

IWC OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA - JUDGES REPORT - LIZ THORNTON

Blessed with fine weather and an efficient steward, i had plenty of time and space to assess the wolfhounds at this venue. Thank you for bringing your hounds, sometimes huge distances, for this Speciality.

Its never hard to judge good dogs, and here were many excellent hounds. I was so pleased to be able to sit to watch the hounds the next day with another judge - we did have many of the same dogs at the top, but not necessarily in the same order. Best of Breed competition was just wonderful.

Overall I didn't get the same impression of narrow and "tight" bites that i have had when judging the last couple of times on this Continent. There are always some with missing premolars or a not quite level incisor line, squashed for space, but I wasn't so concerned about this as to flag it up as an issue here. More often than not one found a good broad under jaw and plenty of white teeth.

The usual " drag on the breed" faults were present in the entry of course - the too curly tails, the narrow ribcages and fronts with insufficient layback of shoulder and upper arm - and in one class three of the four exhibits couldn't move forward straight but crabbed at the trot. Sometimes if you swop sides with the hound it gets onto a better stride if its in the habit of leaning on its handler, sometimes crabbing is as a result of insufficient fitness or some constructional deficit. It would have been nice to see more fitness, enthusiasm and drive from the rear on some exhibits.

On a more positive note, what lovely ears you have ! I so appreciate the leaf thin well carried ears capable of rose-ing and in all ways being " greyhound like in carriage". Regarding overall quality, you have some real " cream on the top". I was blessed by some entrants which would trouble the best across the world and some youngsters whose careers I will follow with great interest.

All the hounds in the entry were clean, in Europe you can often find yourself with greasy black hands at the end of an assignment and it was nice not to have this. Character- wise, one skittish hound and one which muttered at me under his breath was also pretty good in a large entry such as this. I thought the latter was forgivable as he was, i felt, reacting to being made to show rather than at me for handling him. Apart from this small negative comment all the hounds had true wolfhound character and were a pleasure to meet and handle.

Veteran dog (6 - 8 years)

- 1) Inis Airc's Doomore Oisin,(Sharkey/ Christian) A good start to the day, a splendidly fit and typical 6 1/2 yo male whose easy and correct movement took the eye from the start. I commended him for a lovely head and ear carriage, a shapely rear and a compact strong body, he looks every inch a hunter and I kept him in to my final cut in BOB challenge before regretfully letting him go out in favour of larger males.
- 2) GCh Glen Eyrie's Ashford,(Williams) 7 1/2 year old wheaten, a year can be a lot to give away in a wolfhounds' senior years and this handsome hound is beginning to lack in musculature at rear, which slowed him down somewhat on the move. Blackest of pigmentation and good length of leg and proportionate length of back. Coat could be harsher.

Veteran dog (8 - 10 years)

- 1) GCh Eirinn's Castle of Sir Lancelot (Squires) wheaten again with a softer coat texture, lovely quality head, darkly pigmented. His top line has softened with age and although sound in hind action still he found it difficult to sustain a trot, bless him. He enjoyed his tour around the ring and being back in the limelight.

Veteran bitch (6- 8 years)

- 1) Inis Airc's Fanaile Ode to Heartsong (Sharkey & Christian), black brindle and in superb condition, harsh dark grey coat. Admired her dark eyes, long well balanced head and neat ears, she is well ribbed back and like her litter brother in the matching class she moved off beautifully and looked very fit and strong.
- 2) Ch Folkloire's Lauren of Gabriel (Schluter) wheaten brindle a year older than class winner and at this stage not quite as strong in topline, but it was a close call between them. A big curvaceous bitch with good length of leg and sound action, very true up and down, i liked her ribbing and shapely rear.
- 3) Ch Carroy Country Girl of Tory (Burchett, Rosebrook & Shepard). what a very beautiful head and textbook ears this bitch has, very well presented to show off her good points. Preferred the front construction of those ahead of her, very well ribbed back and strong neck and top line. Not gaiting as well as her competition on this day.

Puppy dog (12- 18 mths)

- 1) Lonnkyle Prestige (Simmons) this shaded red youngster looked a handful, happily diving about to push his nose into everything. He is still raw, as he should be at this age, his proportions are very good and he has the length of leg and neck which will stand him in good stead when mature. Short harsh coat. Dark eye, balanced head, ear set could be tighter and higher. Deep ribbing, strong straight bone and well bent stifles. Excellent movement, balanced extensions and kept high head carriage in profile. An extremely classy youngster.
- 2) Folkloire's You're the One to Stormhaven (Thompson) wheaten in extremely good condition, a tall youngster and not at all gangly, he presented a good outline with depth of ribbing and good length of legs. Would prefer slightly more angulation at both ends, heavier in skull and ear than his rival and lacked extension in profile action in comparison.

Novice dog

- 1) Kerryarc Fire Away (Tyler & Collier), at first sight i couldn't believe this hound was in novice, i understand he's not been shown much so far. Aged two and a bit he is already a most striking dog. All male, hardly needs handling into a stack as he possesses the commanding appearance as a result of his confident nature and excellent construction. Tidy high set ears, quality yet masculine head. Strong body, particularly broad and well bent stifles, harsh coat and rock hard condition. Completely takes the eye in profile movement, very sound on the up and down. When his upper arm settles back a bit he is going to be even more appealing - what a prospect. He'd be a champion anywhere.
- 2) Femke Footsteps Glen Elgin (Wandruff & Somers). This youngster was unsettled in the ring and didn't make the best of himself standing or moving on the day. He has many good points, for instance a long arched neck, well set upper arms and broad shapely stifles, presented a houndy outline. Needed to relax onto a longer stride and widen out in hind action, rather large ears on his attractive head and not the coat texture of the winner.

Bred by Exhibitor Dog

the first three in this class would be top quality champions anywhere in the world, it was a delight to meet them all here.

- 1) BIS, BOW, Rockhart Raphael. (Simon). It had to be a good one to win this class and despite stiff competition he kept coming to the top of the line all day. This dog really does have it all. Substantial, curvaceous, houndy, has length of leg and arch of neck - it's all there. He seems to have an easygoing nature yet is completely confident and presents the hallmark of a good hound, commanding appearance - you cant help but notice him. His main fault is the white extending up his inside fore legs, once you have said that and remarked quietly to yourself that

a touch more drive off the hocks would be even better you have put the negatives out there and parked them as insignificant compared to his great virtues. His movement is truly easy and active, how a dog of his size and substance can give the appearance of floating around the ring is a tribute to his excellent construction. His front is so well made he doesn't have to exert himself to open up in profile action, i could watch him all day. What a dog.

- 2) Lonnkyle Midnight Prowler (Simmons) another cracking young hound. Black brindle harsh coated, I mentally described him as in "dry" condition, still needs to fill out a bit which should come as he's not two by some margin. Quality head, long neck, balanced angulations and moved with verve. Has good length of leg and a very long tail. reserve Winners Dog.
- 3) Kerryarc Rio Bravo (Tyler Tyler & Collier) Stallion hound in full maturity, steel grey brindle of high quality and completely masculine. Long neck, well made throughout, strong ribbing and topline, curvaceous hindquarters. If only he had opened out in action on the day, for whatever reason he didn't use himself as well as the two above him.
- 4) Inis Airc's Journey Back to Fitzarran (Sharkey & Christian) grey brindle presented in hard condition, slightly less angulated than those ahead of him, would prefer a little more let down of hock. Another quality head and ear.

American Bred

After lavishing "excellents" on the previous class, this class tended more to the "very good".

- 1) Gabriel's Qoolude of Cu Mara (Gould, Birse, Luba). Beautiful colour, red wheaten, substantial and in good coat, balanced outline. Shapely rear with low set hock. Shoulders could be better laid back.Moved better than his competitors.
- 2) Hounds Reach Gabriel's Arlo (Finucane & Gabriel) Many years ago when I first judged in the USA his sire was I think my best puppy, the marvels of A.I. This a tall hound with strong bone and a very appealing head. Slightly too long in back, nice low hocks. A lazy mover on this day, coat could be harsher.
- 3) Carroy Menacing Monk (Furst), not the best name choice for this sweet natured hound! His outline is good in profile, certainly looks a houndy sort with a good broad stifle and well let down hocks. Needs to be more masculine in head for a male, flat ears. Narrow through the front. Snatched pasterns on the move.

Open Dog

- 1) O'Kelleegh's Lismore Oyrvran.(Tank & Le Van). In the UK one can win CCs and yet remain within an age class, this junior suffered having won some points and being boosted into Open under your system, but still had enough in hand to win. For some reason i didn't take a photograph of him but have enough in my memory and notes to describe him. Only 13 months so a lot of bodying up to do, has made plenty enough height. Best mover in the class, lovely head and expression, excellent neck, short harsh coat, carried himself extremely well on an easy stride.
- 2) Cnoccarne Benagh of Berrybriar (Berry & Ross). This hound was close up to the winner, lovely head and eye, has foretaste and substance, low hocks. His "if only" is the curly tail.....
- 3) Oberon Weasley von Märchenwald (Burr). I liked the substance and musculation on this hound, lacking in length of thigh and second thigh.

Puppy Bitch 6 - 9 mths

Three quality youngsters. I'll be particularly interested in how the baby who came second comes along.

1). Legacy's Salish Diamondback (Blanchard & McCluskey). I liked this quality grey brindle for her length of leg and houndy outline, is nicely balanced especially in profile action where she retained her shape and had very attractive head carriage and poise. Lovely houndy head. Would hope she widens out in hind action given time.

2) Pinehurst Gladys (Goodell & Fairbanks). I loved this puppy, giving a lot away in age at just six months, beautifully presented black bitch of high quality and with much promise for the future. Dead sound, super mover. Marginally preferred the length of leg of winner, but much can change at this age.

3) Taryn Mon Amour of Pinehurst (Goodell & Fairbanks). Well grown and substantial dark grey brindle with white feet, houndy outline and very heavy bone. Tendency to stand high at rump, is at the age when the growth can be uneven. Needs to relax through the stifles which i am sure will come with age and exercise.

Puppy Bitch 9 - 12 months

1) Rockhart Raptur (Simon), Another from this breeder to be subjected to a rave review from me. Golden brindle colour at the moment, you know the coat is going to turn brown in a year or so but at this age and with the sun on her back this golden girl was exceptionally attractive. She even has a stripe of brindle which enhances her good lay of shoulder. Lovely head, neck and a kind dark eye. Balanced outline and action. I have photographs and memories of some of Mrs Nagles hounds back in the 70s where this exhibit would fit right in, she has a strong look of what Ch Max sired. Needs to widen behind a touch and arch over the loin would be nice, but otherwise a thoroughly typical and balanced hound of great quality.

12- 18 month Bitches. Another good class with many excellent young females present.

1) Carroy Jada PS of Tory (Burchett, Rosebrook & Shepard). Very houndy grey brindle, so feminine, beautiful head and presented an attractive outline, curvaceous and with an excellent neck arch.

2) Folkloire's Sweet Tate'r Pi (Schluter), some hounds leave their mark on your memory and her tail is like a bell rope, such length to it. A very nice hound, substantial yet feminine, has bone and a good shape. Marginally preferred winner, it was close.

3) Folkloire's Alley Cat Horizons (Clark). Another quality grey brindle hound, tall and well boned with a lovely body and rear end. I can see her as a very useful brood bitch to the right sire.

4) Rycheron Bailebrae Marlene Dietrich (Stuart & Riggs), charming pale grey brindle with good bone and head qualities, softer in coat and i would prefer more second thigh to give more shape to her stifles.

Novice bitch - absent

Bred by Exhibitor Bitches

- 1) Kerryarc Rhinestone (Tyler & Collier). My notes start with " gorgeous". Very houndy, lovely head and ears with a long neck, shapely rear - and the most fabulous profile movement. Low set hocks produced great drive and her front balanced this perfectly. I was so impressed with her, another who would be a champion anywhere in the world. Winners Bitch.
- 2) Lonnkyle Patent Pending (Simmons). I kept returning to this black brindle bitch, she wasn't far off the winner for me. Superb head, she seems to have a lovely character. Superb sound action. Wonderful coat. Winner edged her on second thighs and is slightly bigger cast.
- 3) Balgonie's Jura of Ammchara (Bell). Was so curious to discover her breeding, she had such great type and breed qualities, a very " Irish" look about her, in that the better hounds you see

in Ireland are of her sort. Slightly looser ear set than winners when you need to split hairs, an excellent bitch with many virtues.

- 4) Berrybriar Cnoccarne Promise of the Past (Berry), harsh coated black brindle and again a lovely type, tall and balanced. Was told she was in season, which might have made her not quite as steady in rear action as those ahead of her.

American Bred Bitches. This was the difficult class for me, i do love a good mover and the best seemed to be in the other classes.

- 1) Summerhill Zajacz She Loves You (Zayak & Rabe). Shown in great coat condition, glossy thick pelt. Substantial and curvy, has heavy bone and a quality head and neck set. Her “ if only” is the cow hocks, but they did not impede her forward action, profile movement was balanced.
- 2) Hounds Reach Gabriel’s Abby 56 Cabell ((Finucane) Tall hound with a shapely outline, good stifles with low hocks, deep chested. Attractive head. Ears could be better folded. She would persist in side winding on the move.
- 3) Hounds Reach Gabriel’s Ava of Bailebrae (Grotano & Barry) Smaller sister of 2) with good ear set and carriage, attractive head, very nice layback of shoulder and upper arm and good reach of neck. My notes say “ hocks not as stable”
- 4) Cu Mhin’s Athena (Giles), A pretty and tall girl with lovely ears, well presented. Eyes could be darker. Crabbing badly on the move.

Open Bitches - another strong class, full of beautiful hounds. A great pleasure to judge.

- 1) Kerryarc Reminic (Tyler & Carson), mother of WB and you can see exactly where Rhinestone got her many qualities. With age she has a little more substance than her daughter on the same beautiful framing. She was pushed by the lovely bitch who stood second, but took it on the quality of her layback of upper arm and extremely easy long strides. Lovely head, overall proportions, profile action, these are her strengths. When examining her in detail against her daughter I marginally preferred the latter’s coat and condition on the day. A small point, but how lovely to see jet black lips with full dentition on the photo i have of Reminic.
- 2) Angie de Campalma (Gould, Luba, Birse), I see she is from Italy and by that great sire Kingarra. Beautiful bitch. Excellent head qualities. Substantial high quality youngster with balanced angulations, couldn’t match the winner for reach of stride but a very typical strong and unexaggerated female with dead sound action.
- 3) Rockhart Wynona (Simon), this one looks as if she should make a great brood bitch, has the excellent construction and chest of the best mothers. Another excellent head, strong arched neck and well made stifles with strong hocks. I did take the white legs into account when deciding between these three lovely bitches.
- 4) Rycheron’s Too Cute to Care (Riggs & Lindley), for a bitch with eight week old puppies at home she was in cracking coat and condition, congratulations to her owners. If anything slightly too well covered ! Particularly liked her coat texture, her head and her tight feet. Well arched neck, great ribbing and super stifles, she moved well.

Best of Breed competition

After spotting so many hounds which i thought would be worthy champions in the classes - in came one of the best groups of hounds its ever been my pleasure to judge. Depth of quality too, these hounds deserved their titles and it wasnt too easy making the cuts, based on small points of personal preference more often than not. I did manage to get more photographs on the second day thank goodness, as once into the judge-concentration zone to decide on the final winners nothing else was thought of.

Best of Breed to the young male Raphael. For me and on this day he was unstoppable.

Best of Sex Ch Olivia of Beltane (Riggs & Lindley) bred in Belgium. I thought she was so very beautiful, outstanding head, substantial yet not losing quality and femininity, very easy and correct action. Saw her from the rear inside the tent on the second day and dived towards her to say how nice she was - so I was pleased I found her and would have liked her on either day.

Select Dog Ch Lonnkyle Traveller (Simmons), I went for the graceful hound ness of this male, quality head, outstanding type and action.

Select Bitch Ch Carroy Zajacz's Abreann of Tory (Zayac, Rosebrook), in a slightly less substantial package than Olivia, beautiful construction, quality head and such lovely poise and action.

Awards of Merit - and I could have given more - Ch Taryn Hamilton of Pinehurst (Goodell) a truly excellent male who was Best the following day for Roger Tebbutt. I remember on my day the two ahead of him edged it on their movement, i felt he needed a tiny bit more activity.

Kerryarc Rhinestone (q.v.)

Ch August Robeson, all male with superb coat and condition, loved his construction and was happy to see him coursing on the final day and showing he can really use himself. You can see he would be able to look after himself against any prey animal.