

expert.

Indeed, the motivation for showing should be the proud presentation of a fine example of the breed to knowledgeable judges and to our fellow fanciers and breeders. It is a mistake to show anything that is less than breed-worthy. People remember the good and the bad.

The Ibizan should be shown in his natural state. His condition should be such that he could show and course on the same day. There should be some neatening of the coat allowed, but razoring of the smooths and heavy sculpting of the wires is contrary to the spirit of the standard.

The standard calls for longer hair on the underside of the tail and the backs of the thighs. Some individuals have barely noticeable longer hair, while the feathering of some is quite noticeable. This is not a point for judging except that it would be preferable to show the Ibizan in his most natural state.

People often come into the breed attracted by its wash-and-wear qualities and then proceed to think up things to trim. Whiskers are actually *vibrissae*, hairs attached to facial nerves. Some sporting-breed fanciers are aware of this and caution on trimming and the potential for increased eye damage.

No handler can set up a dog as well as a good dog can set up himself. A sound dog of confident temperament should walk into position. Unfortunately, in spite of good training a small number of Ibizans hate showing.

The Ibizan in the show pose should stand foursquare, with his hind legs only slightly wider-set than the front. The straighter upper arm required by the breed is not set back to the deepest point of the chest but rather is slightly in front of it. The front is not wide. Hocks should be parallel from the side. That means from the hock joint to the ground, one follows a straight line down the back line of the leg.

The Ibizan should not be stretched so that the topline slopes. The Ibizan is famous for its ability to jump high

from a standstill. The neck should proudly show off its length and arch. Too often the handler pulls the neck forward, straightening it and losing the lovely arch.

Moving the Ibizan in the ring should show off his wonderful suspended trot. Two things often conspire against this: ring size and a handler who can't keep up. This does not mean that one should race around the ring encouraging overextension, however. If the hind foot is falling in front of the front foot, it is overextending. The



Ibizan does need to be shown at a brisk-enough pace to allow for the suspension phase of the trot. Too slow, and this cannot be accomplished; also, the dog needs to be able reach a speed to single-track.

There have been some issues with tail carriage over the years. In the past people seemed to be looking for lower tail carriage, fearing an overly curly tail. The tail can be carried high or low.

The Ibizan has such wonderful natural grace. It should be our mission to proudly present this to the fancy.

—Nan Kilgore-Little, Gladstone, Va.;
NanKilgore@amberlithe.com ♦

Irish Wolfhounds

In Time for Christmas

Nowadays there are more than enough holiday treasures to be found in catalogs and online to satisfy even the most jaded of Irish Wolfhound lovers, but the Internet has also made possible the acquisition of out-of-print books that before now could only be found after much searching. In days past, when we traveled to shows we would slow down going through each town (there were no freeways), looking for book dealers and antique shops. Sometimes if you were very lucky you would come home with a rare-breed book from the last century as well as the coveted blue ribbon.

These treasures can still be found on

occasion, but the looking is much easier and can be done right from your own chair in front of the computer. At the top of the list is Hogan and Graham's *The Irish Wolfdog*, commonly referred to as the "bible of the breed." This is actually two books that in 1939 were reprinted in one volume from the original editions by the Irish Wolfhound Club of Ireland. The longer piece, *The Irish Wolfdog*, by Reverend Edmund Hogan, is a chronological history of the breed that represents years of painstaking research by the author for any and all references to the Irish Wolfhound. The second part is a



monograph titled *The Irish Wolfhound*, by Captain George A. Graham, who is credited with

saving the breed from the brink of extinction, and worked for nearly 50 years before he achieved his goal. Originally compiled in 1879, it is an account of Graham's efforts to restore the Irish Wolfhound to its unique position in the canine world. As such, it is a must-read for any serious student of the breed.

Another book of great value and interest is *The Irish Wolfhound*, by Phyllis Gardner. The author outlines the breed from its ancient beginnings to the notable hounds of her time, many of which appear in pedigrees as ancestors of the breed today. The work is illustrated with more than 100 wood engravings cut by the author and her sister, many of them done from real life. These lovely prints alone make the book well worth owning. It was published in 1931 by the Dundalgan Press, Dundalk, Ireland.

Another very rare treasure worth seeking is the annual *Yearbook* that was issued by the old Irish Wolfhound Society of England in 1925. This 9-by-11-inch book is printed on slick paper and contains 68 pages. It includes articles written by some of the stalwarts of the breed and is profusely illustrated with the dogs of the day. The cover has

a head sketch of the Irish Wolfhound Lady Crochen.

Happy hunting! —Lois J. Thomasson, Salinas, Calif.; Fleetwind@aol.com ♦

Norwegian Elkhounds

Form and Function

History depicts the gray *elghund* as sailing the stormy seas with his Viking master. He did not like the loud clashes of thunder but controlled the trembling of his compact body to gain the respect of his master as an intelligent, dependable companion. Flashes of lightning lit up his beautiful silver coat, causing him to appear ghostlike in the night, the darkness all but hiding his black muzzle, ears, and dark eyes. The thick, flat-lying, black-tipped hairs of the outer coat formed a protective covering for the thick, wooly undercoat, which was also silver-colored. The outer coat standing up around his neck and over his shoulders formed a ruff. His thickly haired silver tail remained tightly curled and centered over his back in a show of courage and determination. When the sea was rough and waves washed overboard, an occasional shake of the dog's body kept his coat dry. The gray dog was 50 pounds of muscle and energy, waiting and watching, prick ears listening intently for sounds of danger.

In his native land of Norway, the gray *elghund* is a hunter of big game, primarily moose. Even though clashes of thunder, gun-blasts, or firecrackers may be intimidating at times, the elkhound is known for its intelligence and dependability in the field. His skeletal conformation enables him to travel the hilly terrain of Norway for hours—an effortless task for a dog of medium size and substance, square in profile, close-coupled and balanced in proportions. Front and rear quarters are well balanced in angulation and muscular development, adding to his stamina and mindset when he is following the scent of a moose.

Strong legs and small feet are an asset for maneuvering the sharp rocks and

craggy slopes. When one of the many streams that meander throughout the terrain is too wide for the dog to jump, he must wade or swim. An open coat would allow the wooly undercoat to absorb water, not only weighing the dog down, but putting him in danger of freezing.

The majority of owners in the U.S. do not have hunting opportunities, but the Norwegian Elkhound still proves his worth as a trusted and intelligent companion. He often chortles in a high-pitched voice when he is exuberant, and he is content with a gentle pat on the head when he has pleased his master. Far-seeing eyes and a keen sense of smell stimulate his hunting instinct, even if his targets are squirrels and rabbits in the backyard.



The gray elkhound is a true hunting dog, employing many of the tactics of sight and scent hounds. He knows when to bark and when to remain silent, retaining his ageless ability and agility for the hunt. Whether on the hunt or in the conformation show ring, the Norwegian Elkhound is the essence of form and function when he reflects the standard for the breed. Time may have changed the Viking ship into an ocean liner, the rough terrain into a show ring, and the rules of the hunt into obedience rules, but the Norwegian Elkhound seemingly has traveled unchanged down through time.

A study of the breed standard and the use of specimens conforming to the standard in a breeding program are paramount in the preservation of the Gray Dog of Norway. —Dr. Nina P. Ross, Arlington, Tenn.; ninaross@bellsouth.net ♦

Otterhounds

We Did It!

Memorial Day is of course traditionally associated with memories. While her particular memory of that holiday is not in the traditional vein, you can rest assured that Dian Quist-Sulek will long remember Memorial Day 2010, for that is the day

she and her Otterhound Barry became the very first of the breed to earn the title of Champion Tracking Dog—and also became the breed's first dual champion! Barry led Dian through a successful run of a VST track in Wisconsin, on what Dian described as a “perfect day.” And so it was, in more ways than one. Her message to the breed Internet list was written late at night on her arrival home, but I'm sure she was pumped enough with excitement to not have the late hour dampen her desire to proclaim to the OHCA pack, “We did it!”

The road to a Variable Surface Tracking title is neither smooth nor certain, as Dian and those who still have that goal in mind can well attest. Just finding a test located anywhere within reasonable driving distance is the first challenge. Then there are always weather problems to consider, so that knocks out hot-weather months as well as those likely to present severe winter conditions that can affect just getting there. If you are lucky enough to find a suitable date and venue, you have to be twice as lucky to make the final draw for entry. Then there is the bummer of rather pricey entry fees. It takes a village to put one of these tests on!

So you finally get lucky, and your name is drawn to run a test. Did I fail to mention one thing? *These tests are really hard.* Your dog might be a “natural tracker,” just breezing through the TD and TDX levels, but this is where it gets awfully tricky. If you read the AKC results on tracking tests, you'll find test after test for VST with *no* qualifiers. Misery might love company, but there is no satisfaction in continually finding yourself in the also-ran group.

The Otterhound is a very persistent dog, and his handler must be just as persistent and hungry for the goal. Even though Barry came very close to running a complete track a number of times, it just wasn't happening. Dian was as persistent as her beautiful hound, however, and she could see he had

