

HOUND GROUP



Ibizan Hound

Expression is a nebulous thing. Of course there is a wide range of expression in Ibizans. Some, mostly bitches, are more reticent and private; I find the males to be more engaging in general. More often than not, the Ibizan has a happy, outgoing, somewhat intense aspect. The expression should not be sharp or aggressive. They can respond in an instant.

This is part of their hunting heritage.

The old Spanish standards always said, *intelligent, but not particularly noble*. I have always found this amusing. An Ibizan is not Rin Tin Tin. The Ibizan has a quick, bright, reactive intelligence that should be reflected in its expression.

As I watch my Ibizans standing in a row on

the couch, looking out my picture window, I am amazed at how observant they are. It is amusing to watch them do a sort of *Terminator* camera-refocus as they watch a distant squirrel. You can almost hear the clicking.

I find that even old dogs retain much of their youthful exuberance, in both expression and deed.

—Nan Kilgore-Little

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Irish Wolfhounds

RARE BOOKS ON THE BREED

Nowadays there are more than enough 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

COURTESY NAN KILGORE LITTLE

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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

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Otterhounds

Our guest columnist this month is Wayne Kline, who has owned Otterhounds for nearly 40 years. Wayne has written an extensive history of the breed worldwide and an unpublished study, *The Genetics of Coat Color in Otterhounds*.

OUTCROSSING

One of the controversial topics in the Otterhound world today is outcrossing. Outcrossing in general is the practice of breeding a purebred dog with a dog of a different breed. Why would this ever be necessary?

There are two main reasons: (1) the popula-

tion of a particular breed has been decimated for some reason, and concerned breeders are attempting to reconstruct it; and (2) the gene pool of a particular breed has been depleted of some set of important genes, or is threatened by some genetic defect, and breeders are trying to restore the former, or avoid the latter, or both.

As for case (1), there have been a number of examples of attempts to restore a breed from catastrophic events, mostly in Europe. During both World Wars, French and English packs were decimated. The hounds were either put down or killed during battles. One example was the French Griffon Nivernais. Almost totally decimated after WWII, it had to be reconstructed in the 1950s using British Otterhounds as crosses. And to this day, many French Griffon Nivernais have a considerable percentage of Otterhound genes.

As for case (2), there have been examples where the gene pool of some breed has been so depleted of classic breed genes that breeders have been forced to outcross in order to reintroduce these genes. However, this process can be very counterproductive. Identifying what set of genes a particular dog has at the genotype level is not possible today. The best we can do with current technology is breed test cases, which can often determine—if not in the immediate progeny, but in subsequent

generations—what genes are there, and what are not. However, few breeders have the ability or inclination to conduct these rigorous tests. So when a breeder decides to introduce an outcross from a different breed, what is ideally required is a fairly intelligent estimate for not only what positive genes are present in the outcross that we wish to introduce, but the absence of certain genetic defects that we are attempting to avoid.

There have been a number of outcrosses between Otterhounds and non-Otterhounds done in the past, mostly in England. Some of these outcrosses may have been done for the two reasons cited above. On the other hand, some outcrosses may have been done by the masters and huntsmen of hunting packs simply for the purpose of improving various hunting qualities. For example, French hunters of the past were notorious for their penchant to experiment with outcrosses, sometimes to the point where the resulting offspring were unrecognizable as the original breed.

So, is outcrossing a good thing, or a bad thing? As always, it depends. If there is a clear need, and a breeder does the proper homework, the outcross could contribute valuable genes and resulting traits to the pure breed. And if the outcrossed breed is one of those that contributed to the Otterhound gene pool in the past, we would not be falling far from

the tree. However, if the research is not able to detect some potential genetic defects in the pedigree, an outcross could introduce problems in the pure breed.

Also important should be a reluctance to inbreed or line-breed from the outcross or its ancestors. Whatever potentially undesirable traits might have been introduced would tend to be masked over time if the progeny of the outcross were bred with excellent examples of the pure breed, but inbreeding or line-breeding of the outcross or progeny would tend to reinforce whatever traits were introduced, which could be good or bad. There is surely some main goal in performing an outcross, and if that goal is achieved, further outcrossing is probably imprudent. —W.K.

Thank you, Wayne.

—Eibhlin Glennon, Riverrun Otterhounds
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Otterhound Club of America,
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Petits Bassets Griffons Vendéens

Our guest author this month is Doug M. Canfield. Doug and his wife, Jana, are members of the Petit Basset Griffon Vendéen Club of America and the Mid New Jersey PBGV Association. They own two male PBGVs who are very much a part of their