

furry little butts off!

Hannah turned out to be a real attention-addict. Directly across the aisle from us was the beautiful, double-sized Australian Shepherd booth.

When the crowds would be jammed in around the Aussies, with their backs to us, I would catch Hannah “going fishing” at the end of her leash, out in the crowd, bumping hands and poking rears from behind with her nose, as if to say “Hellooooo! I’m here and I’m really, really cute! C’mon, pet me too!”

When someone would turn to pay attention to her, she’d do a little happy dance and greet them like old long-lost friends. I’d laugh and explain, “Hannah just got off the boat two weeks ago”—which no one could believe, given how at ease and outgoing she was in what was obviously a setting she was not accustomed to.

Sacred participated at the English Foxhound booth as well, and while she wasn’t quite as inventive as Hannah in her crowd-surfing, she certainly didn’t have a problem with the whole scene.

The event was a true test of their mental stability and genetic good natures, and they passed with flying colors—even if they were still wet from the boat!

—Donna Smiley, Inyokern, Calif.;
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Mallorca being taller and more sinewy. These are broad generalizations, as certainly dogs of a range of types come from all locations.

The first match shows us many Ibizans bred from dogs first imported by the Seoanes. These Ibizans were less elegant, more similar to the Portuguese Podengos; yet they are very much Ibizans. There were also taller, more leggy dogs, even then.

I believe history has shown our breed to be naturally diverse. Larger, heavier dogs work the hunt one way; leggy leapers, another; and littler ones can get in the tight places. The varied topography of Spain and the Balearics also brings about selection of type. Rough, brushy country; rocky hills; and more open fields each call for slightly different anatomy.

Then there is the selection made by breeders. Breeders make choices reflecting their specific interpretation of the standard. The standard is the blueprint of the breed, but it has some room for various interpretations. If all breeders saw things in exactly the same way, we would all be getting into the same difficulties. Then we would not have anywhere to go for corrections. Certainly dogs should fit the standard, and that is why the standard must give a true, clear vision of the breed’s parameters.

Pictures from the specialty this year show a wonderful array of types. Each one of us may believe we have the best, perhaps the only correct type. The Ibizan Hound should be lithe and racy, never cumbersome and bulky; it should fit within the limitations of size, allowing for slight divergences. Remember, this is a hunter of rabbits. How fine is “fine”? How elegant is “elegant”? How big are “big” ears? Such visions have some leeway for interpretation. It is important to keep an open mind and appreciate the wonderful diversity that the Ibizan Hound has to offer. To lose any type would be a great detriment to the breed. We have many new imports from Spain and Europe that bring new choices to the breeder and exhibitor. After many



years in this breed, I believe type has much improved in general, and more avenues have opened for breeders to choose from.

—Nan Kilgore Little, Gladstone, Va.;
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Irish Wolfhounds

Head Type Revisited

At the turn of the last century, Irish Wolfhound fanciers were provided a useful list of point values that were to assist judges and breeders with their selections. Having first appeared in the book *Dogs*, by Harding Cox, this merit point system, with a score of 100 representing the perfect dog, was tried for several years and found wanting. Cumbersome at best, the hound awarded the greatest number of points was found to be not necessarily the most typical animal. What is of interest is that in this system, the head of an Irish

Wolfhound was allotted 25 points, or one-quarter of the total possible for the dog.

It is generally conceded that the most important point in the type of any show dog is the head, as it is

the index to the breed, and although few Irish Wolfhounds are employed today in their original role as a hunter of large and fierce game, they should still have the long, strong head called for in the standard, with the frontal bones very slightly raised and very little indentation between the eyes. The muzzle should be moderately pointed, with jaws of sufficient length and strength to cope with his quarry when he overtakes it, and the skull should not be too broad and is flat rather than round, with the occiput distinct in young hounds.

Ears have a great deal of influence on head type, and a badly carried ear can spoil the appearance of an otherwise good head. The ears should be small and Greyhound-like in carriage, set on rather high, as the ancients would have it: *An eye of sloe with ear not low*. The heavy ear hanging flat to the head is foreign to the

Ibizan Hounds

Diversity of Type

Two recent things brought the subject of diversity to mind—the first being my revisiting the report of the first breed match of the original American Ibizan Hound club in 1974, and the second being the national specialty of the Ibizan Hound Club of the United States.

One could observe from the first that there was a range of type within the breed. Much has to do with the geographic origin of the individual dogs, with dogs from mainland Spain often being larger and more robust; dogs from Ibiza often being more rustic and plebeian, more compact; and dogs from

Irish Wolfhound and was introduced by the use of Great Dane blood during the restoration of the breed.

In an article that appeared in the 1933–34 English yearbook, Mr. I.W. Everett, who bred the world-famous Felixstowe Irish Wolfhounds, set down some thoughts on type given him by the late Captain Graham:

“His head should show greater proportion of strength to the size of him than the Deer-hound. His ears should be carried in repose tucked behind him as a Greyhound’s and when looking at objects in the distance should be semi-erect. His eyes should at least harmonize with his general color, a usual preference being given to the dark rather than light eyes. His muzzle, distinctly not square, it should have the appearance of being undercut rather than square, until the teeth are inspected when it is seen the teeth are level. The head should be of good length in proportion to the hound, with a very small drop before the eyes and frontal bones little raised. His throat should be clear of loose skin or dewlap. His skull, although not coarse, should give one the impression of strength.

“To finish up a nice typical head, a reasonable amount of eyebrow, muzzle hair and beard, completed by the neck being set into the head nice and high up and showing a reasonable crest.”

In essence, the Irish Wolfhound should always remain the giant, rough-coated Greyhound in appearance, with his head in keeping with the Greyhound characteristics. The Irish Wolfhound’s head should convey a feeling of immense strength and majestic beauty, reflecting the noble spirit contained within.

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

Norwegian Elkhounds

Hunting With Elkhounds

Legend paints the Norwegian Elkhound as a picturesque character

throughout his history. He trots down through the centuries as a fearless guardian, a devoted companion, a utilitarian farm dog, and a skilled hunter. To validate at least a portion of the saga, he is still using his skills as a hunter in his native Norway. His expertise in tracking and holding *elg* at bay for the hunters is another indication of his devotion to his master. In Norway, the hunting season for *elg* is between September 23 and October 31, with a one-week break beginning the first of October.

Elghound field trials are commonplace, offering an opportunity for dogs to win prizes for first, second, and third place. To become a hunting champion, the dog must achieve two first prizes in a field

“He trots down through the centuries as a fearless guardian, a devoted companion, a utilitarian farm dog, and a fearless hunter.”

trial, one having been achieved on a two-day field trial and one first prize based on quality in a dog show. The Big Game Committee of Norway passed a law that went into effect on January 1, 1994,



requiring all hunting teams to have at least one dog approved for tracking wounded animals.

The dog’s eagerness for the hunt must be strong enough to keep him working all day. Each dog has his own way to show the hunters that an *elg* is nearby. Some do this by standing up on their hind feet; others let their tails fall down from the curled position. Still others stand with their hackles up—this has nothing to do with bad temper. Gray Elkhounds used for hunting and showing should be good-natured and friendly, easily handled in the

show ring, and eager to go hunting.

During a hunt, the dog’s purpose is to track the *elg*, hold it at bay by barking, and wait for the hunter to close in. The hunters, as well as the dogs, must be prepared physically and mentally for the stress of a hunt. The entire pursuit takes hours of trekking over hill and dale for hunters and dogs. Not only must the dog show eagerness for the hunt, interest in finding *elg*, willingness to obey his master, calmness and self-assurance in approaching *elg*, and the ability to stop and hold the *elg* at bay by barking, he also must have the stamina to start the procedure all over again.

Although hunting is done on a smaller scale in the United States, the official

Norwegian Elkhound standard focuses on the requirements for hunting. Dogs must be in good physical condition. They must be intelligent, bold, and energetic. Their coats must be smooth lying and weather resistant. Their feet should be small, with tightly closed toes and thick pads. The dogs must have a compatible relationship with their master as a result of spending time together.

Breeders can preserve the hunting instinct by controlling the outcomes in their breeding programs to a greater extent through selective breeding. Even though Norwegian Elkhounds are known to be sound and relatively free from hereditary disease, the breed will stay that way only with cooperation among breeders and the diligent use of sound breeding practices. To perpetuate purebred Elkhounds in the fullest sense of the term, it is necessary to concede problems, not conceal them.

—Dr. Nina P. Ross, Arlington, Tenn.; ninaross@bellsouth.net ♦

Otterhounds

Something to Howl About

There are good days, and then there are *really* good days. In mid-October the Otterhound breed made history with a fabulous weekend. It