

THE LEGENDARY BOOMHAUER

By Russ Swigart

My journey with this dog started in South Bend, Indiana. We attended this show to pick up our daughter, Savannah, who had been showing dogs for a friend over the last month. Several bloodhound friends also attended the show and we took our bloodhound Valkyrie for Savannah to show while we were there.

Our breeder, Susanna Anderson, also brought bloodhounds including this dog called Boomer. She had asked us to take him for a while due to some bad luck with his prior homes in the first 14 months of his life. We would be his fourth home since leaving as a puppy. It was nothing to do with him, just bad luck with medical issues of his prior owners. That day I met the dog I would later call the Legendary Boomhauer.

We had known he was coming but we had a full show scheduled planned for that summer and in fact Julie had went ahead and entered him in three weeks of back to back weekend shows in Arkansas and Kansas two weeks after we got home. It was a trial by fire if he would be a show dog or not.

He rode well for the 12 hour ride home from South Bend and seemed to be a quiet guy who just wanted to be left alone. But I'm not that kind of dog owner so I started hand feeding him and he took to me like a lifeline. We became the best of friends. He started eating and started looking good.

The first show for Boomer was in Little Rock, Arkansas. He trotted into that ring with his head and tail held high acting like he was God's gift to the bloodhound world and he had been showing since he was six months old!

Boomer became Boomhauer because I did not want him to hear a name that had brought him pain for the first year of his life and he took to it. He grew into the bloodhound standard for the breed and developed a head and face that brought tears to the eyes of the older more established breeders. He was a slow maturing dog and didn't thicken up until around five years old, which slowed his show career.

Like any doting dad he was perfect in my eyes, but I also knew he wasn't perfect in some people's eyes. I'm not a complete fool. I knew he was not going to be a National Winner, but everytime we walked up to that show ring gate he always rubbed his head on my leg and would look me deep in the eyes and I knew he was ready to show.



When entering the ring Boomhauer always turned his 'show charisma' on. He moved like he was on rails and those beautiful feet received lots of attention from judges, who really know hounds. His head was always up and his tail was held at the perfect curve over his back.

We showed for several years and we loved every minute of it until early in his sixth year of age. Now don't get me wrong he still loved going to the shows, but it was more about hanging out with us in the RV. I then knew it was time to hang up the show lead and let him start mentoring the young pups we have at home.

He ended his primary show career with five knots in his show lead from Group wins, the best was a Group Two over a Hound Group with twenty-two entries. He also had seven knots from Owner Handler Groups, two of which were Group One wins. To say I'm proud of this guy would be the world's biggest understatement.

We did not show him after June of 2022 when he won his last Owner handler Group One at the Hound Specialty Show at Purina Farms. He did not win Best In Show, but he was my Best In Kennel again. He settled into working with the puppies like a great Uncle and has really loved being King of the Kennel.

When he turned seven I had a light bulb go off. Maybe I could get off from school and take him to the National for one last turn around the ring as a beloved Veteran. I made an appointment with my Principal when Julie was at the 2022 National and asked if I could go next year to show my buddy one last time. I almost cried when she said, I demand you go, you have earned it, go and make us proud.

So for the length of a year I have been waiting to turn The Legendary Boomhauer around the ring and have that connection just once more. But life sometimes deals you twists and turns that render things different from the dreams you hold so tightly.

Three weeks from the 2023 Nationals and just one day after filling out the paperwork for a week long sub at school I woke up Saturday morning and couldn't walk.

One trip to the emergency room and a visit to a doctor for pain and I am admitted to the hospital for



two days. By the National entry deadline date I was flat on my back praying I would get all the feeling back in my right leg.

That evening I was told I would be seeing a spinal surgeon on Monday knowing the Nationals were off for me. My pain was managed with massive amounts of IV medications and epidurals and I was sent home to worry about surgery.

Boomhauer heard my voice and went bonkers when I arrived back home after two days. Julie put me in bed and Boomhauer came bounding up the stairs to our bedroom. He knew I was bad, so he gently got in bed and nuzzled my forehead and my ear for the longest time. Boomhauer then laid down beside me and I knew it was okay if he missed the National this year. As for me, I will always remember the National I just wanted to walk with my Champion.

