

Lulu, A Hollywood Tradition

Last week I had a unique opportunity to chat with Coco d'Este and her dog Lulu. Coco is a multi-hyphenate. A noted actress, writer and acting coach, she is responsible via her efforts as personal manager and publicist, for the resurrected career of actor David Carradine.

For over 35 years, Coco has made a successful life for herself venturing in practically every facet of the entertainment industry in front of and behind the camera designing, producing, writing, acting, makeup, teaching, personal manager, mentor and then some.

I met Coco at an autograph signing show and was so impressed about her dog Lulu and how much she reminded me of Lassie, that I had to get an interview.

Q When you first adopted Lulu, was it your sole intention to train her to be in films or in front of the camera?

A Actually, I wanted my own dog. David had a mountain dog named Thunder. In the beginning, I didn't know where to get a Collie, so I made a few calls. I was able to contact Bob Weatherwax. Bob and his father trained Lassies for over 50 years and had a litter of Collie puppies up for adoption. When I first saw Lulu, I fell in love with her right away.

When working with a dog like Lulu, whose ancestors go back 9 generations to Lassie, do you feel it was easier to teach her tricks because of the long line of show dogs in the film industry?

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The way Bob and his dad breed the Collies genetically, they're physically a more beautiful dog and for the intelli-

gence, I definitely think I have an edge because of the way they were trained and bred. Remember, in the breeding it applies to the markings like white, ruff and blaze, as well.

Q From the time Lulu was a puppy, how long did you have to work with her before you felt she was comfortable in front of a camera?

A Actually, from the time that she was a puppy, I had taken her with me anywhere and everywhere I could so she was already used to people, noises, animals and all types of circumstances.

When I went on set with David or we did interviews, she came along, so it just kind of went with the territory. It wasn't like I made the decision. It was just gradual as she got accustomed to the situations with people and all of a sudden the focus was on her.

Q Bob Weatherwax and his Father have been training Lassie offspring for over 50 years. Did he ever help you or advise you when you first started training Lulu?

A Not when I first started training her. It was a couple of years afterward. Lulu and I made a visit to see her Dad and brother, and I showed Bob all the tricks that I had taught Lulu and he was impressed especially with her barking to hand singles. Bob said that was a really difficult one to teach a dog and he was really impressed and gave me a major compliment.

Q In Lulu's bio it states that she is a Delta Society Certified Therapy Dog, which gives her entrance to hospitals, nursing homes and other places where a healing presence and friendly face is needed and welcomed. Would you explain this to our readers?

A First she got her A.K.C., "Good Citizen Certificate." They have to go through a test for obedience and attention span. I mean they put the dog through a series of tests with and without the owners or trainers.

She's got that, but I'm about to get Lulu tested to become a "Therapy Dog" and that's so I can take her into nursing homes, senior citizens and children's hospitals. It's been proven scientifically to help healing the patients. The reaction they get from all ages is fantastic. Their eyes light up and you can see the joy in their faces the minute a dog enters the room.

To get certified there is a lot of paper work and even a test before the dog can go out to these different facilities. There are also a lot of organizations like Delta Society, Love on a Leash, among others, that certifies dogs to do this. Lulu is very sensitive to people and again I take that as part of the breeding from Bob Weatherwax.

Q Was Lulu a contestant in the "First Dog Beauty Pageant?"

A She was "Miss Arizona" in the first Doggie Beauty Pageant. They didn't have a Collie for the contest and I met this fellow who had something to do with the dog show and he was so impressed with Lulu and asked if I would like to enter her as "Miss Arizona" and I said, "Well, sure."

It was a fabulous experience. There were 50 some odd dogs with their trainers, an assortment of other people and actually quite a crowd to watch the show.

They had rehearsals and everything was choreographed with the same person who did *Miss Congeniality*. They did have one problem: the surface on the stage was slippery and some of the dogs had trouble walking on it. Lulu did great and it was a very fun show.

Q I think when people see animals on TV or in Film, they just take it for granted when they see how natural the animal looks and how many tricks they do. How much work went into teaching Lulu hand-command and spelling trained tricks?

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A The silence hand command and spelling caught on really fast. I taught her a trick within 20 minutes. She's got over 20 silence commands and she can recognize different toys and retrieve them on command. It all broils down to "Repetition, Patience and Reward." If you make it like a game, they will more than want to please the owner and have fun at the same time, but if it's a negative experience, you're fighting an up-hill battle.



Q Do you have to rehearse different scenes with Lulu before the actually shoot or is she pretty good about nailing the scene on the first take?

A It's, always good to rehearse, especially if you have other people and kids involved and just to know what to expect timing wise and getting used to the set. Another reason to rehearse is to cover or anticipate unexpected things that might come up.

Q I understand that Lulu has an Astrologer. Could you fill us in?

A Weiss Kelly has been my Astrologer for at least 25 years and she told me about things that have been very accurate. So when I got Lulu, she ran her charts and I've been amazed, to say the least.

Especially this year, she said, "this is the year Lulu is going to get out in the limelight." In January I booked the Ralph Lauren modeling shoot.

She also said there would be a lot of surprises for Lulu. She actually said this in the last month. Well, Lulu got hit by a car and stung on the nose by a wasp, but not to worry. Thank goodness she's ok!

All these unexpected surprises started popping up and her career has really taken off.

Weiss Kelly is very accurate! Just send her an email weissastro@aol.com and see for yourself.

Q Coco, I understand that you design your own jewelry line. Can you tell our readers where it's available?

A My Flying Goddess Jewelry had its debut in Studio City at the elite LTH STUDIO, 12182 1/2 Ventura Blvd - (818) 985-1278, November 19th. It's the same design as featured in my interview for the E! Entertainment Channel Special, E! Hollywood Wives Tales.

My Flying Goddess Jewelry line is also featured at "The Psychic Eye" in Sherman Oaks.

I hope your readers will drop by the store and check out the very select jewelry. They're unique and beautiful. Perfect gifts for the holidays!

The Flying Goddess is now made in solid sterling silver w/18k gold and genuine diamond and pink sapphire.

Here is a list of celebrities that have Coco's jewelry:

- Fran Drescher
- Dr. Maya Angelou
- Edie (Mrs. Robert) Carradine
- Jennifer (Mrs. James) Belushi
- Jillie Mack (Mrs. Tom Selleck)
- Jan (Mrs. Mickey) Rooney
- Jennifer (Mrs. Jerome) Gold
- Rachelle Carson (Mrs. Ed Begley)
- Malgosia (Mrs. Stacy) Keach

Q I've also read your bio and realize that you remain very busy in all facets of the entertainment business from acting, directing and producing. Are there any projects that you want to mention before we close?

A I'm working on producing a couple of projects and one is a TV series and I've been concentrating my time on that. I'm still doing the acting and something's coming up, but I can't mention anything at the present time or at least not until it's completed.

I've also been writing a couple of books and I have a publisher interested in one of them and an agent from New York interested in the other.

I will be making an appearance on the "Q" Television Network. They have a daytime morning show called the "Brunch" and they asked me to come on with Lulu and show my jewelry and talk about my career, so that should be a fun show to do. That's coming up live December 9th.

Q You were married to David Carradine and managed his career. Are you still doing any type of management work?

A I managed David's career for the six years we were together. I was the one who introduced him to Tarrantino and got the pathway cleared for Kill Bill to happen. (That's why they did an interview of me on E! Entertainment Channel Special, E! Hollywood Wives Tales).

I have taken on another client, a young actress out from New York, Candice Cooper. I will continue to act, but wanted to mentor a new talent. I wish I had a me when I was her age...or a me to help me while I was managing David! A good manager has to think of the client's future, not just making a buck. It requires knowledge in marketing, PR, publicity, many areas of the entertainment business to help a client's career grow.

Q Now if one of our readers wants to contact you to arrange for you and Lulu to come out to an event, host a banquet or a fund raiser, what is the best way to contact you and Lulu?

A They can reach me through my email address. publicitypower@aol.com.

Coco, I want to thank you for giving me this very interesting interview about Lulu and what you've been up to these days. It must be quite rewarding having a pet like Lulu. She is the daughter of Lassie XIII and sister of Lassie IX, and direct relative of an American icon, Lassie.

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