

Breeders, fanciers, and judges alike will benefit from watching the many wonderful videos taken of Ibizans hunting in their native Spain. I remember the first time I saw this. It really opened my eyes to the reasons for the beautiful shape of the Ibizan. The Ibizan was bred to hunt all day in extremely rough conditions. The Ibizan is shaped by function. His many unique characteristics have purpose. No other breed makes such spectacular leaps. Anything that compromises this ability is a detriment to the heritage of the Ibizan.

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

Temperament, Again

One of the strongest characteristics of the breed is its uniform gentleness of manner. This gentleness is the natural complement of a brave and fearless nature, and it qualifies the Irish Wolfhound as an ideal family member. They are intelligent and levelheaded, with a sense of humor—and gifted, as Phyllis Gardner put it, with a magical “second sight.”

This is the Irish Wolfhound who has been handed down to us, so perhaps that is why it is so distressing of late to read on the Internet lists of owners dealing with shy or aggressive dogs. Some of the advice they are receiving is just as disturbing, and a young hound with aggressive tendencies toward both people and other dogs should not be “forced out in public to get used to crowds.” That is idiotic and a tragic situation waiting to happen; all the socialization in the world cannot change a genetically poor temperament.

When you keep a giant breed, you have a responsibility as an owner to know the character and dependability of that animal so that you may assist it to interact in the situations it finds itself, making sure it will not be a danger to either itself or the public. Things can happen in a split second and a life is changed forever.

Temperament must remain a foremost consideration in selecting breeding stock, and all the physical beauty and perfection of form are worthless if the hound does not possess the intelligent and gentle nature for which the breed is known and cannot meet one of the prime requirements of the standard, which calls for a “commanding appearance.”

Breeders have an obligation to produce puppies who are going to be stable, well-adjusted members of the society in which they find themselves.

I cannot help but wonder if some new owners gave a great deal of thought to how acquiring an Irish Wolfhound, or any dog for that matter, would affect their lives, and to how much time would be involved in shaping the puppy’s character so that it will reflect well on them and the breed. You get out of a relationship what you are willing to put into it, and dogs reflect their owners’ care. I sometimes hear of far too much time spent in crates, which hardly allows a



young mind and body to develop to its potential. For an athletic breed like the Irish Wolfhound, this seems a crime. Perhaps some breeders need to do a better job educating prospective owners.

The Irish Wolfhound is not for everyone, but for those who have the space and time the rewards are many, and the innate gentleness of manner is what has endeared the breed to his owners and admirers through the centuries.

As the late Kelly Fox, past president of the IWCA wrote, in part: “We, as breeders, have a duty to make the primary objective of our breeding the preservation of the temperament which is the Irish Wolfhound’s greatest asset.”

—Lois J. Thomasson, Salinas, Calif.;
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Otterhounds



Our guest columnist this month is longtime Otterhound owner Nancy Scarci, who relates the talents of her Ch. Scentasia’s Yankee Doodle

Dandy, RN, also known as Keone, who is obviously a master locksmith.

Otterhound Ingenuity

When fanciers discuss the intelligence of various breeds, we doubt our Otterhounds are mentioned—unless, perhaps, the topic is “breeds that must be brighter than they look.” The fact is, however, that Otterhounds demonstrate, at least occasionally, preternatural problem-solving abilities. Tales abound of those with the Houdini gene and their escapes from crates during airline flights, locked RVs, and every kind of fencing. Some, though, prefer to stay at home and use their talents there.

My hound has always been enthralled with the dishwasher, and his hobby is removing the contents and arranging them decoratively in the master bedroom. Until recently, I thought this only occurred when I forgot to click the door closed. Wrong! The other night, after moving him away from the dishwasher multiple times, I watched with shock and awe as he gently grasped the handle in his mouth and opened the door to reveal the riches within.

OK, time to wash those dishes by hand—which gave me a ringside view as he opened the cabinet next to me and began removing the Tupperware. Dogs can generalize and apply what is learned in one situation to a similar but not identical one. The handle of the dishwasher is horizontal; that of the cabinet, vertical. No problem! I hastily gathered up the Tupperware, raced to the guest bedroom, and dumped it on the dresser, out of harm’s way.

Returning, I heard an unfamiliar yet ominous sound. The Dog was rummaging in the refrigerator! Yes, opening my side-by-side refrigerator-freezer was his next accomplishment. Alas, life has not been the same since.

Remembering the saga of an OH who removed the salmon from the oven and how his owner prevented further thefts by sticking a cane through the door

