

# G7 BREED COLUMNS

hounds

usually the result of two badly bred individuals of two separate breeds. These people are usually asking the same money that a careful, contentious breeder does, but without having put in all the expense of good care, health screening, and ensuring responsible contracts.

But if we have no breeders, as some would have it, there will be no breeds. It won't take very long. I love the breeds, especially my Ibizan Hounds. What a loss it would be to the world. When I want an Ibizan Hound, it will be an Ibizan—elegant, athletic, ethereal and a piece of history. When I want an Australian Cattle Dog, it will be of a specific and predictable size and temperament. I own several “orphans of the storm,” rescues, and I love them all. Each creature is special, but they were unknown quantities. Luckily they fit in, but each might have been a very bad match.

All dogs deserve to be planned for and nurtured and supported for life. My answer is to support my own breed, and several others; encourage cautious, responsible, well-thought-out breeding; and support rescue efforts for the poor dispossessed. I support neutering of pets, and holding close and protecting our wonderful unique Ibizan Hounds. Only the very best need to be bred—a daunting responsibility.

As I retire after having been a foundation breeder since 1973, I leave my beloved Ibizan Hounds in good hands. But I will be watching.

—Nan Kilgore Little,  
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Ibizan Hound Club of the United States website: [ihcus.org](http://ihcus.org)

## Irish Wolfhounds The Female Advantage

There is no question in the minds of successful breeders that the strength of a kennel lies in its bitches, and a great brood bitch is worth her weight in gold. The expression has nothing to do with the number of progeny she produces, but rather with the quality her bank of genes allows her

to pass onto her get.

Why, then, do so many breeders today mindlessly scramble to breed to the current show winner? It only takes a study of specialty catalogs to see popular dogs being used at stud a dozen times or more before they are even mature and before it can be known what genetic baggage they bring with them. A good bitch deserves far more thought than merely picking a sire from the current crop.

It is the bitch who carries your hopes for the future, nourishes and cares for the puppies upon their arrival, and during those early, critical weeks imprints them for a lifetime as she teaches them how to live in the world they will inhabit.

The dam may contribute only half the chromosomes in a mating, but her influence is far more reaching. The breeders of over one hundred years ago understood this from experience, noting that it was the bitch responsible for carrying on type. As Captain Graham wrote:

“This writer believes, with Colonel Garnier, that the following rules are the correct ones to recognize, that quality is very much more dependent on the dam than on the sire. Bone or size, on the contrary, is far more dependent on the sire.”

What those early breeders learned from observation we now know is based on scientific fact, for females possess two X chromosomes in their body cells, while males possess one X and one Y chromosome. Since the X chromosome is longer than the Y chromosome, it carries the majority of the breed's genetic material and characteristics and, although for both positive and negative influence, gives the bitch the edge.

So when you are contemplating a breeding, it pays to remember that advantage that comes with the distaff side, and build a tail-female line of great brood bitches.

—Lois J. Thomasson, [LJTRoses@aol.com](mailto:LJTRoses@aol.com)

Irish Wolfhound Club of America website: [iwclubofamerica.org](http://iwclubofamerica.org)

## Norwegian Elkhounds Primal Instincts?

I am always moved by the stories on TV and in e-mails portraying dogs saving people, bonding with animals that in a different situation would be prey/dinner, or demonstrating unbridled joy. All these indicate to me that there is much more to our dogs than we understand. Nowadays we consider them to be much more than the animal that lives under the porch receiving table scraps and an occasional pat on the head after a hard day's work.

Numerous owners consider their dogs to be substitute family members, with owners seemingly hoping to make a new life and/or family with them. Centuries ago the very clever wolf realized quickly that as man's companion, life was easier and safer for them—a partnership benefiting both. To that end they became more human in their actions, exhibiting love, devotion, sadness, faithfulness, and joy. All of these characteristics served to endear them to us.

I was just reading a study about the reasons why dogs have multiple offspring and linking this to the way they survived before domestication. It is attributed to the parents having to roam to hunt sans youngsters, leaving them unprotected. Despite how much we have become one with our dogs, there is still a portion of the wolf intrinsic to their DNA. No matter how much we dress them in clothes, carry them in our luggage or purses, or have them sleep in our beds and share our dinner, they retain some primal instinct.

To this point, consider the following story sent to me by a breeder-exhibitor colleague:

“I go outdoors and find one of my bitches not looking like she feels too good. When I check out her pen, I notice a small amount of feathers on the ground, some of them about 10 inches long. I realize she has completely eaten a large bird! Being so full of a big bird explains why she doesn't feel well. Oh, my gosh, did she eat a bird carrying disease? Is she OK? Did the bird manage to hurt her?”