

JUDGING AT CRUFTS.....

Basenjis

To attend any great event is exciting, to be invited to be a participant is a great thrill, and so it was with a keen sense of anticipation that I arrived from Australia to judge a well-supported entry of 84 Basenjis. I thank all those responsible for the organization of my appointment and all the exhibitors who accepted my decisions in a sporting manner and who made my visit so memorable.

The end of winter is not the best of times for Basenji coats and allowances had to be made for the many that were dry and coarse and where many exhibitors had attempted to remove the old coat, not always successfully. Also in evidence were feet and pasterns that denoted a winter by the fire! However, whilst coats, feet and in many cases tails and sets needed improvement, on the credit side there were good eye colour and shape (just a few round ones), small hooded ears (a small number rather widely set), good length of upper arms and good toplines with some pleasing reachy hindquarters. Most exhibits presented with the required fine bone and those long elegant forearms, many would have done even better with improved layback of shoulder, though length of neck was most adequate.

Much allowance had to be made for dogs to cope with the noise and conditions of the day. Most coped with things well – some after a little

coaxing. Only one display of bad temperament marred a day of otherwise excellent dispositions.

On perusal of the catalogue and my results sheets, it was interesting to note that I had placed litter brothers for Dog CC and Reserve Dog CC – something that I had done previously when judging the Basenji Club of Great Britain Specialty back in 1992 – though not from the same breeding this time.

My BOB was a bitch from Denmark, **Dan/Lux Ch Skyewalker Storm of Whitney** with Reserve to a Swedish-bred bitch Faroaland Toyou of Zordia. Another to take my eye was the winner of the Junior Bitch Class, Sharon of Swalapal. With maturity she should have an excellent show career.

Of my BOB in my critique I wrote *“Entered the ring with all the panache of a truly elegant Basenji and moved effortlessly around it to fill your eye. Lovely balance and angulation which were highlighted by her short back, good shelf, good musculation and good feet. All this enhanced by a very pleasing head and expression. I would like a tighter tailset and curl, but ring conditions were such that there were moments of apprehension which her handler overcame. Her performance later in the evening at the Goup judging resulted in a place on the final short list and the winning of many admirers amongst the “doggy” spectators.”*

Kay Eldred



Miniature Poodles

Just what can one say that hasn't been said before about the most phenomenal Dog spectacle anywhere in the world?

They can discourse at length about the marvel of Westminster, the colossal FCI World Shows, the terrific Winner Shows, the Stockholm Internationals and the rest BUT nothing comes close to the unparalleled spectacle that is Crufts! And, now that international dogs can be exhibited there, it should become even more amazing and stimulating in the years ahead. It is indeed the Mecca of the international dog world.

My few words could not possibly do justice to the sheer scale of this truly enormous doggie event. Certainly I know that many dog writers, more competent than I, will try to portray for you just what it is about Crufts which sets it far and away to the forefront of any other Dog Show or doggie experience throughout the entire world.

Please believe me it is an experience that is totally unforgettable - one that every able-bodied dog fancier, whether a breeder, an

exhibitor, judge or handler, should aspire to enjoy at least once in a lifetime. Go, you'll be 'gob-smacked'!

Over the years I have been very fortunate in having had the chance to attend Crufts at the old site, Earl's Court, as well as at the National Exhibition Centre at Birmingham - and I hope to be able to make the trip again sometime in the years to come.

However, the main purpose of my visit this year was to honour an invitation from the Crufts Committee to judge Miniature Poodles on the last day, Sunday 9 March. The entry was super with 120+ dogs making a total entry of 133. Needless to say, I was delighted.

My first impressions were that there had been a considerable improvement in the overall standard of presentation and handling since the last time I judged Miniatures at the Welsh Kennel Club some years ago.

Generally, there were some really good specimens presented with very pleasing heads and expression, lovely chiselling and some good chins. Most displayed correct substance and bone, respectable bodies - in shape and depth, some pleasing feet (for a

change), a number of excellent tail sets and carriage, mostly correct angulation, some excellent coats and very good movement.

My major concerns were that some lacked balance, usually due to overlong loins with the resultant over-angulation; a few heads tended to lack stop and there were also some „mean% little eyes giving a completely foreign expression. Of course there was the normal small percentage of 'soft' coats and tails carried over the back (ugh!) and, in some cases, movement left something to be desired.

Nevertheless, I was extremely pleased with the results and am most grateful to all of the exhibitors for bringing along their stock for me to judge. Mention must be made of the truly terrific support received from The Miniature Poodle Club - just great - and sincerely appreciated.

What more could one ask?

My BOB was **Nordic and Fin Ch Kudos Hyside** - *An exceptional and outstanding type, full of quality with a classic head and expression, stylish movement, very well put down and handled, a clear winner on the day.*

Bob Curtis

Afghan Hounds

To judge your breed at Crufts must be the ultimate honour and I wish to thank all concerned for granting me that opportunity. I was greatly complimented by the large entry of many quality dogs.

Along with many other breeds worldwide, ours is currently experiencing dramatic and rapid changes of direction with the now greatly increased ease of use for imports, visiting stud dogs and frozen semen. Most of these developments are for the good of the breed, however there is a potential down side due in no small part to a too rapid introduction of too many different types which may prove to be incompatible when mixed together, resulting in a modern generic show dog rather than in an example of classic breed type.

The unavoidable loss of “families” recognisable for generations and prized for their predictable gene pools is one of the sad facts of breeding in the future.

In my opinion this “melting pot” situation was very much in evidence at Crufts 2003, with a greater variety of “type” being present in an entry than I have experienced before.

1 CC and BOB on the referee's decision, Ch Amudarya Shafir, (left in picture) a very typical and classical shaded masked red, really well balanced, nothing extreme about him, correct proportions of length to height and is of the requisite moderate size. Lovely body, very good outline, good head and lovely expression. Good ring in his tail. Superb fore and hindquarters, good depth of chest and spring of rib, Beautiful coat texture and a very good saddle. Steady as a rock in temperament, dignified and aloof but arrogant and absolutely sound coming and going, an excellent dog on the move, makes more of himself moving than he did on occasions when standing as he was inclined to rock back off his front and spoil his topline. He has a lovely length of stride due to his correct and balanced construction, an easy way of going and covers a great deal of ground without any bustle or hustle.

2 and Reserve CC, Ch Zareesh Asha JW, a striking and exotic black and tan with those very clearly defined rich TAN head markings seldom seen nowadays. He pushed the winner really closely and was in front until the last go around. Again he is a classic type, exuding dignity and aloofness, standing his ground with absolute arrogance, a stallion with no need for any stacking, and also completely sound coming and going. Substantial, masculine, with a lovely head, good topline, beautiful saddle and coat texture.



Lovely ring in his tail, adequate forequarters and lovely hindquarters. Could do with a slightly better shoulder but he uses himself so well. It was a very tight decision and I found it hard to say “Change them over please”. He was just not quite

as correct on the move, and initially he wanted to rush a little and was shortening his stride and then when I worked them he slowed down just a little too much and lost his carriage fractionally - but enough for me to change them over.

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