

Flying to Philadelphia to judge the prestigious Potomac Valley specialty is a great honor and I have to thank the comity for its kind invitation and all the people who helped me during these 2 days by driving me or helping me in the ring. They made this experience a real nice souvenir which will stay in my memory for ever. I remember some decades ago when , as a young student , I was reading in IW magazines some reports about this show with curiosity and enthusiasm . Now it's my turn to be there and give an opinion , my opinion.

The organization was perfect and the weather almost ideal for our breed. I particularly appreciate the sportsmanship and the listening of the exhibitors. You were all attentive to my critics , which made my function easier.

The general quality of the dogs I had to judge was good , especially the females as usual. There is some kind of difficulties to breed and raise a top quality male , in many breeds but this is more accurate in giant breeds.

Some could have been improved by a better handling and appropriate grooming. I can understand that in youngsters but mature dogs should be trained to the ring. When I judge , this point doesn't come in the balance for the final range except if I cannot see the dog moving. I can see the construction through an untrimmed coat or an imperfect standing position but to appreciate the movement he needs to move properly.

The type was correct in a majority of dogs but you have to be careful about the proportions. In Irish Wolfhounds , the most common fault is a problem of proportions. Its not in the details you are going to find your winners but it's when you make the exam of your final cut from a long distance . The tendency is to the short legs dogs with a lot of angulations (often too much) in front and rear with a big forechest and a long stride movement. The long legs are characteristic of sighthounds and an absolute necessity. We must not go the facility to produce these short legs specimens with impressive movement who are so often awarded by non specialist judges. Moreover the length of body must be in proportion with the length of legs. If you have a long body , more than ever you need long legs otherwise you increase the impression of a short dog. The nobility and the commanding appearance come with the long legs.

On the other hand I have seen some very tall dogs with almost no angulations , very straight , which is not typical either.

The truth is in the middle , beauty is in moderation.

European judges are well known to focus on teeth and bite. Honestly I don't think I am and I can pass over lack of teeth or a level bite , but what I am looking for is the functional mouth with strong under-jaw and , very important , canines in the right position. Most of the time, this fault can be avoided in puppies with appropriate environment (raw food with bones) but you have to educate your puppy buyer and help them during that delicate period.

The straight pasterns have become so frequent that it becomes difficult to penalize this fault. I know they can move without correct angulated pasterns and sometimes very well and fast. But nice pasterns finishing long legs is a particular beauty I cannot resist.

Many of the fanciers of our giants are looking for XXL , not only in size but in many other points as movement, angulations , bones , head No dog from the past was so big , look at the Reinagle painting . The young female of 19 months ***Carnasserie Kincsem*** is a model of moderation. No excess in her , she is perfectly balanced , has a typical expression , an easy and fluid movement , nice curves and strong legs. She has all we need in the breed and nothing in excess. Judging her and putting my hands on her was a real pleasure .

Another pleasure was to meet you , to see your enthusiasm for our noble breed and to have this short moment of exchange. Such a difficult breed needs passionate breeders to survive. I do hope to come back one day in the future.

Dr Frédéric Maison