

FERRETS: THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

Airing:
Wednesday, July 18, 2007 8:00-9:00
p.m. ET

Acclaimed Documentary Filmmaker Mark Lewis ("The Natural History of the Chicken") Offers a FERRETS: THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE Glimpse Into the World of the Quirkiest Show Animal Around

FERRETS: THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE is an endearing and amusing celebration of America's most playful, mischievous pets - not to mention their distinctive owners. At the annual Ferret Buckeye Bash in Columbus, Ohio - the largest and most popular ferret show in the country - hundreds of top breeders, seasoned experts and ferret enthusiasts pamper and parade their pets in a quest for prizes and prestige. Mark Lewis' FERRETS airs Wednesday, July 18, 2007, 8:00-9:00 p.m. ET on PBS.



FERRETS offers a quirky contrast to the common animal show. These curious creatures lack the regal air of show cats or the respectable nature of pedigreed dogs, yet they are trained, pampered and primed in the serious hope of taking the top prize in the biggest ferret show in the country. "I call it 'trophy high' when I win," says owner and judge Kerry Fabrizio. "So, you're just flying high. I mean, there's nothing that can touch it as far as I'm concerned. It's addictive."

FERRETS introduces each of the contenders as they prepare their prized ferrets for the upcoming competition and uncovers the delightfully eccentric world of these unusual pets. Described as "fun on four legs" by their human companions, these ferrets try to steal the show with their playful antics. Yet their owners are not to be outdone. "If I went to my psychiatrist and said, 'Yes, I understand what my ferrets are saying,' I'd be on little funny-colored pills," admits ferret fancier Barb Carlson, "but you do understand."

At the Buckeye Bash, tension is high as judges cast critical eyes over the bone structure, muscle mass and temperament of each furry contender. The competition challenges the champions and the newcomers, the hobs (guys) and the jills (gals), the Albinos and the Cinnamon Points, all in pursuit of trophies and ribbons for their passionate owners. The tiny competitors, however, don't get what all the fuss is about: they're too busy creating mayhem when no one's watching.

THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE, a series of four one-hour films, celebrates the ambition, determination and passion of those who pursue distinction in slightly unconventional fields. Each film showcases the training and preparation required to be competitive and reveals the surprising, and sometimes heartbreaking, results of that dedication. The featured characters, diverse in background, are endearing and sympathetic, people consumed by their individual quests for excellence. Other programs in the series include SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING (7/11), HAIRWORLD (7/25) and LORDS OF THE GOURD (fall 2007).

Filmmaker Mark Lewis' THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE CHICKEN was screened in competition at Sundance and was named by The New York Times one of the top 10 television programs for 2001. Lewis won two Emmys for the film: Outstanding Science Program and Outstanding Direction.

Underwriters: Public Television Viewers and PBS. Producer: Radio Pictures production in association with PBS. Producer/director: Mark Lewis. Format: CC Stereo Letterbox/HD where available.