

TO BE OR NOT TO BE CONCAVE

A new problem arose among Dogue de Bordeaux fanciers especially in the U.S.A.: "there is much discussion about the topline".

The FCI standard says that the Dogue de Bordeaux is a « concave-lined molossoid»

« Molossoid » dogs (Pierre MEGNIN's classification, 1897) have a « massive body, rather low to ground ». « Concaviligne » (concave-lined, BARON) animals show a concave outline (not only the head but also the body). The skull is broad, the muzzle turned up, the topline hollow, the "extremities" (paws, tail, tip of muzzle) are thick, the feet turn out and the skin is thick.



THE PERFECT SILHOUETTE

Eros de l'étang de Mirloup prop. M. GUIGNARD

The Dogue de Bordeaux is basically a concave dog **BUT** breeders have tried for a century to avoid exaggeration. Consequently the standard says "a very muscular body yet retaining a **harmonious** general outline", "built **rather** low to the ground", "metacarpal region (pasterns) **slightly** outwards".

Now, what is the effect of **selection** on the Dogue de Bordeaux? The standard in French says "bien soutenu" meaning "well sustained": no hollow or sway back.

In concave dogs, the withers are not marked or only very slightly marked. In our dogue, on the contrary, the withers are "well marked". Several dogs with straight backs are said to have "well marked withers" or "pronounced withers": the Dobermann, the Belgian shepherd, the German Pointer, the Auvergne Pointer, etc. Then there is a slight or very slight dip behind the well-marked withers. The back slopes slightly down (except in dogs "camped behind" in the show ring like the Dobermann or the Boxer when the "slope" is much steeper) towards the loin which is always slightly or very slightly arched. Let us not speak of the croup which is not a part of the "topline".

In the Dogue de Bordeaux, the back **never slopes down** to the rear (it would be against its nature). The topline is never perfectly "straight" in a mathematical meaning, nor is it horizontal. At best, after the "dip" behind the

withers, the line rises insensibly to melt into the slightly arched loin. This is what we call a "well-sustained" topline. This is why in my *Saga of the Dogue de Bordeaux* I said in the commentaries to the standard "No molossus has a rectilinear topline. In the Dogue de Bordeaux **we aim** for it **as straight as possible** in a concave-lined dog"

Should we describe the topline as dipping from the rear to the front? Certainly not! A standard being the description of the ideal model, we would rapidly obtain roach-backed bulldogs. See what the (British) Kennel Club says about our Dogue's cousin (or brother) the Bullmastiff: "Roach and sway backs highly undesirable". The British standard for the Bulldog says: "top of loin higher than top of shoulder" (which is the top of the withers). It should never be the case in the Dogue de Bordeaux.

Don't forget: we want no exaggerated features. This is why I suggest to illustrate this paper with what I called formerly: "the perfect silhouette", showing the meaning of the expression; "a topline as straight as possible"

Le 29/04/2008
R. Triquet



Angun des Chenaies de Kom Pystou prop. JYPEX

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