

This above all makes them unique.

I believe the fear of losing these specific abilities is the reason Spanish breeders hesitate to classify the Ibizan Hound as a sighthound, equating *sighthound* with *Greyhound*. The FCI standard warns against this fear in the breed disqualification of “anything in the characteristics that reveal admixture of Greyhound blood, since although speed in racing is increased, the sensitivity of hearing is diminished, as is the standing jump and especially the sense of smell, which are the principal physiological qualities of the breed. There is moreover a noticeable lowering of intelligence and judgment.”

(Please, Greyhounds: Many of my best friends are Greyhounds. There is just a great difference in the specific hunting techniques. Both breeds are wonderfully evolved for their respective hunting approach.)

The Ibizan Hound is a sighthound with added talents. It is a sighthound that evolved to hunt in rough terrain and cover. In our modern world so removed from their heritage, without the pressures of natural prey and habitat, we as breeders must strive to do our best to preserve and protect these wondrous abilities. —*Nan Kilgore-Little, Gladstone, Va.*; LWS4art@centralva.net ♦



Beginner's Luck PART TWO

Dr. Braxton B. Sawyer, in his seminars, always suggested careful selection when choosing a brood bitch, and listed three points of investigation: the individual herself, her pedigree, and the progeny (this is where the “horizontal pedigree” of siblings, aunts, and uncles gains importance). Because the brood bitch’s window of opportunity to demonstrate what her bank of genes will produce is so much more limited by the number of offspring as compared to the stud dog, great care should be taken in her selection.

A great brood bitch becomes the

jewel in your crown. She carries your hopes for the future, nourishes and cares for the puppies upon their arrival, and during those early, critical weeks she 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, but her influence is far more reaching when you consider that she helps shape the puppies’ character. This is why it is so critical to breed only from bitches with solid temperaments, as the puppies take their cues from their mother as she interacts with humans.

Down through history, great importance has been laid on the selection of the bitch. Over 100 years ago the “father of the breed,” Captain Graham, said much the same in *The Kennel Encyclopedia*, when he wrote:

“In the breeding of Irish Wolfhounds, the same principles apply as in the breeding of all other dogs, namely, only to breed from the best possible strain available, and from only the soundest of the breed. As regards the bitch, the writer is strongly of opinion that only bitches of well-matured age should be used, as Wolfhounds do not reach maturity till two years old; also they should only be bred from once in the year, and, for choice, a spring litter should be aimed at, so that the whelps may have all the summer before them, to enable them to get through all their puppy ailments with everything in their favor; as once over the first six months they are strong and hardy and better able to withstand any disease such as distemper.”

Regarding the choice of the bitch, he continues:

“The writer believes, with Colonel Garnier, that the following rules are the correct ones to recognize, that quality (nervous development, vigour, energy and character) 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.”

After listing color and coat under the sire’s influence, Captain Graham concludes: “Muscular development and general form is chiefly dependent on the dam.”

After observing the resulting progeny from hundreds of matings in the past 60 years, I would acknowledge that the

“rules” set forth are surprisingly accurate more times than not. Great size and bone will be found carried down in a strong tail-male line of ancestors with great size and substance, while outstanding quality puppies are sure to have behind them a tail-female line of grand, first-rate bitches.

—*Lois J. Thomasson, Salinas, Calif.*;
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Expanding Our Knowledge

Dear readers, forgive me if this column revisits a favorite topic of mine—our breed history—but new owners of Norwegian Elkhounds ask us old-timers so often about why and how the breed came to be what it is today that a review of the resources available to us all seems to be in order.

In a previous column, the value of studying the photos of the famous breed-founding dogs was discussed. Let’s now look at the written resources of those who translated their observations and experiences with the working hunting dogs of Norway into the breed standards that we use today to evaluate our dogs.

Early interpretations of the breed standard were written by Norwegians Carl Omsted and Harold Platou, both avid hunters who guided the development of the breed in the first half of the 20th century, when the idea of dog shows was secondary to the value of the dogs as hunters and family providers. This foundation of breed information was strengthened by the interpretations of the standard added by hunter-breeders including T. Hemsén, Olav Campbell, Olav Wallo, Jesper Hallingby, Johnny Aarflot, Kitty Heffer, and Gerd Berbom.

While many of these commentaries are written in Norwegian, translations can be found, and their words flesh out the bare-bones description provided by the standard. Adding their ideas to our word-picture of the ideal dog developed for the purpose of hunting big game in rugged, forested terrain can guide us as