

Firstly my thanks to the Club for giving me the opportunity to judge your specialty show and I genuinely am grateful to all those who entered. I thank you for the sportsmanship you displayed and the pleasant atmosphere you all created.

In reality, you all, as Club administrators, owners/breeders and we judges are custodians of the breed (any breed) and it is our duty to protect the breed, direct its progression and aim towards a uniformity of type – never forgetting what our breed has been bred for. To do this we must all be aware of any particular areas that may be of concern and make these concerns a main consideration in our breeding program.

Critiquing is a valuable tool in any breeding program in that by analysing critiques one can get a fairly accurate indication of any particular virtues or faults. The ideal recommendation I would recommend to you Club is to work towards a similar system of written and verbal (on the peg) critiques as used at GSD Specialty shows. Using a stenographer enables critiques to be posted up at the show at the end of each class and verbal critiques on the pegs explains in detail why each exhibit is where it is (sometimes hard to see why from the outside!) at the end of the class. A grading system, as embraced by the GSD fraternity enables exhibits in a class to be 'grouped' by quality at the end of a class. So for example the first group in the final line up can be 'Excellent' (far above average) and the second group 'Very Good' (above average) meaning for example Excellent 8th is not far from Excellent 1st in quality and performance.

You will find a lot of critiques read the same. As you experienced, each class was called out in order of what was presented to me – size, type, proportions, strength, construction, appearance, type, attitude and so on. Then the placings were decided on the movement, the soundness, the firmness and the vitality / attitude / willingness to work. This selection is based entirely on the exhibits ability with very minimal input or influence from the handler.

My overall impressions are that the type is reasonably uniform, size is probably at maximum (never forget this is a medium sized working dog whose ability to work will be hampered by oversize, overweight). Withers backs and croups were generally very good, with the croups well laid but mostly a little short. Hindquarters are very good overall. All this area contributes to forward propulsion and deviations from the norm places stress on the front – evident after prolonged movement.

To me the front is an area that needs consideration in future breeding. There was generally a large percentage of under-developed fore chests and some under chests that could be a little longer. The former affects ligament and muscle attachment and the latter restricts lung capacity. Upper arms were mostly all steep but of good length. The front assembly is all held up in place by ligaments and muscle. Simply put, the chest is suspended between two columns of bone and attached / held in place by ligaments and muscle. So the better the fore chest - the longer the bones, the more ideal the chest development, the better and firmer the connections.

I hope these observations can be of some help in understanding the requirements of a working dog. The presentation of your exhibits was great overall. The baiting of exhibits was most noticeable and I do hope that for some this was not hiding a character issue. Overall except for 2 exhibits I found the character good.

Remember you have a working dog. To me "Pretty" is secondary to working ability. Combined these two are great but don't get too "Pretty" at the expense of working ability.

Regards, Graham Saltiel.