

BOXER QUARTERLY

December 2005

£4.50



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**CHAMPION
NORWATCH SUNHAWK HEYPRESTO**

Heart tested 0

My weekend in England

by Alessandro Tanoni (Colle dell'Infinito)

Great honour

After more than forty years in the activity of breeding Boxers, my friend Antonio (Tony) Piccone kindly invited me to England. I arrived together with my son Tommaso on the evening of 15 July. This invite gave me the opportunity not only to visit Antonio, but also to pay a visit to Mrs. Pat Withers of the renowned Witherford Kennel. Pat is a great lady and I'll write more about that visit later in this article. I also had the pleasure of judging an English Boxer match at the Essex and Eastern Counties Boxer Club. This experience in England was a great honour which awakened in me a lot of enthusiasm and much interest.

Outward mannerism

We dedicated the Saturday to visit Pat Withers and her kennel. On the way there I had the pleasure of attending the National Working and Pastoral Breeds Championship Show. I was very impressed at the amount of people that were present, amongst these were many Boxer enthusiasts with their pride and joy on the end of the lead. I must say I was very overwhelmed by it all! From the Boxer ringside we watched some of the classes being judged, after which, I posed a few thoughts and questions to myself. First of all was the difference in type to the European Boxers of whom I am very well accustomed. Secondly I was struck by the outward mannerism of the dogs since they were calm and indifferent to one another in the ring and this did surprise me.

Critique

I also could not stop noticing the total difference in giving a critique. In my view it is wrong for the breed not to be able to explain clearly and exhaustively the judge's choices, the basic explanation of the morphological critique and the presence of virtues and faults specific to each exhibit being judged. It is only in this way that the exhibitor will know the reason for its placing or grading and act accordingly for future plans.

Grave faults

I'd like once again to emphasise the great difference in type among the various British Boxers that I saw. There are some good virtues such as being tall in leg and with a well carried, long neck. There were also some with good shoulders, evident withers and some very square outlines. Unfortunately there were also



ALESSANDRO TANONI WITH KEN GROOM, CHAIRMAN OF THE ESSEX AND EASTERN COUNTIES BOXER CLUB



LEFT TO RIGHT: TONY CURTIN, ALESSANDRO TANONI AND MARIAH KUECH WHO HANDLED THE RESERVE WINNER. THE PLATE FOR BEST IN MATCH WAS KINDLY BROUGHT OVER BY ALESSANDRO

various faults such as fronts being too straight and much too far in front of the dog. There were also some with over angulated quarters. None of this allows correct movement and personally I consider them very grave faults. I also noticed that the back at the point between the withers and the loin dips in a 'v' form which is a symptom of incorrect formation of the vertebral spine (very noticeable when a dog is relaxed) and on some exhibits the croup lacked the required inclination.

Disturbed

Very evident is the head expression. It is well known that the assembly of the lower jaw in the British Boxer is excellent, unfortunately the prognathism is almost absent with a lack of curvature to the chin and the bridge of nose almost sloping away making some of the exhibits very downfaced, losing the stop, the tilt

NB: The photos for this article were taken from a camcorder. We are delighted to have them as a record of this fascinating occasion, but as a result they are not as clear as we would have liked.

up of nose and the required lip to lip placement. The forehead was often set low with not enough rise and the heads were often too flat and sometimes rounded. However what disturbed me the most was the Boxer expression with the amount of wrinkle on the head and the eyes being too little, even if they were predominantly of good dark colour.

Surprise

I remember a dog that caught my eye during the final line up for the Challenge Certificate of about 16 to 18 months of age and I subsequently had the opportunity to talk with his breeders. He had a surprising compactness of body assembly, powerful and square with a beautiful depth of chest, wonderful top line with the croup well inclined, quarters of correct proportion with well evident muscle formation and his head was most typical. I repeat, this was a dog of great construction. To my surprise the Judge did not award him either the CC or RCC. I mention this just to show the diversity of my interpretation and that of the Judge.

Waiting

We did not stay until the end of the show as Mrs. Withers was expecting us and after many miles in the beautiful English countryside we arrived at our destination in the late afternoon. Mrs. Withers had been waiting for some time and I too had been waiting for this visit. The only difference being that I waited for more than thirty years. My admiration towards this great Judge and breeder who has great knowledge of the Boxer is immense. My admiration for this person began a very long time ago when I started in Boxers. My teacher and mentor Dr. Tomaso Bosi often referred to Mrs. Withers in his teaching. We must all remember the great Ch. Witherford Hot Chestnut. If he had never been bred we would not have had the likes of Carlo ut Gutsel, Carlo von Henningshof, and through them, Tito dell Colle dell'Infinito, Olimpio, Teck etc. There is no doubt that Hot chestnut has been a good improver of the breed.

Secrets

Naturally my friend from Scotland, Lesley Boyle, was also present and she showed me some of her dogs who were children and grand children of her import Faustino del Colle dell'Infinito. I'd like to thank with all my heart the ladies for their hospitality and the patience



THE EXCELLENT BARBECUE WAS ENJOYED BY ALL.





ALESSANDRO GAVE EVERY DOG A VERBAL CRITIQUE - TRANSLATED BY TONY PICONNE

they showed me in answering all my questions with all the difficulty in translating technical terms from Italian to English for both Antonio and my son Tommaso. I would have liked to know in a few hours all the secrets of so many years of breeding.

Great culture

A good part of the Sunday was spent travelling back to where I was to judge a Boxer match, and there was an entry of about sixty dogs waiting, belonging to judges and respected professionals in the sector. Due to the experience of the previous day, I did not hide the fact that I was a little embarrassed in judging the British type Boxer. Luckily, before it all started, I met Dr. Bruce Cattana to whom I confided my embarrassment. He encouraged me, smiling all the time and confessing that he himself was in a similar situation when he had to judge in Barcelona. I would like to thank this person of great culture and knowledge for his particular work in the selection of "Bobtail Boxers". I am waiting with anticipation and enthusiasm the opportunity of utilising in my kennel some of these specimens.

Appreciation

I hope the show went well as I wanted to give each individual a verbal critique and explain the reasons for my choices at the end of the show. I received good appreciation from the majority of the exhibitors on my judgements whether winners or losers. The good sportsmanship of the English is proverbial. I'd just like to say a few words on the finalists and in particular the young dog who was Best in Match. I hope to hear of his future since, for sure, he will have a promising career. I also remember with great sympathy the young lady exhibitor and her bitch of good construction. I hope that our friend continues her career with lots of good results.



VAL WHEELER TAKES HER BITCH AROUND THE RING



THE WEATHER WAS LOVELY AND THE RINGSIDE WAS CROWDED ALL AFTERNOON

Arrivederci!

My wish is to thank again the organisers, the President, the Secretary, the Committee and all the members of the Essex and Eastern Counties Boxer Club together with all the exhibitors, with the hope of seeing you all again soon. You made me feel very welcome. Arrivederci



TOMASINO AND ALESSANDRO TANONI AND TONY PICONE WITH BIM CURTIN & LOCKWOOD BROWN'S SUNHAWK NORWATCH DANNY BOY OF SHILOH, RBIM SUE KUECH'S BOYNHAMS DANCING ESTHER, HANDLED BY DAUGHTER MARIAH, BPIM CLARK'S CAPEL TOFFEE RAN ILL



FAUSTINO DEL COLLE DELL'INFINITO, LESLEY BOYLE'S IMPORT FROM ALESSANDRO'S FAMOUS KENNEL

Immense

We are delighted to have the thoughts of Alessandro Tanoni in this edition. No one can question Alessandro's credentials since the influence of his del Colle dell'Infinito kennels has been immense throughout Europe and all of you will be able to conjure up in your mind's eye pictures of some of the beautiful Boxers who have carried this famous name. Against this background it is fascinating to hear his very direct comments about the differences between our English Boxers and the ones that he is more used to seeing. Outside views from such a knowledgeable source should prompt us to look afresh at our own dogs and to try and see things from another perspective. Having done this it is usually possible to conclude that there are country-based strengths and weaknesses in Boxers from around the world. Our challenge as breeders is to face up to these and to try and find solutions to our own individual problem areas. With the gene pool narrowing quite alarmingly in this country, we believe that it is getting more and more likely that the solutions may come from overseas.