

# Sweden Road Trial

I found myself in an unfamiliar country that I could not understand the language. What was I doing here? Oh yes it was time to judge and help Sweden start their first Road Trial. The people of Sweden



welcomed us as if we had visited there for years. We travelled to the northern part of Sweden into the countryside. It was a cool but clear autumn morning. We had a beautiful background of orange and yellow leaves. The early morning brought with it excitement and butterflies of uncertainty. It was The Dalmatian Club of Sweden's first Road Trial. None of the competitors had seen a road trial before. They only had rules and regulations and some of them had attended a seminar last year to discuss their interpretations of the rules.

We decided to give a demonstration in the arena the evening before. This helped to elevate any questions and possible misunderstandings. With a language barrier to deal with I had to remind myself that I needed to take my time. With the help of my husband, Bruce and both Alison & Tim Burgess from England, we started with the simple hock. It amazed me of how much they understood and how well they had arrived at the concept of the American Road Trial. With both Alison and I offering support, they were ready. Alison, Tim and Bruce served as ring stewards, distraction dog handler, and judge steward. Everyone was a teacher and helping someone to understand that role. Susanne Thell served as our constant interpreter and guide to her country. She was very proud of her country and it was important to everyone that we left with a better understanding of both the people and country.

Sweden had 5 competitors and six dogs completing the RD. There was one completing the Coaching Certificate. This was an excellent start for Sweden and I was impressed with the hard work that everyone had put into this event. The excitement will carry them on to next year. There were several future competitors that watched from Norway and Sweden. They are all eager to try this exciting sport for next year. We were very fortunate to have great rental horse, wonderful trails and unseasonably pleasant weather. You could not have asked for a better location.