

JUST WHAT DOES THE DACHSHUND BREED STANDARD MEAN?

This lecture by the late **Jacqueline Reading** has long been regarded as a valuable tool in the understanding of the Dachshund.

It may be argued that, having read and mastered the Standard of a particular breed, what more is there to be said on the subject. The Standard is self-explanatory.

This is far from the truth. The Standard is merely a guide, and one not couched in very scientific or precise language either. In any case, most words in common use have a wide variety of meanings. Take the word 'long'; for example. In some instances a distance of a quarter of an inch would be very long. You would agree that often a quarter of an inch long would be a very long term. On the other hand, in different circumstances the distance from here to Bourke would be very short. A space traveller would certainly consider it so.

What we are concerned with here is understanding the meaning of the terms and descriptions of the Standard in one precise context – the context of the Dachshund dog. The object of this lecture on the interpretation of the Standard is to enlarge upon, discuss, and where necessary more fully define the Standard requirements.

There are six varieties of Dachshund, and consequently six Standards, though one of them is very brief. The Standards we in Australia breed and judge by were drawn up in England.

The first consideration in the Standard is headed 'Characteristics'. This describes the mental and physical attributes which separate the Dachshund from other breeds of dog; it is a description of the very special and distinctive individuality of the Dachshund.

Characteristics (Smooth-haired): First and foremost a sporting dog, the Smooth Dachshund is remarkably versatile, being equally adaptable as a house pet; his smooth coat is impervious to rain and mud. His temperament and acute intelligence make him the ideal companion for town or country. In the field of sport he is unequalled, combining the scenting powers of a Foxhound with unflinching courage, and will go to ground to fox, otter or badger.

All Standards are agreed that the Dachshund is a sporting or hunting dog. He was bred for the purpose of hunting small game that goes to ground. To be a successful hunter the Dachshund must be alert, courageous and tenacious, with good scenting powers and fairly keen eyesight. He also requires a bark penetrating enough to be heard from below ground, and the lung power to both breath and bark for long periods in the confined space of the burrow or den.

The Long-haired Standard mentions that this variety is also suitable for water retrieving. The Wire-haired on account of his harsh, strong coat is very fitted for hunting dense cover. On the other hand, the Smooth-haired Standard points out that the Dachshund makes an intelligent house pet.

The miniature varieties should possess all the characteristics of the standard varieties. They were evolved not as lap dogs but to hunt smaller game in as brave a manner as their larger relatives.

As a judge, it is not possible to evaluate whether the dog in front of you possesses a keen nose or would be courageous in the hunt. Most of these desirable Dachshund characteristics will have to be taken for granted by the judge, and providing that the dog is not seen to be cringing in fear or falling asleep in the ring it must be assumed that, given the right stimulus, the dog would behave in the correct manner.

We know that a dog can be trained to appear alert or gay, perhaps, even to the extent of masking his true temperament. We are aware that any dog continually exposed to the same routine, in this case the show ring, will eventually become bored; his performance will therefore lack zest.

It is sure that while the Dachshund is 'lively', he is not 'merry' in the same way as the Cocker Spaniel. He can well do without the petting or attention of strangers.

GENERAL APPEARANCE: Long and low, but with compact and well muscled body, not cripple, cloddy or clumsy, with bold defiant carriage of head and intelligent expression.

These few lines really tell us very little; particularly if we have not already seen a Dachshund. The 'sausage dog' depicted in cartoons and illustrations bears little resemblance to the dog seen in the show ring today.

The Long-haired and Miniature Long-haired Standards give us measurements of comparison of height and length. These are rarely used either by breeders or judges, both preferring to rely on correct proportions judged by the eye.

While a long and low dog is good, the longest and lowest dog is not necessarily the best. The overall conformation of the dog must fit within the requirements of the entire Standard and all exaggerations should be avoided.

Lowness refers to the height of the dog as measured from the withers, or top of the shoulder, to the ground, and not nearness of the chest to the ground. Excessive depth of chest would contribute to an undesirable stuffy appearance, and make the dog unfit for hunting.

It is emphasised by the Standard that the Dachshund must not be clumsy or cloddy. Apart from the too deep chest already touched upon, a dog short in neck, heavily loaded in shoulder, or too short in body, would also be clumsy.

On the other hand, the Dachshund must not go to the other extreme and be too light in bone or lacking in such body substance that he appears frail or, as the Long-haired and Miniature Long-haired Standards put it, 'weasel-like'. This frail appearance has been the bane of miniature varieties and is still more

often seen in these than in the standards.

What is required is a dog appearing long in proportion to his height off the ground, with ample bone and giving an appearance of strength and agility without any suggestion of coarseness or at the other extreme fragility.

The reference to head carriage and expression is self-explanatory.

HEAD AND SKULL. Long and appearing conical when seen from above, and from a side view tapering to the point of the muzzle. Stop not pronounced, skull should be slightly arched in profile, appearing neither too broad nor too narrow. Jaw neither too square nor snippy but strong, the lips lightly stretched fairly covering the lower jaw.



This is fairly well described for all varieties. The main points to bear in mind are the conical shape of the whole head whether viewed from above or from the side. Conical must not be confused with wedge-shaped.



The tapering from the back of the skull to the nostrils is gradual and the muzzle is fairly filled in under the eyes, not hollowed out leaving the eye protruding. The stop, which is that part between the skull and the foreface approximating the bridge of the human nose, should not be marked by a dip. There are bony ridges over the eyes. The skull and the foreface should lie as much on the same plane as possible. Roughly, the head should be the same length from the back of the skull to the eye as from the eye to the nostril. The muzzle arches slightly to the nose. The lips are not pendulous or loose but lie neatly along the mouth, following the gradual slope of the muzzle and almost covering the lower jaw.

EYES. Medium in size, oval and set obliquely. Dark in colour, except in the case of chocolates, in which they may be lighter, in dapples one or both wall eyes are permissible.

There is little to add to this description. It must be remembered that the set of the eye and the expression conveyed by it does much to aid the appearance of the dog, and reinforces the specials Dachshund characteristics as required by

the Standard. Faults are large round eyes with a soft expression, and in reds and black and tans a light or yellow eye which gives an unpleasant, staring expression.

EARS. Broad, of moderate length, and well rounded (not narrow, pointed or folded), relatively well back high and well set on, lying close to the cheek, very mobile as in all intelligent dogs; when at attention the back of the ear directed forward and outward.

Faults are very low set droopy ears which are often folded or pointed and not very mobile. A short small ear set on in a terrier manner. The ear should end a little below the jaw line and it is very untypical if the inside edge of the ear does not lie close to the head.

MOUTH. Teeth must be strongly developed. The powerful canine teeth must fit closely. The correct bite is a scissors bite, any deviation being a fault. The Standards are very definite on this point and briefly say "any deviation is a fault". Many mouths are faulty to some degree. The most common fault seen is the overshot mouth, where the upper jaw protrudes over the lower jaw, giving the teeth a 'buck-toothed' appearance. An undershot jaw, where the upper and lower teeth meet edge to edge, is not often seen. The pincer bite is not objected to in some countries, and arguments in its favour have been advanced amongst Dachshund fanciers from time to time. Our Standard, however, demands a scissors bite. The teeth must be strong and white, not shelly or of a pearly texture. The jaw must not be so narrow that the teeth are overcrowded.

NECK. Sufficiently long, muscular, clean, no dewlap, slightly arched in the nape, running in graceful lines into the shoulders, carried well up and forward.

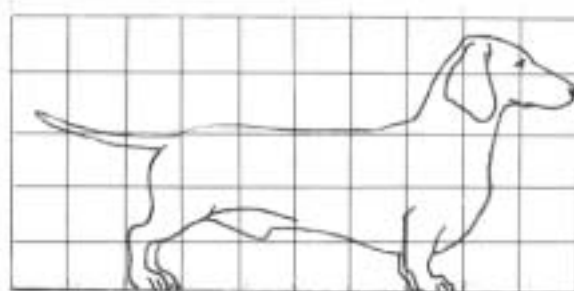
This description is clear. Faults are: a short, thick neck, a long thin neck without any crest on the nape (ewe neck); and too much baggy skin or dewlap under the throat.

FOREQUARTERS. Shoulder blades long, broad and set on sloping, lying on fully-developed ribs, muscles hard and plastic. Chest very oval, with ample room for the heart and lungs, deep and with ribs well sprung out towards the loins, breast bone very prominent. The front legs should, when viewed from one side, cover the lowest point of the breastline. Upper arm of equal length with, and at right angles to, the shoulder blade; elbows lying close to ribs, but moving freely up to shoulder blades. Lower arm short as compared with other animals, slightly inclined inwards (crook), seen in profile moderately straight; not bending forward or knuckling over (which indicates unsoundness).

The forequarters are probably one of the most important special characteristics of the Dachshund and deserve much consideration by the judge. The prominence of breast bone called for by the Standard, couple with the overall length and lowness of the dog, requires an exceptional thoracic structure.

With the preference decreed by fashion, rightly or wrongly, for straight front legs on the Dachshund, without any 'crook' whatsoever, the shoulder placement has suffered to some degree. It is now a common fault to find the shoulder blades set so far forward as to be almost up the dog's neck.

When the shoulder is forward set there is often little prominence of breast bone and, in fact, if it were possible to slide the shoulder blade back



Long, low and level