but am very superstitious as far as my dogs are concerned, like wearing the same clothes that were worn when I won at a show, using the same show lead etc.

CVS: What are your strong points and weaknesses and how have you attempted to overcome your weaknesses? What is the secret of your success in the breed?

Gauri : As a breeder my strong points are that I try to keep learning all the time and can critically evaluate my own dogs .I do believe everybody you meet can teach you something. I am very emotionally attached to my dogs and that can sometimes be my weak point. I also used to trust easily and learnt a few hard lessons in the bargain. Hopefully I'm a bit wiser now. Lol

The secret of my success in the breed is having a great mentor, a very supportive family and friends and my passion and determination to keep learning more. Quality without compromise is the motto that inspires me.

CVS: What is the advice that you would like to give the Great Dane breeders in India?



Gauri : To my contemporary Dane breeders I would like to offer my thanks for their interest in the breed, for keeping the sport alive and for their endeavour to improve the breed in India.

To the novice breeders I would say don't go for short term gains. That never works. Learn the standard and to interpret it correctly. Don't hesitate to seek advice from the right people. Don't breed to a dog just because he is winning but do your research and breed accordingly. Please strive to preserve the future of this beautiful breed in India. Love your Danes, they love you unconditionally!

CVS: What is your opinion of the Indian Kennel Gazette as compared to the other overseas magazines that you have seen. The IKG has been recently revamped to give it a better look and appearance and made more meaningful and educative. Please tell me if there is further scope for better presentation of

the Indian Kennel Gazette.

Gauri : Please accept my compliments on the new look IKG, Sir. Kudos to you for all your efforts in making this such a wonderful and very informative magazine at par with international magazines. The IKG carries some great articles every month that the experienced breeder as well as the novice would find very useful. Every dog owner in India should make it a point to subscribe to the IKG.

CVS: Thank you Gauri, for sparing your valuable time to give us this lovely interview. On behalf of the Kennel Club of India and its Committee and the Editorial Board of the Indian Kennel Gazette and the most important the reading fraternity and dog lovers, I wish you all the very best in all your future endeavours.

Gauri : You are most welcome Sir! Like I said at the beginning, it is an honour and a pleasure to be doing this interview. I thank you and the KCI for this opportunity.