

# G7 BREED COLUMNS

hounds

minute or two to follow his instincts to look for movement. If he doesn't get back to the business at hand, I verbally remind him to track."

Helen explains that when she got her first Greyhound, she started training in obedience but started looking around for another sport to try. She thought tracking looked interesting, although there were no classes or instructors to work with. She called Gail Burnham for advice, although she was nervous about calling someone "out of the blue."

Gail was very helpful and gave Helen advice that she still uses to this day: "Use food for motivation, *always*; don't bore the dog, and don't ask for repetition."

When asked what she enjoys most about tracking with her Greyhounds, Helen answers, "The camaraderie. It is a noncompetitive sport—one either passes or fails. I enjoy being out in the countryside with the dogs. After tracking, sometimes the dogs are able to run off-lead and play in the fields. It is a relaxing, non-stressful sport."

Helen measures success by having a good time with her dogs and being able to successfully navigate a track. She says it is very humbling to be dependent on your dog to be right.

I invited her to share a memorable story about tracking. "Once I was tracking my dog Jesse," she said, "Ch. Aragon Dark Wind, CDX, TDX, who didn't have strong article indication. She would rather track than stop and indicate the article. Her track had a non-regulation article at the end: The tracklayer had dropped the glove somewhere on the track and used his notebook as the end article.

"For some reason I assumed that the notebook was white," she continued. "I thought it would be easy to see and thus might help her indicate the article. So I chose to run that track.

"We were coming up to the end of the track, the other exhibitors watching, when Jesse stopped and sniffed something white. I ran up to her, praising her for 'finding it,' and lifted the

white object into the air for the judges to see. It was used toilet paper in the field! Jesse looked at me like I was crazy, put her nose down, and continued tracking. I sheepishly put my arm down and followed her. She made a turn down another leg of the track and stopped over the notebook to tell me it was there.

"We passed that day, but not without some embarrassment. Tracking can be fun and memorable!"

Thank you, Helen, for showing us that Greyhounds can be scenthounds as well as sighthounds.

—Carol Curlee, [cjcurlee@yahoo.com](mailto:cjcurlee@yahoo.com)

Greyhound Club of America website: [greyhoundclubofamericainc.org](http://greyhoundclubofamericainc.org)

## Ibizan Hounds Sighthound Plus

The Fédération Cynologique Internationale (FCI) classifies the breed (the *Podenco Ibiceno*) as a primitive hunting dog. Here in the United States, the general consensus is that the Ibizan Hound is a sighthound.

The breed is undoubtedly built for running. The legs have long, fine, bladed bone. The feet are oval, as are those of the hare. The chest is deep and relatively narrow. The head is long and narrow, as befitting a sighthound. The tuck-up is pronounced, and the overall impression is of elegance and grace. In speed the breed can compete with the other sighthounds on the lure-coursing field.

As long as game is in sight, the Ibizan pursues by sight. This is when they give voice; this is why they bark as they chase the lure. This barking helps the pack to function as a unit. Ibizan Hounds are team players.

What sets the breed apart is the additional use of hearing and scent when game goes to cover. A hunting pack of these hounds stand and listen for the rustle of the rabbit in the dense brush of their Spanish homeland.

They also use their sense of smell to locate the rabbit, although they do not "cold trail" like a scenthound. The Ibizan Hound's light, precise, high-step-

ping action allows them to traverse very harsh, rocky, brushy hillsides without injury to themselves. Their springiness allows them to do spectacular leaps from a standstill. 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."

The Ibizan Hound is a sighthound with added talents. He is a sighthound who 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,  
[NanKilgore@amberlithe.com](mailto:NanKilgore@amberlithe.com)

Ibizan Hound Club of the United States website: [ihcus.org](http://ihcus.org)

## Irish Wolfhounds We Are What We Eat

Ask 12 breeders how they feed their dogs, and you will get a dozen different answers, some of them expressed quite passionately.

Knowing there is more than one good way of feeding, I have always felt you must be doing something right when you have long-lived hounds, fertile brood bitches, healthy puppies with glossy coats, and stud dogs with good sperm counts. Your dog's health is the best indicator if something is working, and a properly balanced diet is arrived at by study of the needs of the hound at various stages of growth.

I am not a great fan of throwing a whole raw chicken to a canine companion in this day and age of the preva-

lence of salmonella and the use of growth hormones in food animals. I am a great believer in quality sources of protein such as red meat, wild game, eggs, cottage cheese, yogurt, and milk for those who can tolerate it.

Where I raise the eyebrow is at the purists who claim that commercial dry dog food is a modern innovation and does not belong in the diet of a carnivore such as an Irish Wolfhound and is held responsible for a number of the ills we see in the breed today. If those who make such claims had done their homework, they would have found that dry kibble and biscuits have been in use for several centuries by early breeders, including Captain Graham himself in the 1800s. Graham fed his hounds raw meat along with kibble soaked in a soup made from calves' or sheeps' heads and bones, the boiled meat of which was cut up and mixed with the dry food. Various green vegetables in season were added to the mixture. On occasion, oatmeal porridge or dry biscuit was given in lieu of the rich soup and kibble.

Colonel Roger D. Williams, who kept a number of hunting breeds and bred several hundred Irish Wolfhounds at the turn of the last century, considered beef and mutton the best meats and prepared his biscuit from one-third cornmeal, one-third shorts of wheat flour, and one-third hog cracklings. This mixture was first thoroughly boiled in a steam-jacketed kettle and then baked hard in a regular brick oven. In summer, oats were substituted for cornmeal, as the latter was considered too heat-producing.

I.W. Everett was a breeder of note during the same period, and he started his puppies out with goat's milk, raw eggs, and oat flour, graduating to oatmeal as the puppies grew. He then introduced finely minced beef, raw ox marrow, and one of the prepared dry cereal foods, such as Saval or Victoria Terrier Meal, moistened with a little hot water. These dry-cereal foods were relied upon as a staple of the Irish Wolfhound diet even then. Everett felt

it was beneficial to vary the diet, as did the other two gentlemen.

None of this is far removed from what breeders do today. It was much the same in the other great kennels, each having worked out their own recipes for successfully feeding their hounds and keeping them in the best of condition, knowing that in the end we are what we eat.

—Lois J. Thomasson,  
*LJTRoses@aol.com*

Irish Wolfhound Club of America  
website: *iwclubofamerica.org*

## Norwegian Elkhounds

The following was written by Dr. Nina P. Ross.

### Form and Function

History depicts the gray *elghund* as sailing the stormy seas with his Viking master. He did not like the loud clashes of thunder but controlled the trembling of his compact body to gain the respect of his master as an intelligent, dependable companion. Flashes of lightning lit up his beautiful silver coat, causing him to appear ghostlike in the night, the darkness all but hiding his black muzzle, ears, and dark eyes. The thick, flat-lying, black-tipped hairs of the outer coat formed a protective covering for the thick wooly undercoat, which was also silver-colored. The outer coat standing up around his neck and over his shoulders formed a ruff. His thickly haired silver tail remained tightly curled and centered over his back in a show of courage and determination. When the sea was rough and waves washed overboard, an occasional shake of the dog's body kept his coat dry. The grey dog was 50 pounds of muscle and energy, waiting and watching, prick ears listening intently for sounds of danger.

In his native land of Norway, the gray *elghund* is a hunter of big game, primarily moose. Even though clashes of thunder, gun-blasts, or firecrackers may be intimidating at times, the elkhound is known for its intelligence and dependability in the field. His skeletal conformation enables him to

travel the hilly terrain of Norway for hours—an effortless task for a dog of medium size and substance, square in profile, close-coupled and balanced in proportions. Front and rear quarters are well-balanced in angulation and muscular development, adding to his stamina and mind-set when he is following the scent of a moose.

Strong legs and small feet are an asset for maneuvering the sharp rocks and craggy slopes. When one of the many streams that meander throughout the terrain is too wide for the dog to jump, he must wade or swim. An open coat would allow the woolly undercoat to absorb water, not only weighting the dog down, but putting him in danger of freezing.

The majority of owners in the U.S. do not have hunting opportunities, but the Norwegian Elkhound still proves his worth as a trusted and intelligent companion. He often chortles in a high-pitched voice when he is exuberant, and he is content with a gentle pat on the head when he has pleased his master. Far-seeing eyes and a keen sense of smell stimulate his hunting instinct, even if his targets are squirrels and rabbits in the backyard.

The gray elkhound is a true hunting dog, employing many of the tactics of sight and scent hounds. He knows when to bark and when to remain silent, retaining his ageless ability and agility for the hunt. Whether on the hunt or in the conformation show ring, the Norwegian Elkhound is the essence of form and function when he reflects the standard for the breed. Time may have changed the Viking ship into an ocean liner, the rough terrain into a show ring, and the rules of the hunt into obedience rules, but the Norwegian Elkhound seemingly has traveled unchanged down through time.

A study of the breed standard and the use of specimen conforming to the standard in a breeding program are paramount in the preservation of the Grey Dog of Norway. —N.P.R.

Norwegian Elkhound Association of America website: *neaa.net*