

The DOGUE DE BORDEAUX

front construction but these dogs do have the appearance of moving their front legs very quickly while not actually travelling anywhere and appear to be 'running into the ground'.

We're also seeing some Dogues awarded highly for exhibiting movement which is clearly an exaggeration on that which is required. I think judges tend to make a bit much of what should be essentially basic straight movement with good reach and drive on a fairly heavy dog. This is a breed which has at times been used as a heavy draught dog and for herding cattle so economy of movement is important. Where fronts are hyper-extending to the point where the bottom of the feet are fully visible as a dog is coming towards you and at full extension some 4 or 5 inches off the ground this is neither correct nor sound and some rears are exhibiting extreme rotary movement. The standard doesn't call for either so why reward it?

A.3. a. The breed is afflicted by basically all of the hereditary diseases seen in the large/giant breeds and some breeders are working very hard to improve those things which can be tested for eg. Hip and Elbow Dysplasia. Immune mediated diseases can be a problem which many still choose to ignore. Some of the rarer recessive diseases are difficult to eradicate but I think if breeders take a responsible attitude and limit or disallow the use of affected Dogues they will remain rare. Unfortunately the breed does not have the most expansive gene pool so it is unreasonable to assume that health problems can be completely eradicated within the limits of science at this time.

A.3.b. There are some breeders who understand both form and function and how it relates to structure and they are attempting to improve or maintain good conformation but the bulk of Dogues in Australia are based on dogs which were quite flawed in their structure and many breeders continue to linebreed and inbreed on these lines. As a result many Dogues here have poor construction being short in upper arm (with a corresponding sharp dip behind the withers) and out at elbow in front and straight stifles (some to the point of hyperflexing) continue to be seen regularly. There are a very large number of breeders at this present time but only a small percentage are actively attempting to improve the breed.

A.4. The trapezoid skull shape, undershot/chin mark/rependous, profile, muzzle strength, body type. The undershot, chin mark and repandous must all come under one point as they are all intrinsically tied together - all must be present for correctness of type.

A.5. I think many judges are overly impressed by Dogues with excessive substance or movement and often ignore better types with more correct construction and movement because they are not

understanding the requirements of the standard regarding these aspects and the clear differences between each of the Molosser breeds. We have seen the rise of the generic 'show dog' prancing about, often lacking in many of the most basic breed characteristics the world over and at the same time type has fallen by the way side. Type is a major issue for the breed worldwide at this time and until judges are able to recognise correct type it will continue to be an issue. It would be a pity to no longer be able to distinguish the Dogue from the other Mastiff breeds based on type.

Over the years there have been many judges ask if they're supposed to be undershot (!!!) and many more who are concerned when they look in what is actually a correct mouth and are put off by the greater degree of undershot; which if correctly coupled with the curve to jaw the lower incisors will overlap the upper incisors (at times considerably). Often these correct bites will lose to a 'prettier' mouth with less undershot and lacking repandous.

The job for our Judges has not been made any easier by breeders/exhibitors who have in the past misled many as to what correct type, movement and construction should be and rather interpreted the standard to suit the dog/s they are exhibiting. Various they have been told they should be 'east-west' in front, they should look like drag-cars with lowered fronts and steep toplines or that they should be exaggeratedly low to the ground (excessively short in leg). None of these are correct!

While we have no breed club to enable any Specialist shows to be conducted we have had a few Specialists here; Mr Rafael Malo Alcrudo of Spain, Mr Bas Bosch of the Netherlands who has not judged the breed here but did make time recently to do a breed lecture and Mr Jacques Menard-Ringuet of France (tier 2 Breed judge and responsible for confirming Dogues for breeding on an annual basis) and they have been quite definite in looking for the desired aspects of type; namely skull shape and chin marks/rependous.

A.6. Perhaps it is bias or perhaps it is knowing the bitch so well but our own Gr CH Laruscades Tazz would have to be the best example I have seen. There



proportions and at the same time nothing was excessive or over done; she was

also clearly feminine. To be picky she could have had larger incisors!

Construction wise she was well balanced with good proportions and angulations in front and behind and a good strength of topline but she also showed enough body type to suit specialist judges (the 'pear shape' with the chest slightly wider than the rear, the correct spring of rib and slightly greater depth of chest than depth from chest to ground). Some would perceive her croup as being a little more sloped than the required moderate and some would find it acceptable.

Her movement was straight and correct although many judges lamented she did not move as well as a Siberian (??) She carried a good degree of bone and substance quite suited to a Dogue de Bordeaux bitch of medium size.

One of her few and most obvious faults was her coat; it was quite heavy and coarse but product and stripping improved that! She is still with us today at the age of 9½ years (and looking a good couple of years younger than that) but has been slowed up a lot after having a foreleg amputated over 2 years ago after developing a tumour in her elbow joint. I guess it is a testament to her soundness that she is still running around today as losing a front leg is much more difficult for a heavy dog to adapt to.

Chris & Yvette Girling
Moloscyg

A.1. As a whole compared to some other breeds, yes. But while it is sufficient and longer than some breed standards I have seen, once one reads the Commentary on the Standard written for the Saga of the Dogue de Bordeaux book, the difference is clear. There are some finer points in the commentary which really explain the standard in more depth, making the differences in type much clearer when compared to the Bullmastiff, Mastiff and Neopolitan Mastiff. "Slightly" is a word that is often referred to in our standard and sometimes this needs clarification, as do upper and lower limits. All breeders should study the commentary and I also highly recommend it to judges.

A.2. Lion like gait. Head low, good reach, powering along with drive from the rear. Neither too slow or excessively fast.

A.3.a. Hip and Elbow dysplasia are still the most obvious issues and to breed without these scores is irresponsible, most breeders in Australia hip and elbow score, with many moving to the Penn Hip method also. But there are still those who breed without scoring first. Heart issues are seen more overseas but are creeping in over here and some breeders also heart test.

A.3.b. Lack of type in confirmation. Too many dogues are lacking type with muzzles too long and narrow, lacking in wrinkle, heads not trapezoid shape,

not enough visible chin or correct undershot, no muzzle layback, open stop. Some types will resemble Great Danes, Bullmastiffs and Neopolitans, so if the first impression you get of a Dogue is another Mastiff breed, then the type is not correct. Many are also becoming too high on leg, not to say they should also be too low on leg.

A.4. Ordering these in priority is very difficult because particularly of the first 4, it is almost impossible to put one in front of the other due to the majority of the standard being devoted to the head.

1. Trapezoid head shape
2. Visible chin mark, repandous jaw.

A correct undershot and upwards curve of the lower jaw should give the correct view of good visible chin mark, along with the correct fall of the lips giving the shape of a wide upside down "V".

3. Adequate wrinkles across the muzzle, eyebrow and forehead, that are also "mobile", particularly mobile eyebrows and forehead rather than heavy "dead" folds.

4. Wide and deep closed stop. The stop should almost form a right angle.

5. Harmonious shape, being neither too high on leg or low on leg. They should have the appearance of being built slightly close to the ground and be balanced, not massive heavy dogs.

A.5. Mistake or Preference.....it is hard to gauge if a judge is genuinely making a mistake or awarding their preference for the All Breeds ring. My feeling is that as the standard devotes almost 70% to the head, that a judge who awards showy movement above head type is making a mistake. A dogue must exhibit breed type. To pass over a dog with the correct head shape, chin mark and expression, for a dogue who shows well, glides or prances like another breed, holding their head high, while it might look pleasant in the All Breeds arena, to me is a mistake.

A.6. While other breeders have been lucky enough to attend many more overseas shows and kennels than I have, I had the pleasure of going overseas last year and seeing around 250 Dogues at show. While the perfect Dogue has not been produced yet that fits every single aspect of the standard perfectly, I have my priorities as far as the standard goes and I want my example to be a dogue I have seen myself. My favourite example Dogue has strengths, extremes and weaknesses, like any show dog, but he fits my priorities within the standard and I have been lucky to see him in person.

Belgian bred and UK/Belgian owned, World Champion, International/Dutch/Belgium Champion, Enferno van de Paterhoek, says everything to me about the Dogue.

He has a regal air about him, an arrogant look, dissuasive and "sour mug" as the breed is described. His expression