

# A SALUKI IS A SALUKI

(This introduction was first written by Florence Amhurst, the original importer of Salukis into the United Kingdom in 1928)

Many people still ask 'What are Salukis?' and they are told in the usual way that 'Saluki' is the Arab word for a hound, that Salukis are the hunting hounds of the wandering desert tribes. They then imagine Salukis to be just a nice kind of Greyhound that the Arabs take out to catch hares and gazelle with. It is explained that this is true, but what a great deal more has to be added! They have to be informed that Salukis are 'The Noble Hound' belonging to the great Sheikhs, that they are of lineage of incalculable value, like the world famed Arab horses that for pureness of descent nothing in the world surpasses, and that Saluki represent thousands of years of pedigree breeding; which seems almost incredible were it not for the traditions of the Arabs whose gift as breeders all nations acknowledge and that it can be further proved through history, archaeology, literature and art of the East and West.

And then must be pictured the Saluki in his own surroundings. We can see it all – the wandering sheep, the shepherds, the tents pitched beneath the stars, the dawn in the desert and the mirage-shrouded plain that baffles the guide, the string of camels, the Arab steeds and their dauntless riders, the Saluki too in the picture, hunting like the wind over the vastness, or after his chase perhaps a favourite one asleep in the great Sheikh's tent.

Students of Salukis will note with interest their inherited points and instincts and the quiet dignity which marks their high breeding, and will feel the charm of their gentleness and almost human dispositions. Someone who came home from the East and knew Salukis well said, 'The more you know a true Saluki the more you see that no combination of breeds or training or environment could ever make one – 'a Saluki is a Saluki'.

The Saluki Club has a unique responsibility and members realise and are proud that they are not merely specialising in some 'rather uncommon' breed', but are the guardians and custodians of a great heritage in possessing representatives of this most wonderful race.

Dr Clarence Little's old book on *Inheritance of Coat Color* claims that Salukis do not include brindles... If one comes up with a true brindle (which is a dominant), it would have to be from a different breed... maybe a Greyhound. He says that, like Afghans, the Saluki "grizzle-and-tan" is really a sable with the tan showing up on the legs more than any brindle pattern, and the "grizzle" is really just an alternative descriptive word ... how it looks to non-geneticists, is how I'd put it.

FRED LANTING



## Interpreting THE STANDARD

**TYPE.** All Sighthounds have elegance and a regal bearing and they have in common those elements in structure that create speed and endurance. These consist specifically of depth of chest, well tucked up loins, well laid-back shoulders, good angulation of rear quarters and moderate low-set hocks. **The components that give the Saluki its type are the head; the topline; the tail with its set, structure and carriage; the feet; the coat pattern and texture; the unique light, ground-covering gait; the multi-variation in colouring; and the temperament.**

**Almost alone among the breeds, Salukis vary enormously in type, and each type is correct.** The reason is the special place held by the Saluki in the Arab tradition and the immense size of the Middle East which has had the Saluki as a Hound of the chase.

Originally each tribe had the Saluki best suited for hunting the particular game in its own country, but by tradition (which still holds good in the Middle East) Salukis are not bought or sold but are presented as marks of honour. It follows that those presented to Europeans and brought to this country have come from a wide variation of terrain and climate and vary accordingly. The Standard has been drawn up to cover all types in the showing, a judge must make his selection on the standard of points and soundness of conformation.

**The topline of the Saluki is one of his most salient identifying characteristics.** *The Saluki topline is not exactly like that of any of the other Sighthound breeds.* The FCI Standard drawn up by Professor E Seiferis of the Union Internationale Cynologique des Levriers (International Sighthound Club) says:

*'Body – Withers well accentuated...a slight depression behind the withers...the back and loins, because of the muscles, are very slightly rounded. The hip-bones should be prominent, and sufficiently wide apart, the crop falls away slightly.'*

**Hutchinson's Encyclopaedia noted that the Arabs emphasise the prominent hip-bones, looking for enough space for three or four fingers between them, with a deep hollow between these bones being considered good.** The Arabian Standard also says that:

*'The main slope of the body should be from tail to shoulder, giving an impression of speed, the hindquarters being higher than the shoulders.'*

This is the construction of the cheetah, fastest of all animals.

**HEAD** The terms 'moderately wide between the ears', and 'stop not pronounced', leave room for considerable variation in head type. The Saluki head must never be domed. It should give a pleasing, balanced appearance in relation to the overall dog, denoting great quality with no trace of coarseness. To quote a long time breeder, judge and author, Hope Waters, *'it is the head which must give that air of breeding one expects in an aristocrat. The head should never be Borzoi-type.'*

**Ears.** Ears should be set fairly high (level with or above the corner of the set of the eye). **When the dog is intent on something the ears come up and forward;** on the bored or discontented Saluki they hang lower on the skull and close to the head. A Saluki's head and expression is most appealing when he is alert and his ears are pricked. However, breeders and judges must avoid the temptation to favour a dog whose ear-set is so high that he has an alerted expression regardless of his mood, for such a Saluki loses character and fails to conform to the Standard.

**On occasion judges throw objects or make strange noises in an attempt to assess Saluki expression. While their intentions are noble, their efforts are in vain.** The Saluki is not a Terrier. He will as likely as not stare off in disdain at such nonsense. Let judges watch the Saluki on the coursing field, or let a cat chance to streak across the ring. Then observe Saluki expression!

Note here that the leather of the ear should be of such length that when brought forward (not pulled) the bottom tip should reach the corner of the dog's mouth.

**Nose.** Liver or black. Attention should be called to the fact that liver is a dark reddish brown. Clearly, liver should not be penalised.

**Eyes.** Eyes should be gentle and intelligent, 'almost human'. **When alert, the Saluki eye should be**

**piercing.** The eye must have an oval shape rather than round. It should be dark to hazel, and it is preferable that the eye-rims be dark. The eyes should not be prominent.

**Teeth.** Strong and even with a good scissor bite.

**Neck.** Long, supple and well muscled, but not thick.

**Chest.** **The chest when viewed from the front should not be an inverted 'V'.** It should be relatively narrow, not weak or pinched, but in no case wide. The rib cage is generally flat-sided, and barrel chests should be considered faulty. The lungs are low in the chest cavity and for the most part behind the elbow. The chest should be deep to accommodate ample lung space.

The Saluki must in no case be 'herring-gutted' that is, his bottom line must not break upwards to his tuck up too far forward, for this denies him heart and lung room and sufficient length of diaphragm which is necessary for endurance. We frequently observe judges measuring depth of brisket by feeling its position relative to the elbow and earnestly hope that in each case the judge is making an evaluation of the amount of brisket **behind the foreleg as well.** The Saluki gains his lung capacity from depth rather than width. At the gallop, he extends his rear leg forward on the outside of the front legs, and his moderately narrow chest lends efficiency to this gait.

**Forequarters.** Shoulders sloping and set well back, well muscled without being coarse. **A sloping shoulder is important for the angle it makes with the upper arm or humerus.**

**Hindquarters.** Strong, hipbones set well apart and stifle moderately bent, ie not straight in stifle or over angulated, hocks low to the ground, showing galloping and jumping power.

**Loin and Back.** A fairly broad back means a moderate spring of rib, not barrel ribbed and not slab sided. A slight arch over the loin but in no way roached backed.

**Feet.** Of moderate length, toes long and well arched, not splayed out, but at the same time not cat-footed; the whole being strong and supple and well-feathered between the toes. **A Saluki characteristic is that the two middle toes on all four feet are considerably longer than the two outer toes.**

**Tail.** A good guide to the length of tail is that the tip of the tail bone should normally reach to the hock. The importance of this is that the tail is used as a rudder when the Saluki is running at speed. Note especially here that the Standard states **'set on low'** and **'carried naturally in a curve'**.

There is nothing about low carriage. A low-set tail indicates the length of the pelvis as it is set more or less at the end of this important bone. The pelvis should be long and gently sloping as a powerful lever for jumping power. A too-short and too-steep pelvis gives a sharp cut-off look to the rear, instead of the sweeping powerful spring from hip to hock which is desirable. Normally the tail should not be carried above the line of the back except in play. The feathering at the end of the tail may give the impression of a loop when carried in a natural curve but this should not be confused with a tight ring of bone which is undesirable.

**Coat.** Slight feathering is often encountered on the throat. Whiskers should not be cut. Colour. Any colour or combination of colours is permissible.

**Height.** The wide variation in the Standard is in recognition of the fact that the Saluki comes from a vast geographical region which cause wide variation in height. It follows that a Saluki should not be penalised on account of size, provided it is within the standard.

**Movement.** The movement of a Saluki is a very important characteristic of the breed. **The action of the Saluki is different from that of a Greyhound, as it is also from that of the correctly moving Afghan Hound and certainly the German Shepherd or Irish Setter.** It is more springy when walking and at a trot it should be very light. **As one well-known judge put it "each step should look as though it was a push-off for the next".**