

General observations on the IWANE regional specialty on June 9th, 2024 at Windsor Connecticut:

I was extremely impressed with the overall quality of the Wolfhounds at the "IWANE" regional specialty and find that the breed has improved in quality over the last fifty years. The Wolfhounds that I saw at the IWANE show were as good as any that I have judged in the past and easily comparable to other regional specialties which I have judged in the past. Delaware Valley, about 10 years ago, and, more recently, in Canada about three or four years ago come to mind.

For example, there were very few "gay" tails or, for that matter, even ring tails, which I find fairly objectionable. In fact, many exhibits had very lovely, thickly coated tails -some with a white tip. (Why I mention this is that in a Deerhound a white tip is considered a sign of quality and, of course, we know that at one time Deerhounds were used to help bring "back" the Wolfhound.) "*...The less white the better but a slight white tip to the stern occurs in some of the best strains.*" In fact, there was relatively little white markings but pretty much correct for the breed.

I chuckled to myself for years ago, when Mrs Nagle had come to America, she excused virtually most of the dogs with gay tails when visiting in New Hampshire and judging the equivalent of a smaller British Open Show. Eyebrows were raised; it even carried all the way back to Britain. We had been visiting Miss Noble and were at the Bath Show, when we got the "news" - first hand - from Joe Braddon at Bath.

I saw very many lovely heads, well proportioned not too blocky or "pointy." There were far less flat ears and very few light eyes. In fact, the overall picture in many of the classes had dogs and bitches that were balanced with very clean necks set on properly, lovely underlines; good sweep of stifle, well muscled and, most importantly, in good condition. All in all most of the exhibits were 'not overdone' or too gross. To my mind novices confuse large with "big." which leads to some very ungainly and uncoordinated Wolfhounds.

Movement was quite good in most cases; the exhibits covered ground well with good reach (or "extension") and drive. Due to the overall good condition, there were very not many cowhocks or weak pasterns. Most feet were well knuckled. I like to think that a Wolfhound should be sound enough to turn easily and effortlessly within its own diameter, particularly if they must deal with a wolf, which is no mean feat. Many entries fit that criteria easily and were very agile.

Some may say reading this critique that I might have emphasized too much attributes such as bad ear and earset, underline and tails, &c. &c. Well these components are important to the breed, particularly Wolfhounds. A strong, well coated tail acts a rudder while protecting the tail from brush and bracken. A well coated, strong tail helps this running breed to manage the terrain. It is important to note that the Standard describes the Wolfhound as a galloping breed, necessitating a proper tail. Since both the Wolfhound and Deerhound had incorporated greyhounds with the arrival of the Romans to Britain and Ireland, such fine points are very important.

By in large, coats were not overly groomed and were harsh to the touch and in most cases the proper length. I cannot abide overly groomed Wolfhounds (or Deerhounds, for that matter). They are not terriers and need a decent coat to deal with bad weather, for which Ireland and Scotland are known.

My Best of Breed, Ch. O'Lugh Blackwater Barkeep owned by Jennifer Sula and bred by Andrea and Michael Dormady was an upstanding male with a lot of quality; he moved easily and well, both coming and going as well as from the side. The **Best of Opposite Sex, Ch O'Lugh's Martini**, bred by J&W Lee and Glen Meyer was equally good quality; however it is difficult to find such a quality, sound dog, which is why "Barkeep" (really?) went Best of Breed. In actuality, I really could not fault either.

Best of Winners went to a very sound and good quality, young male, **Red King Dei Mangialupi**, bred by Daniela Lori and owned by Jocelyn Gagne and her daughter, Serena Ivanofskis. "King" should do well very well over time.

I gave Awards of Merit to the class dog, best of winners, **Red King** and a lovely and very sound, veteran bitch, **Ch. Ard Chi's Summer Solace**, bred by the owners, Linda King and Margaret La Rosa. She was in fine shape considering her age.

Now the last awards, Select Dog and Select Bitch acknowledges - in my estimation - quality and type. I awarded Select Dog to **GCHB Ch. R Noble Nasch**, bred by the owners, Mr. And Mrs. Joe Roland and Select Bitch to **Ch Gin Fizz O'Lugh Of Aerie**, bred by Amy Benjamin and M&A Dormady, owned by Doug Marx and Amy Benjamin. Both were worthy of the Select ribbon.

All in all, I was pleased to have had such a good entry with some really stunning youngsters capped off by my choice for "Best Puppy," **Elite Of Aerie**, bred and owned by Doug Marx and Amy Benjamin. In fact, the youngsters at this show by in large were very promising. The breed is in fine shape going forward.

Veteran Dogs

All three veteran dogs and bitches as well were in good condition and moved tolerably well. It was an added benefit that they all had finished and were champions. Speaks well of the breed!

1. 39) **Ch. Legacy's Starkeeper**: Lovely outline, depth of chest and bend of stifle
2. 41) **Ch. Taliesin Blaze's Buchaill of Wideview**: Proper low hock and sweep of stifle. Good deep chest.
3. 43) **Ch Coleraine's Cathbadh Incubator Jones**: Proper spring of Rib and depth of chest.

Veteran Bitch

1. 80) **Ch. Ard Rhi's Summer Solace**: Lovely head and coat, which is important, and a very easy mover.

2. 82) **Ch. O'Lugh's Yuengling:** Excellent ears and earnest, and a lovely low hock. These factors are extremely important also and were very correct.
3. 84) **Ch. Starkeeper Aoibheann Ailis RN:** Her neck was set on properly with a good depth of chest and proper bone.

Puppy Dog 6-9 months

1. 5) **O'Lugh's Gin and Tonic at Massapeag:** An easy mover with a lovely head and expression.
2. 9) **Hops-N-Hound's Hello Sweetie Bell:** This youngster has good bone with a neck well set on and a low hock.
3. 7) **Aisling's Fw Oh Henry:** This pup was balanced with good bone and an easy moving youngster.

Puppy Dog 9-12 months

Both these youngsters are very good quality and have the proper length of tail which is important.

1. 11) **Shancarrick's Kavanagh Of Eirian:** Very good proportion and balance with an harsh coat, good breadth of chest and a lovely expression.
2. 15) **Hipsley's Celtic Thunder:** a very upright dog with a good, harsh coat also and a proper depth of chest.

Fifiteen months to Eighteen months Dog

1. 21) **O'Lugh The Poet's Dream:** A very lovely type and a youngster that needs to grow into himself. Typical of this age in both Wolfhounds and Deerhounds. I swear that this age "grows bone" He has good ears and earset so important to a Wolfhound.

Novice Dogs

1. 27) **Red King Dei Mangialupi:** This dog was my **Winners Dog**. He has a lovely low hock and is balanced and in proportion! He moved well not only going away but had correct extension. He stood up well in the Winners class and - hopefully should do well over time.
2. 23) **Starkeeper Witcher of Remington:** Neck was set on well. He had proper depth of chest.
3. 25) **Taliesien's Beul-Aithiris of Sceolan:** Also a very nice example with good spring of rib and a lovely expression.

American Bred Dog

1. 31) **Shanachie's Hunter Bad Moon Rising Over Vermont:** Very easy moving dog with good extension and balanced. This dog was my **Reserve Winners Dog** and a good type! Balanced.

2. 29) **Mari's Biff Ionmhain of Ireland BCAT:** This entry was also a very lovely dog with decent depth of chest with a harsh, dark coat and a lovely outline.

This was a quality class, of only two dogs. The American Bred Class is often ignored - not in this case. More people should enter this class, which often and sadly judges ignore. My comments about a harsh, dark coat comes from Sam Ewing who always thought it was very difficult to breed a dark, harsh coat. It is so in both breeds, both Wolfhounds and Deerhounds.

Open Dog

1. 35) **Shancarricks Cashel Coyne:** A very good looking dog with good depth of chest, length of tail, balance of bone. Nice side gait.

Note: The Dog classes were better than I expected, and I was overall very pleased with the dog entries. The breeders are definitely on the right track.

Puppy Bitch 6-9 months

1. 8) **Elite of Aerie:** This youngster was very balanced and an easy mover - which for a pup is no mean feat! She had good depth of chest for her age, good "bone and a lovely expression.
2. 10) **J.P. Wendle Bootleg of Aerie:** This pup already exhibited a lovely sweep of stifle, ears and earset, balanced off with good bone particularly for a youngster.
3. 6) **O'Lugh's Blackwater Sapphire:** I liked the planes on her head and she also had a lovely coat for her age! Her gait was quite nice and balanced.
4. 12) **O'Lugh Blackwater Juniper:** This youngster had lovely balance with a good sweep of stifle and depth of chest.

The 6-9 Month class is usually all legs and feet, going in every direction. I rather thought this class was one of the better for their age than I have seen in a long time. All the girls were put together and went in one direction - amazing in its own right. I had to laugh as their handlers were all over the place. I commented that they all must have taken "*How to not to Train a Wolfhound for the Ring for the First Time*" by Sam Ewing - whose dogs were very often introduced to the ring on the day of the show.

Puppy Bitch 9-12 months

1. 26) **O'Lugh Blackwater Aperitif:** I liked her as she had a lovely underline to match her sweep of stifle, good balance of bone and very nice ears.
2. 22) **Starkeeper Huntersrun Jeweled Jolene:** Moved well also with a lovely sweep of stifle and underline.
3. 18) **Starkeeper Huntersrun Juniper:** also had correct balance of bone to substance with a very good sweep of stifle. She had very good ears and earset.

There were two absentees but this class was represented by three bitches that were very good quality. I thought that they exhibited what Mary Jane Ellis, *Killybracken*, used to think important - a good underline with a correct tuck-up that did not show "too much light underneath," and to which I completely agree!

Bitches 12-15 months

1. 28) **Ard Rhi's Alula:** This entry's neck was set on well and had a proper depth of chest, underline with a balance of bone to substance culminating in a proper low hock.

Bitches 15-18 months

1. 30) **O'Lugh Bimini:** This girl also had a neck set on well with a lovely head and expression and a nice underline as well!

Novice Bitch.

1. 32) **Starkeeper Witchflower Wicca At Silver Thorne:** This girl had a good sweep of stifle and moves very nicely. I particularly liked her ears and earset. Although she needs to grow into herself, I did not chose her 1st in her class based on potential (she already has good bone), but still needs to mature. She's a very good type or style.
2. 36) **Taliesin's Baintighearn:** This bitch has a lovely outline with a neck well set on, low on hock, which also is desirable. She reaches well with good extension!
3. 34) **Draconecrome Agathatha:** Agatha is an easy mover also with a low hock.
4. 38) **Ballyhara Afric:** A good looking bitch with a good underline, low hock - as well - and a neck set on correctly.

Bred By Exhibitor Bitch

1. 44) **O'Lugh's Truly:** This bitch was my **Reserve Winners Bitch** . She has a good underline, not too much light underneath. With good bone and sound, she also was easy moving and had really good extension.
2. 42) **New Girl In Town at R Noble:** Love the name; this girl is low on hock; has a lovely body and strong neck, which is set on well.
3. 46) **Muse Lismore Of Aerie:** Love the sweep of stifle with an underline, sound and good tuck-up. Worthy of the name and a compliment to the whisky after which she is named.

This class of bitches was absolutely outstanding and in many ways very uniform. All three are very high quality and very stylish Not much more needs to be said, really!

American Bred Bitch

1. 50) **Ballyharra Aideen:** Very easy mover with good extension, Ample spring of rib and neck well set on.
2. 48) **Solas Grainne's Mairead Of Glennamadda:** Lovely underline and good balance of bone to body,
3. 52) **Taliesins Beaoadh Of Findlay:** Also a lovely underline, god length of tail and a very nice, low hock.

Open Bitch

1. 66) **Jello Shot O'Lugh With Aerie:** This bitch is an absolutely correct type and a very lovely example. She is very balanced with a good underline. I was pleased to award her **Winners Bitch**, which she rightfully deserved - notwithstanding, the lovely Bred by Exhibitor Bitch Class
2. 62) **O'Lugh's Black Label:** A lovely dark color with a really good, harsh coat. Also well balanced with good bone and overall substance.
3. 68) **O'Lugh Sugar Mountain BCAT:** She has a lovely outline and correct depth of chest, very low on hock.
4. 70) **Ballyharra Alannah:** I liked her type very much. She was a very easy mover and was very agile in the ring.

Finally, I would like to thank the members IWANE for thinking of me and letting me judge their breed show again. I know Michale Canalizo, whom I replaced, would have been just as pleased with this fine entry of very good, quality Irish Wolfhounds. It certainly made my day very enjoyable.