

Rottweiler Carting History

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Introduction

Centuries ago, the Rottweiler evolved as a working dog. Historians tell us they likely descended from one of the breeds indigenous to ancient Rome and were utilized primarily as drovers. They were bred to accompany the Roman Army, herding the cattle required to feed them on their European conquests.

The dog we now know as the Rottweiler was named for town of Rottweil, Germany, a former Roman settlement characterized by red tiled roofs. Favored for their strength and structure, Rottweilers in the Middle Ages were put to work as “butchers’ dogs”, not only herding the cattle to slaughter, but also pulling carts laden with butchered slabs of meat to market. The massive heads, along with their steady, loyal, and fearless dispositions made them convenient forerunners of the armored car, carrying the butchers’ proceeds in a purse around their necks.

Like their European ancestors, today’s Rottweiler loves to cart. They pulled carts centuries before the AKC categorized them as working dogs for conformation purposes. Long before they pranced around the ring, stood for exam, heeled on lead, jumped fences, fetched dumbbells, ran weave poles or discriminated articles by scent, Rottweilers thrived on demanding physical work. It is part of their heritage. It is in their DNA.

Medallion Rottweiler Club was one of the first Rottweiler Clubs in the nation to offer the opportunity to compete in carting. Far ahead of their time, Wayne Budwick and the Medallion Rottweiler Club Draft Dog Committee designed the Specialty Cart and Wagon Exercises and Draft Tests in the mid 1980s¹.

Since 2000, the American Rottweiler Club, under the aegis of the American Kennel Club, has been offering annual carting trials as part of the National Specialty Show on three levels: Carting Started – on leash; Carting Intermediate – off leash; and Carting Excellent – driving the cart. There are two divisions at each level: individual and team (brace) competition.

Rottweilers can be seen happily carting in many different settings, such as parades, special events, or giving rides to children in the neighborhood. Passersby have done double-takes when they see Rottweilers pulling lawn mowers or loads of firewood. Carting Rottweilers are wonderful ambassadors for the breed and do much to overcome unfair negative publicity.

Unfortunately, Carting was not offered as a competitive event at MRC for several decades, but we are pleased and proud to announce that Carting will be offered as a competitive event at the 2015 Medallion Rottweiler Club Specialty on October 7, 2015.

¹ Joan R Klem and Susan C Rademacher, *The Rottweiler Experience: From the Golden Age to Predictions for the 21st Century*, 1996 (New York: Howell Book House), 122.