



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL LTD

Extended Breed Standard of the
BRACCO ITALIANO
(Italian Pointing Dog)

Produced by
The Australian National Kennel Council Ltd

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Country of Origin ~ Italy

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HISTORY OF THE BREED

People say that this dog is one of the classic and ancient pointers, selected mainly in the northern regions of the Italian peninsula. The breed has been present since the middle age and became widespread in the Renaissance period. The nobility held it in very high regard. In fact, feathered game hunting was an exclusive appanage of the aristocracy. The Gonzaga and Medici families bred it; nobles and royal families sought out the subjects born in those kennels.

This dog of ancient Italian origin used for bird hunting has modelled itself and developed over the hunting of yesteryear by means of nets, he has adapted himself to the present hunting and Frescoes from the 14th century are proof of the indisputable timelessness of the Italian pointer through the centuries, whether either regarding his morphology or his aptitudes at hunting as a pointer.

The white-and-orange variety originated in Piedmont. The white-and-brown in Lombardy. The white- and-orange variety from Piedmont was lighter in construction than the white-and-brown type from Lombardy. The white-orange dog from Piedmont was because of his lighter construction better to use in the mountains. The breeders has used those two types of dogs to make a combination, nowadays we have a uniform type of Italian pointer.

The definitive Standard was officially registered by the Italian Kennel Club (ENCI) on the 19th February 1949. This Standard allows both the heavy type and the lighter type. In November 1949 the Italian Bracco Italiano Association was born, the SABI (Sociata Amatori del Bracco Italiano). Most important goal of the SABI is to help their members to breed dogs, which keep up the high quality, excellent of type and health, without loosing any of the hunting instinct.

The Federation Cynologique Internationale recognised the breed on 27th November 1989 as FCI Standard No 202. The breed is classified in Group 7 – Pointing Dogs. Section 1.1 Pointing dogs, type – Braque, with working trial.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

This dog of ancient Italian origin used for bird hunting has modelled itself and developed over the ages; from the hunting of yesteryear by means of nets, he has adapted himself to the present hunting and shooting. Frescoes from the 14th century are proof of the indisputable timelessness of the Italian Pointer over the centuries, whether either regarding his morphology (appearance) or his aptitudes at hunting as a pointing dog.



Fig. 1. The Bracco Italiano - At work

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament, and appearance of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function with soundness essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be mindful of features which could be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed.

! GENERAL APPEARANCE

Of strong and harmonious construction with powerful appearance. The preferred subjects are those with lean limbs, well developed muscles, well defined lines with a markedly sculpted head and a very obvious lower orbital chiselling, elements which all contribute to give distinction to this breed.

Important proportions: Length of the body is the same or a little more than the height at the withers. Length of head is equal to 4/10 of the height at the withers; its width, measured at the level of the zygomatic arches, is less than half its length. Skull and muzzle are of equal length.

The Bracco Italiano should present as a powerful athletically built gundog, with very clean lines. The general appearance should be that of a tireless worker. Length of body the same or a little more than the height at the withers. Size, expression, temperament, balance and conformation, points all described in the Standard go to make its ability to carry out the purpose for which the breed was evolved.

It should be noted, any dog clearly showing physical or behaviour abnormalities should be disqualified.



Fig 2. Well proportioned and balanced specimen.

! TEMPERAMENT

Tough and adapted to all types of hunting, reliable, endowed with an excellent ability to understand, docile and easy to train.

Steadiness, attentiveness, calmness, alertness, tractability are all important characteristics of the breed. Aggressiveness or overly shyness are regarded as eliminating faults.

! HEAD AND SKULL

The head is angular and narrow at the level of the zygomatic arches; its length corresponds to 4/10 of the height at the withers; the middle of its length is at the level of a line, which unite the inner angles of both eyes. The upper longitudinal axes of the skull and muzzle are divergent, i.e., if extending the topline of the muzzle, this one must emerge in front of the occipital protuberance, ideally at mid-length of the skull. When seen in profile the skull is in the shape of a very open arch. Seen from the top it forms lengthwise an elongated ellipse (elongated oval). The width of the skull, measured at the level of the zygomatic arches, should not exceed half the length of the head.

The bulge of the forehead and the supraorbital ridges are perceptible. The frontal groove is visible and ends mid-length of the skull. The interparietal crest is short and not very prominent. The occipital protuberance is very pronounced. The stop is not pronounced. The nose is voluminous, with large well-opened nostrils, protrudes slightly over the lips with which it forms an angle. Colour is more or less pink to flesh-colour or brown, depending on the colour of the coat. Muzzle: Foreface either slightly arched or straight. Its length is equal to half of the length of the head and its depth measures 4/5 of its length. Seen from the front, the lateral sides of the muzzle converge slightly, still presenting a foreface with good width. The chin is not very apparent. Lips: The upper lips are well developed, thin and floppy without being flaccid, covering the jaw; seen in profile, they form an inverted "V" below the nose; the corner of the lips must be marked without being droopy. Cheeks: Lean.

The head should be of fair length, in balance with the body. The skull in profile is slightly curved. From above the sides are in the shape of long curves. Measured at the zygomatic arches the width should not exceed half the length of the head. The eyebrows are well defined. The interparietal crest (ridge joining the two parts of the skull) is short and not very prominent, while the occipital protuberance is pronounced. Cheeks are lean.

The top of the muzzle may be either slightly arched or straight (not level). It measures half the length of the head. The muzzle should be deep and its sides come together gradually but still present a foreface of good width. An extension of the topline of the muzzle should ideally emerge at mid-length of the skull. Convergence of cranial-facial axes are regarded as an eliminating fault, as is a split nose.

! EYES

Semi-lateral position with a soft and submissive expression, neither deep set nor prominent. Eyes fairly large, eyelids oval-shaped and close fitting (no entropion or ectropion). The iris is of a more or less dark ochre or brown colour depending on the coat colour.

The oval shaped, large eyes are situated slightly to the side; they are neither deep nor prominent. The colour should be dark ochre or brown blending with the colour of the coat. A soft and submissive expression is a breed characteristic. It should never be hard and penetrating. A wall eye is stated as an eliminating fault.

! EARS

Well developed, in length they should, without being stretched, reach the tip of the nose. Their width is at least equal to half their length; raised only very slightly; base rather narrow, set rather backwards at a level of the zygomatic arches. A supple ear with a front rim well turned inwards and really close to the cheek is appreciated. The lower extremity of the ear ends in a slightly rounded tip.

The ears should comfortably reach the tip of the nose. The width being at least half the length. The ear is supple, the front rim is well turned inwards and close to the cheek. It is slightly rounded on the end.

! MOUTH

Dental arches are well adapted, with the teeth square to the jaw. Scissor bite. A pincer bite is also acceptable.

Accentuated overshot or undershot mouth is regarded as an eliminating fault.

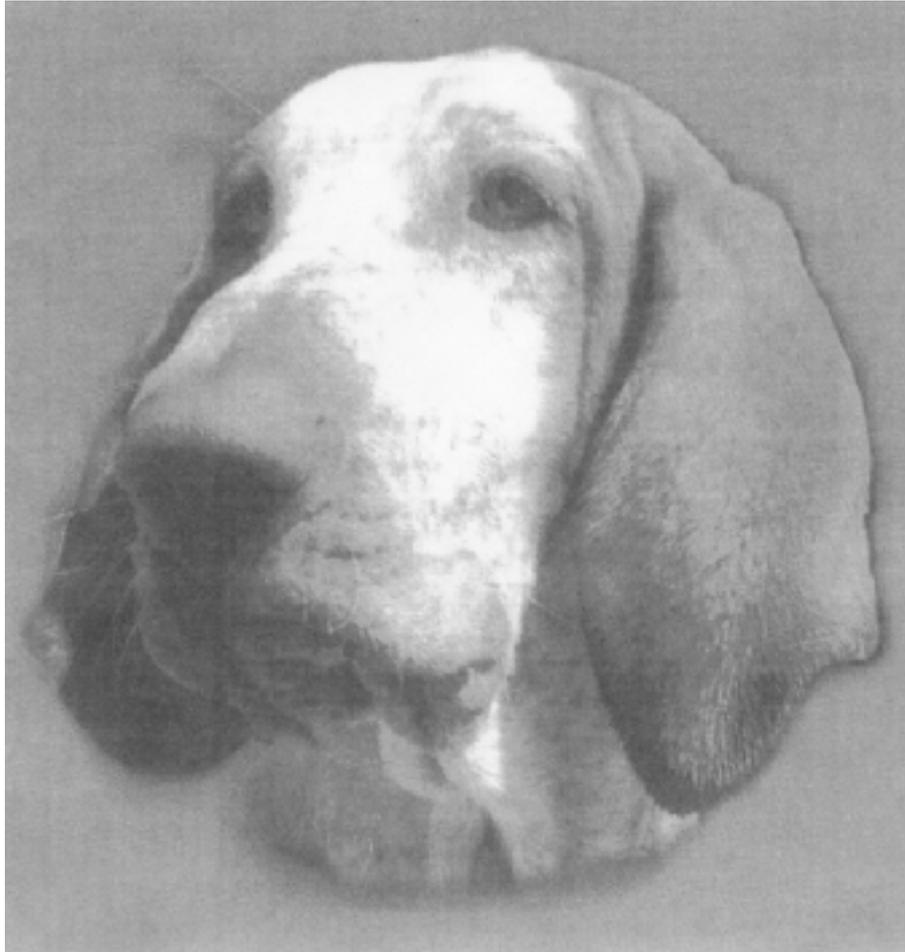


Fig. 3. Typical head study, showing correct soft double dewlap.

! NECK

Powerful, in truncated cone shape, length not less than 2/3 of the length of the head, well detached from the nape. The throat shows a soft double dewlap.

As the Standard indicates the neck is powerful. It is truncated cone-shaped. It must be of sufficient length to give balance to the overall animal and allow the dog to carry out its allocated work. The neck is required to have a clearly defined detachment from the back of the skull. It must be noted that a "dry neck" is incorrect; a soft double dewlap is a characteristic of the breed.

! FOREQUARTERS

The shoulders are strong, well muscled, long and sloping, very free in their movement. The upper arm is sloping and fitting to the ribcage. The point of the elbow should be on a perpendicular line from the rear point of the shoulderblade to the ground. The forearm is strong, straight, with strong and well muscled sinews. The pasterns are well proportioned, lean, of good length and slightly sloping.

The shoulder blade and upper arm are both long and well angulated to each other. They are of equal length and positioned to allow the point of the elbow to be placed directly under the rear point of the shoulder blade. The forelegs are straight viewed from all sides and parallel viewed from the front. The elbows are turned neither in nor out. Pasterns are slightly sloping and flexible.

! BODY

Chest: Broad, deep and well let down to level of the elbows, without forming a keel, with well sprung ribs, particularly in their lower part, and sloping. Topline: The upper profile of the back is made up of two lines. One almost straight, slopes from the withers to the 11th dorsal vertebra, the other is slightly arched, joining with the line of the rump. Withers: Well defined, with the points of the shoulder-blades well separated. Loin: Wide lumbar region, muscled, short and slightly convex. Croup: Long (about 1/3 of the height at the withers), broad and well muscled; the ideal pelvic angulation (angle formed by the pelvic girdle with a horizontal line) is 30 degrees. Pelvis wide. Underline: Lower profile almost horizontal in its ribcage part, rising slightly in its abdominal part.

The Standard's reference to the 11th dorsal vertebra is clearly a reference to the 11th thoracic vertebra. The spinal column is made up of five anatomical sections. The two of importance in relation to this question, are the thirteen thoracic vertebrae and seven lumbar vertebrae. The word "dorsal" means on or near the back and is the opposite of "ventral" meaning underneath or belly. The Standard clearly describes the topline required. The 'slope' from the wither to the 11th thoracic vertebrae is straight and slopes **very slightly** downward. The other slope is slightly arched over the loin and then sloping down over the croup to the tail. This does not allow for a soft or sway back or any other type of weakness in the topline. It is important that the croup should be long and broad and well angulated to the horizontal. The forechest is prominent. Chest is broad and let down to the elbows catering for long wellsprung ribs. A well-formed 'skirt' (skin fold) should be present on the underline, directly under the loin.



Fig. 4. Well-balanced male.

! HINDQUARTERS

Upper thigh: Long, parallel, muscular, with a rear edge almost straight. Lower thigh: Strong. Hocks: Wide. Metatarsus: Relatively short and lean.

The hindquarters must be strong and well muscled to allow the effortless forward propulsion of the whole body. Without being over angulated the upper thighbones should slope to the lower thighbones at an angle approximately with the front angulation. Any tendency towards over angulation of the hindquarters reduces firmness and endurance. The metatarsus (rear pastern) should be short and vertical when the dog is standing naturally.



Fig. 5. Typical young bitch.

! FEET

Forefeet: Strong, slightly oval shaped; well-arched and tight toes, with strong nails well curved towards the ground. Colour of nails is white, yellow or brown, of more or less dark shade depending on the colour of the coat; pads elastic and lean. Hind feet: With all of the characteristics of the front feet; they have dewclaws, the absence of which is not a fault. Double dewclaw is tolerated.

The feet are slightly oval in shape, with well arched and tight toes. Dewclaws are not regarded as a fault.

! TAIL

Thick at the base, straight, with a slight tendency to taper; hair short. When the dog is in action and especially when questing, is carried horizontally or nearly like that. Should be docked at 15-25 cm from the root.

The set on and carriage of the tail is very important, particularly to the flowing lines and balance during stance and movement of the dog. This particularly contributes to the gait that is required.

! SKIN

Tough but elastic. Finer on the head, the throat, the armpits and on the lower parts of the body. The visible mucous membranes must be of a corresponding colour with the coat, but never show black spots. The mucous membranes of the mouth are pink; in the roans or white and chestnut coloured dogs they sometimes show brown or pale chestnut spotting.

It is noted that mucous membranes, skin and annexes with traces of black are regarded as an eliminating fault.

! GAIT/MOVEMENT

Extended and fast trot, with powerful impulsion from the hindquarters. Head raised, nose held high in such a way that, when hunting, the nose is higher than the topline.

The Bracco is a trotting breed with young dogs in field training first worked in a harness known as a 'braga' to discourage any galloping. The correct proportion of height to length and corresponding length of limbs will produce a ground-covering stride that travels flat over the ground, giving the impression of effortless movement. The head is raised allowing the nose to be held higher than the topline. The fast trot requires the movement sequence of steps that follow a diagonal pattern, in that he always moves foreleg and opposite hindleg forward at the same time.

! COAT

Short, dense and glossy, finer and shorter on the head, the ears, front part of the legs and feet.



Fig. 6. Stronger type

! COLOUR

White.

White with patches of varied size of an orange or more or less dark amber colour.

White with more or less large chestnut patches.

White speckled with pale orange (melato).

White speckled with chestnut (roano-marrone). In this last combination, a metallic sheen is appreciated, and a warm shade of chestnut is preferred, recalling the colour of a monk's frock.

A symmetrical facial mask is preferred, but the absence of a mask is tolerated.

The following are regarded as eliminating faults. Coat black, white and black, tricolour, fawn, hazel, uni-colour with tan markings.

! SIZE AND WEIGHT

Height at the withers: Between 55 and 67cms

Preferred size for males: 58-67 cms

Preferred size for females: 55-62 cms

Weight: Between 25 and 40 kgs depending on size

Sizes of 2 cms above or below the limits are eliminating faults. It should be noted the height difference of 12 cms between a 55 cms bitch and a 67cms dog.



Fig. 7. Note head and expression and double dewlap.

! FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

! ELIMINATING FAULTS

Aggressive or overly shy.

Convergence of cranial-facial axes.

Split nose.

Accentuated undershot mouth, overshot mouth.

Wall eye.

Coat black, white and black, tricolour, fawn, hazel, uniclour, with tan markings.

Absence of pigmentation (Albinism).

Mucous membranes, skin and annexes with traces of black.

Size of 2cms above or below the limits indicated in the Standard.

Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities shall be disqualified.

N.B. Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.