

A Tribute to Stanley

AMY AND CHARLES W. NEWHALL III
OWINGS MILLS, MARYLAND

In 2003 Amy and Chuck Newhall commissioned Christine Merrill to do a group portrait of their pets: the German Shepherds Winnie and Morgan, the Siamese cat Ramses, and Stanley, their Pug. Winnie and Morgan had come from Chuck's previous life, and Ramses from Amy's, but they had together brought Stanley into their home. It was a decision that had changed their lives. "I think what drew me to the Pug was that it was the same coloration as the Siamese cat. And we had a friend in Bermuda who had a Pug, and I just fell in love with the breed. I just think their little curly tail and the way they cock their

A view of the gardens at Brightside



A jade Pug by Fabergé rests on a diamond encrusted rock crystal pillow



head to the side is so cute, like they're really trying to understand what you are saying. They are friendly with everybody, good with children, and they're very friendly with each other. They just want to be picked up and loved," Amy explains. And Amy did her research. She had known about the prominent Pug breeder, Margery Shriver of Sheffield Pugs and when a friend had one of her Pugs bred to one of Mrs. Shriver's dogs, she was able to get Stanley.

Stanley quickly became a member of the family as well as an integral part of the Newhalls' social life. Amy is a naturally gracious hostess who loves to entertain and Stanley was to become a social being as well. "Oh Stanley was like a little person," Amy explains. "Stanley was very unusual in the way he would sit, for instance. He was just so unlike a dog. At Thanksgiving he would sit on a chair at the table with a linen napkin around his neck, and he would not move. It was cute. It's very rare to get an animal that just sits like that, so relaxed. Really he was just special. And I think that once you have a Pug, you always have a Pug. I can't imagine my life without a Pug."

Amy took Stanley virtually everywhere and friends often invited Stanley



Christine Merrill, Morgan, Stanley, Winnifred and Ramses, 2003, oil on canvas, 34 x 40 inches



Amy Newhall with her Pugs, Gracie and Milton, her Rhodesian Ridgeback, Ralph Lauren, and her Treeing Walker Coonhound, Coco Chanel



A bronze of one of Queen Victoria's favorite Pugs

A portrait of Stanley in sterling silver by Heather Jansch



along to dinner parties, or to come over for lunch. Stanley reciprocated. In June of 2003 Stanley, along with the Newhalls, hosted a party for thirty of Stanley's favorite Pug friends at St. Paul's School Garden Pavilion. Dogs munched on organic treats, while their human counterparts enjoyed cookies, iced tea and sparkling water. And there was the PugOween party where everyone, including the Pugs, had to come in costume.

Both parties were to some extent inspired by the now-legendary Pug party held in 1990, in honor of the great Pug lovers, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. The Maryland Historical Society was mounting an exhibition of gowns belonging to Baltimore-born Wallis Warfield, the Duchess of Windsor, and Amy Newhall wanted to honor the Duchess' love of Pugs. "The Windsors had commissioned clothing and exquisite collars for their Pugs – shouldn't they be represented in the exhibition as well?" she thought. Amy had never hosted a dog party before, and wasn't sure if she even knew enough Pugs to invite. She enlisted the help of her friends: Frances Brooke, the prominent Baltimore interior designer Stiles Colwill, and Margery Shriver of Sheffield Pug fame. Area veterinarians helped her with the guest list. It was decided that a proper English tea was in order, and the date was set for Saturday, September 18, 1999. The

A life-size bronze by Constance Payne marks Stanley's grave



director of the Maryland Historical Society took a bit of convincing, but when he met the impeccably behaved Stanley Newhall, he was quickly won over.

Speaking of the great turnout of guests and their dogs, Amy enthuses, “You know, I didn’t know a lot of these people but it made me happy just to know that they were having such a fun time. Everybody smiled and everybody was so happy and it was just so wonderful to see everyone have an afternoon of frivolous fun and smile for a long time, because there is so much in the world that makes you unhappy.”

Having Stanley also expanded the couple’s collecting interests. Mr. Newhall is a connoisseur with wide ranging collections, including classical Greek pottery, nineteenth-century French bronzes, rare books, eighteenth-century furniture and American Impressionist painting from the turn of the century. Rather modestly, Amy explains that “Chuck is more furniture and I like more of the little things with the Pugs, but we pretty much collected the Pug art together.” Images of Pugs are scattered throughout the house, beautifully decorated by her friend Stiles Colwill in an updated take on the English Country house style. A solid silver statuette of Stanley greets you as you enter the house, and other Pug treasures are casually placed: an exquisite Fabergé Pug of carved jade, resting on a carved rock crystal cushion, a small bronze of one of Queen Victoria’s favorite Pugs, and an exquisite Meissen porcelain of three Pugs playing.

Amy and Chuck first saw Christine’s work at a friend’s house and they immediately loved it. Amy explains, “We were visiting our friend Margot Heller, who had commissioned Christine to do a portrait of her dog, and it was beautiful, and had such an old-world quality about it. We thought it would be such fun to have a portrait of all our pets.” Christine suggested that she use the Newhalls’ extensive gardens as a background, creating a detailed drawing for the Newhalls to illustrate the composition of the finished painting. “The detail is incredible,” enthuses Chuck, standing in front of the finished painting, admiring Christine’s technique, “... just look at the details in the faces of Winnie and Morgan, and she has captured Stanley perfectly.”

Amy has hung their Christine Merrill portrait in her expansive second floor office, and it is in good company. The walls are hung floor to ceiling with nineteenth- and twentieth-century paintings of Pugs. Paintings by Henry H. Couldery and F. W. Rogers join works by Mildred Megargee as well as contemporary artists. Vitrines are filled with porcelains and small sculptures of Pugs, many picked up on their various travels.

Nor is the canine theme restricted to the house, for the Newhalls five-acre property, known as the Brightside Gardens, is extensively landscaped, with tranquil pathways, beautiful vistas with garden statuary, and down a long winding path is a quiet spot where they have created a gated cemetery for their pets. The entrance is guarded by two life-size stone sculptures of Mastiffs and the cemetery is walled with a stone and cast-iron fence. A granite monument has been erected to commemorate Stanley, surmounted with a life-sized bronze of him by the contemporary artist Constance Payne. It is a tranquil spot, away



Life-sized sculptures of Mastiffs guard the entrance to Brookside's private dog cemetery

from any sound of traffic or neighborhood children. Stanley is accompanied by the other pets depicted in Christine Merrill’s painting – the German Shepherds Winnie and Morgan and the Siamese cat, Ramses. But for Amy, Stanley was the special one. She explains that “I think you always have one animal in your life that really steals your heart and yes, is really special. I love all of my dogs, but I think Stan was the one that was really it. He was the ‘it’ dog for me.”

Amy and Chuck now have two Pugs – Gracie and Milton – and they travel with them everywhere. And they also have the two dogs that quietly greeted me when I drove onto the property. Ralph Lauren is a Rhodesian Ridgeback and Coco Chanel is a Treeing Walker Coonhound, a dog that they saved from a shelter. As Amy says, “I just think that the animals make your house a home.”