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ITALIAN VOLPINO

(Volpino Italiano)

TRANSLATION : Mrs. Peggy Davis.

ORIGIN : Italy.

DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THE ORIGINAL VALID STANDARD : 27.11.1989.

UTILIZATION : Guard and companion dog.

CLASSIFICATION F.C.I. : Group 5 Spitz and primitive type.
Section 4 European Spitz.
Without working trial.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY : He is one of the descendants of the European Spitz which already existed in the central region of our continent since the Bronze Age and of which skeleton fossils have been discovered around the foundation piles of the dwellings on stilts. So the Volpino goes back to the same ancestors as the German Spitz of which he is not a descendant, but a relative. He has been bred in Italy since immemorial times and has been idolized in the palaces of the noblemen as well as in the hovels of the common people, where he was especially appreciated because of his instinct of guard and vigilance. He was the dog of Michelangelo, and, in the 18th century, the tireless companion of the carters of Tuscany and Latium, always ready to announce noisily any strange persons met on the roads.

GENERAL APPEARANCE : Small size Spitz, very compact, harmonious, with a long stand-off coat.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS : Built into a square, length of head reaches nearly the 4/10th of that of the body.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT : Very attached to his environment and his family, of a very distinct temperament, lively, gay and playful.

HEAD : Pyramid shape, length reaching almost the 4/10ths of the height at the withers.

CRANIAL REGION :

Skull : Long than the muzzle (6,5 : 5), its bizygomatic width is more than half the length of the head (7, 3 : 11,5); is slightly ovoid (egg-shaped) as much in longitudinal as in transversal direction; medio-frontal furrow very slightly marked; occipital protuberance slightly marked. The superior axes of the skull and muzzle are slightly convergent. The bony protuberances of the forehead, well developed, come down almost perpendicular onto the onset of the muzzle.

Stop : Rather accentuated.

FACIAL REGION :

Nose : Wet, cool, with well opened nostrils. Seen in profile, set in the same line as the topline of the foreface and does not protrude beyond the front line of the lips - Its colour is always black, as well in subjects with white coats as in those with red coats.

Muzzle : Of inferior length to that of the skull with lateral surfaces convergent, is pointed. The nasal bridge is straight. Seen in profile, the lower edge of the muzzle is determined by the lower jaw.

Lips : From the front, the upper lips, by their lower edge, draw a straight line. The labial commissure is not visible, so the lips are very short. The edges of the lips are black.

Jaws/Teeth : Jaws apparently not strong, normally developed and meeting perfectly level on front. The branches of the lower jaw are straight. Teeth white, regular in alignment, complete and perfectly developed. Scissor bite, pincer bite tolerated.

Eyes : Well opened and of a normal size, denoting vigilance and vivaciousness. Roundish eye aperture, set in planes forming a very open angle towards the rear; eyelids fitting perfectly the shape of the eyeball. Colour of the iris is dark ochre, the rims of the lids are black.

Ears : Short, triangular shape, pricked, with a rigid cartilage and the inner surface of the lobe showing forward. High set, close together. The length of the ears reaches about half the length of the head.

NECK : Its length is about equal to that of the head. Always carried upright. Skin closely fitting.

BODY : Square built, its length measured from the point of the shoulder to that of the buttock is equal to the height at the withers.

Topline : Dorsal line straight, over the loins slightly convex.

Withers : Slightly raised from dorsal line.

Croup : Extends the line of the loin. Obliqueness from the hip to base of the tail is of 10° below the horizontal.

Chest : Descending to level of elbows; ribs well sprung. Sternal region is long.

Underline : From sternum to belly rising only slightly. The hollow of the flanks is slightly accentuated.

TAIL : Set in the prolongation of the croup, carried permanently curled over the back. Its length is a little less than the height at the withers.

LIMBS

FOREQUARTERS : Considered altogether, set perfectly vertical to each other and parallel in relation to the median plane of the body.

Shoulders : The length of the shoulder blade is equal to 1/4 of the height at the withers and its obliqueness below the horizontal is of 60°.

Upper arm : Longer than the shoulder blade and its obliqueness below the horizontal is of 65°. Is approximately parallel to the median plane of the body.

Elbows : Parallel to the median plane of the body.

Forearm : Continuing the vertical line, finely boned. Its length, from ground to elbow, is slightly more than half the height at the withers.

Pastern joint and pastern : Seen from the front, they continue the vertical line of the forearm. Seen in profile, the pasterns are sloping.

Forefoot : Oval shaped with closely-knit toes. The pads and the nails are black.

HINDQUARTERS : Seen altogether from behind, they must follow a perfectly vertical line from the point of the buttock to the ground. They are parallel to each other.

Upper thigh : Its length is equal to 1/3 of the height at withers. Perfectly parallel to the median plane of the body.

Lower thigh : Its length is a little less than that of the thigh. Of a light bone structure and its obliqueness below the horizontal is of 55° to 60°.

Hock joint : Distance between the point of the hock and the ground is slightly more than 1/4 of the height at the withers.

Hock : Vertical and perfectly straight seen as much in profile as from behind.

Hind foot : Oval like the forefoot with all the same characteristics as this latter.

GAIT / MOVEMENT : Must not be jumpy either at the trot or gallop. At all gaits, the strides are large.

SKIN : Well adhering and taut, without looseness in any part.

COAT

HAIR : Dense, very long and exceptionally straight and standing-off. Of harsh texture with straight stiff hairs; must never be falling; must be upstanding even when there is not of a lot of coat. The body gives the impression of being wrapped up in a muff, particularly on the neck where the coat forms an abundant collar. The skull is covered with semi-long hairs which hide the base of the ears. Hairs are short on the muzzle. On the ears, the hair is very fine and smooth. The tail is covered with very long hair. On the edges of the hindquarters, the coat forms fringes.

COLOUR :

- Self-white.
- Self-red.
- Champagne colour accepted but not desirable.

Pale orange shades on the ears are tolerated, but in any case constitute an imperfection.

SIZE :

Height at withers : 27 to 30 cm for males.
25 to 28 cm for females.

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.

ELIMINATING FAULTS :

- Colour of nose other than black.
- Convex topline of the muzzle.
- Wall eye.
- Tail tucked in between hindlegs.
- Size over, by 3 cm, the limits indicated by the standard.

DISQUALIFYING FAULTS :

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Divergence of cranial-facial axes.
- Overshot mouth.
- Total depigmentation of nose or eyelids rims.
- Ears completely drooping.
- Lack of tail or very short tail whether congenital or acquired.
- All colours other than white, red or the not desirable champagne colour.
- Red markings on white basic colour, white or black markings on red basic colour.

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.