

SESSS Championship Show – Sunday 14th July 2024

Thank you to the committee of the Southern English Springer Spaniel Society for the invitation to judge at your 49th Breed Championship Show. I enjoyed the day very much and really appreciated the hard work that goes into putting on two shows like this. It was a sunny, warm day and the friendly atmosphere around the ring provided for an almost 'garden party' vibe. It is easy to forget that we are all connected by a love for this breed and that perhaps we should work harder to create this atmosphere at every show. Hobbies should be pleasurable after all.

I must thank Paul Osbourne for his stewarding prowess and Kay Woodward, Pauline Wallis and Louise Scott for taking all the photos. Thanks, of course, go to all the exhibitors who entered. Grateful for the very few absentees and for the manner in which my decisions were accepted. Regarding my findings on the day, I was more than happy with my main winners and more besides. I was looking for a correctly-sized dog, racy in build, refined in head with a soft expression and one that covers the ground with enthusiasm. Whilst there were many different styles present, I still felt that most fell within the parameters of the breed standard or my interpretation of it. I am not, and never have been a fan of 'oversized' and I do feel that sometimes too much latitude is being taken in this respect. With the serious drop in numbers in recent times, there will of course be a drop in quality too and it is difficult to see how we can turn that around. The really low numbers in the younger classes are exceptionally worrying as it is hard to see where the stars of the future and the stud dogs of the future will come from. On the positive, there were a number of newcomers present which was great to see. Let us work hard to fully engage them and keep them for the sake of our breed and its future.

Puppy Dog (1)

1st Hill's Teignvalley New Beginnings

Elegant male puppy of nine months with an ultra-stylish and racy outline. Still has his baby head so a little narrow at present, but plenty of time for that to develop. Softest expression from the darkest eyes of correct shape. Beautiful neck, well laid shoulders and well-made front. Forechest developing well. A compact youngster with leg, good bone, tight feet and moderate in angulations with nothing overdone. Currently a bit narrow all through but again, time on his side for his body to catch up. Pristinely presented and in lovely condition. Moved well and enthusiastically, erratic at times but I like to see that in a puppy. Good luck for the future. BPD and BPIS.

Junior Dog (1)

1st Weyman's More Than Amazing Wanna Be A Gangster at Spuffing JW

17 month old liver tri boy of correct size. Not really my kind of head being strong and steep in stop but his eye colour is good and his expression kind. Super forehand angulation, with lovely lay back of shoulder and corresponding well-angled upper arm. Deep chested and well bodied youngster with a moderate rear. Covered the ground well and soundly.

Yearling Dog (2)

1st Eyeington's Meadowdale Twix

Up to size liver and white male of 22 months. My first impression was that he was carrying so much coat that it adversely affected his outline. Again, not my kind of head as it lacks a bit of work and too steep in stop for me. A little short of neck and would prefer better forehand angulations to match his well let down rear. Broad thighs and tremendous bone on this boy and like all dogs from this kennel, covered the ground well, soundly and confidently.

2nd Fitchett's Kingsheath Sun Dance

Black and white youngster giving away a bit in age. Finer all though than 1 but a better size and altogether more refined. Head a little narrow and needing time to finish but possesses dark eyes and a very kind expression. Lacking in body currently but has time on his side for that to improve. Would prefer wider thighs. Movement was okay and showed good temperament.

Graduate Dog (3,1a)

1st Nicholson's Kingsheath Paso Doble

Super youngster of the type that appeals to me very much. Liver and white boy of 19 months, very correct in proportions with good leg length. Masculine head but not overdone in any way. Lovely eye and expression from darkening eyes. Well-constructed front with good length of neck, well placed shoulders and well angled upper arm. Forechest is coming nicely and he has plenty of substance and depth. Enough bone, very decent feet and a moderate rear. Moved well maintaining a super topline with correctly carried tail. Did nothing wrong today but is still immature and has it all to come.

2nd Le Clerc's Hunterheck Fade To Black

Liked this two year old too with his neat, compact and unexaggerated outline. Correctly sized. Super head that is balanced and well-worked with kind, dark eyes as you would expect from a black and white. Excellent forehand with well laid shoulder and good length and angle to upper arm. Enough bone and tight, round feet. Could wish for a bit more substance all through, a fact disguised by excess coat. Less would definitely improve his appearance I feel.

Mid Limit Dog (4)

1st Walkers' Dexbenella Double Oh Seven

Lovely upstanding three year old liver dog with super leg length and overall proportions. Liked him a lot. Compact in outline with lovely bone and substance. Pleasing masculine head not overdone with a kind expression. Good neck and a very well angulated forehand. Plenty of body and deep chest. I found him to be a fraction long in second thigh. Excellent in topline and tail set and he carried his tail correctly. Beautiful dark liver coat so well presented. Moved really well and full of enthusiasm. In the last four for the CC.

2nd Rawlinsons' Meltarose Midshipman

Another nice one out of a slightly smaller mould and sired by the same dog as 1. Liver tri boy of three years of correct size, make and shape. Liked his head very much which was well balanced in

skull and foreface, well-worked and very kind in expression. Could wish for a tad more neck. Very well boned with lovely tight feet. Substantial in body and another that carried a super topline and tail set. Well-presented coat with gleaming whites. Moved well showing good temperament.

3rd Richardsons' Cherishym Draconis

Limit Dog (3)

1st Gledhills' Greg De Les Tres Llacunes

Liver and white four year old of beautiful type. Correctly sized and moderate throughout. I just loved his head which is so well balanced in skull and foreface, with the right eye shape giving such a soft expression. Excellent forehand assembly with good shoulder placement. Super forechest. Very well-boned limbs and gorgeous tight feet. The overall impression is one of a neat and unexaggerated package and one that I found very appealing. To be ultra picky, I could wish for a fraction less in body length. Well presented and moved out well to take the RCC. Well done!

2nd Wilson & Connors' Pinereoch No Stunts Larrie

Another quality dog of good size whose style and type appealed. Pleasing masculine head with a kind expression, perhaps a little throaty. Nice length of neck and well-made forehand. Compact and short coupled with lovely bone and decent feet. His rear matched his front, well let down with excellent broad thighs and short hocks. Super topline held on the move but not moving as freely as I have seen him before and he lost out to 1 in this respect.

3rd Jenkinsons' Eastriding Royal Black

Open Dog (4)

1st Topliss' Beresford Bolt From The Blue

Black and white of nearly four years. Loved his elegant outline and size and he makes a stunning and stylish picture stacked. His head is pleasing, refined and masculine enough. Super dark eyes. Beautifully angulated fore and aft. Great bone but would prefer better feet. Deep in body with good substance. Excellent topline and tail carriage. Moved soundly, covering the ground well. In beautiful condition and presented to perfection. In the last four for the CC.

2nd Eyeingtons' Sh Ch Meadowdale Daisydale Lightning Bolt

Five year old black tri male of lovely quality and sire of 1st in the class. Upstanding male with a lot to commend him. Sports a lovely head with a kind expression. Moderate in angulation but balanced front and back. Short coupled with lovely bone and tight feet. Beautifully presented coat. Really super mover, demonstrating his lovely temperament and easy ground-covering action. Did nothing wrong today, just preferred the size of his son.

3rd Topliss' Sh Ch Beresford Lockdown

Veteran Dog (1)

1st Walkers' Sh Ch Dexbenella Atticus Finch ShCEX VW

Top quality liver boy now seven years young and showing the youngsters what it's all about. Lovely for size and shape. Adored his head which is not overdone in any way with such a gentle expression. Best of fronts with well laid shoulders and long and angled upper arm. Deep in chest with tight elbows. Compact with great ribs and substance. Short and strong in loin. Good rear angulations with broad thighs, well bent stifles and short hocks. The best of temperaments and a great mover, covering the ground with ease and enthusiasm. Today he was the complete package for me with nothing overdone and all that a springer should be. Happy to award him the CC and hope he has time for a few more yet! DCC, BOS, RBIS, BVIS.

Special Beginners Dog (2)

1st Fitchetts' Kingsheath Sun Dance

See Yearling Dog

2nd Le Clercs' Hunterheck Fade To Black

President Special Open Stakes Dog

1st Allerys' Dexbenella Final Frontier

Up to size boy, a liver and white of nearly five years. Pleasing head, refined with soft expression. Well off for bone and substance. Short coupled with a good topline. Coat in lovely condition with plentiful feathering. Moved erratically.

Puppy Bitch (1)

1st Hills' Teignvalley Rags To Riches

Litter sister to BPD winner and like him, she sports a very elegant and racy outline. At nine months she is immature and rightly so. Correctly sized. Pretty head with the dark eyes typical of a black and white. Could wish for a fraction more strength in foreface, but this could come in time. Lovely neck. Moderately angled front and back with super depth of body. Forechest coming along nicely. Very neat and tidy mover in all directions. BPB.

Junior Bitch (5, 2a)

1st Walker & Bellamys' Dexbenella In My Dreams

I liked this 16 month old liver girl and she was another of the right size with a feminine head. Eyes are still to darken a bit. Very compact in outline with lovely substance and fill. Correct in proportions with good leg length and short couplings. Decent forehand angulation with corresponding and moderate rear. Fabulous bone and the most glorious feet on this youngster. Moved okay and soundly.

2nd Glendinnings' Plaiglen One Last Time

Younger bitch of 14 months, taller and finer in bone than 1st. Feminine headed with lovely expression. Moderately angled and slightly longer cast. Needs time to develop in body as she is looking a bit tucked up currently. In beautiful condition and pristinely presented.

3rd Gledhills' Dexbenella Dream Of Dreams

Yearling Bitch (5,1a)

1st Smiths' Melverly Iridescent

I must admit to not being a huge fan of this girl as a puppy finding her a little heavy and less feminine than I would usually prefer. Shows how much I know, however, as she went on to take her title while still a very young bitch. Today, as soon as I saw her, I knew she would be the one to beat. None of the heaviness remains and I found her completely feminine in every way. Still a youngster at 23 months but clearly a star from the very start. I found nothing to criticise as she possesses a lovely head, super neck and shoulders and is full of substance. As always, from this kennel, she has beautiful bone and glorious, thick hindquarters. Carries a strong and firm topline with correct tail carriage, all holding together when she moves. Loved her for size and she was happy and outgoing. Beautifully handled. Could not find anything to beat her today and was delighted to award her the BCC and BIS. Congratulations.

2nd Walker & Bellamys' Dexbenella In My Dreams

See JB

3rd Topliss' Shersona I Believe In Angels at Beresford

Novice Bitch (5)

1st Wilsons' Calvdale Padlurowncanoe at Zawspring

Black and white bitch just out of junior. Nice sized bitch with darkly marked head and a sweet expression. Very upright in forehand assembly and lacking angulation in upper arm. Adequate bone with lovely compact feet. Seemed a little unsure on the move today but carries a decent topline.

2nd Hoares' Lymnoares Ode To Memory

Finer boned liver bitch of 15 months. Good proportions and correct in size. A little steep in stop and eyes need to darken still. Deep chested with moderate angulations. A bit rounded over the croup. Nicely presented coat and moved well.

Graduate Bitch (5)

1st Harris' Melverly Amy Dorrit at Coastalglows

Gorgeous black and white bitch of perfect size. Stacked, I liked everything about her. She possesses the sweetest of heads with plenty of work and correct shape and colour of eyes, giving such a melting expression. Super reach of neck and excellent forehand assembly. Compact in outline with good spring of rib, beautiful firm topline and correct tail set. Well boned with tight feet. Hindquarters were well let down with wide thighs and neat hocks. In fabulous coat and condition

and turned out to perfection. Short-listed down to final three for the CC but felt she was a tad immature for top honours just yet. However, I loved her.

2nd Le Clercs' Hunterheck Lost In A Spell

Lovely sized two year old black and white bitch. Good type and is compact in profile. Another with a sweet head, dark eyes and super nice expression. More than decent forehead assembly although more grooming would show case this much better. Not the bone of 1st. Level topline and she has good substance throughout. A little lacking in confidence on the move.

3rd Walker & Bellamys' Dexbenella In My Dreams

Post Graduate Bitch (5)

1st Walkers' Dexbenella Double Or Quit

Another beautiful black and white bitch approaching three years old and one I hadn't seen before. Really super quality all through with a glorious head, so well balanced and chiselled with a lovely kind expression. Loved her reach of neck and excellently assembled forehead. Forechest present and correct. Compact in body, with good spring to ribcage and a strong, short loin. Very well boned limbs with tight, compact feet, very much a trademark of this kennel! Moved soundly and enthusiastically in the challenge maintaining a firm level topline with correct tail carriage. Totally up my street in every way and I was very pleased to award her the RCC and best B & W in Show, well done.

2nd Dunsdons' Kingsheath Mayday at Seaspring

Pretty and feminine black tri bitch of correct size. Sweetest of heads with dark, almond-shaped eyes giving such an appealing expression. Lovely arch to neck with correctly constructed forehead. A picture of moderation with nothing overdone in any quarter. Enough bone and tight round feet. Plenty of fill to her frame with good depth of chest. Her rear is moderately angled, perhaps she could have slightly wider thighs. Very happy on the move and covered the ground with ease. A little narrow coming towards me but otherwise still sound with good reach and drive.

3rd Harris' Melverly Betsy Trotwood with Coastalglows

Mid Limit Bitch (5,2a)

1st Keelys' Khaleesi De Les Tres Llacunes with Alhambian

Quality bitch of correct type and outline. Upstanding with good length of leg. Feminine in head and dark in eye to give a super expression. Loved her reach of neck and lay of shoulder. Enough substance and bone for a bitch. Strong and firm topline and excellent tail set and carriage. Moved out very well, with good extension to take this class.

2nd Rawlinsons' Meltarose Mystique

Liver tri bitch of four years. Loved her for size. Preferred head of this one and found her to be very well balanced in skull and foreface with a gentle stop and kindest expression. Very short coupled and is moderation personified. Decent length of neck. Really well filled frame with lovely substance.

Super bone and feet. Carrying too much weight today which affected her topline both stacked and on the move.

3rd Simmons' Dexbenella Frivolity

Limit Bitch (4,1a)

1st Smiths' Melverly Vignette

Dark liver bitch of stronger type presenting an impressive outline and another of good size. I liked her head with her dark eyes and soft expression. A little short of neck. As always from this kennel, she has great substance and bone, and fabulous feet. Really well let down behind with broad and strong thighs. Beautifully handled to bring out the best in her. Moved well and is sound fore and aft but with a slight roll in topline.

2nd Lillies' Freeway Fortune

Lovely type of bitch and up my street for style. Stood, could have been my winner as I loved her outline with nothing overdone. Compact in body and moderate in every aspect. Adored her head and dark eyes. Good length of neck, depth of chest and is substantial throughout with no 'gaps'. Plenty of bone and tight feet. Movement let her down a bit today and she decided not to pull out all the stops.

3rd Jenkinsons' Barecho Fame Queen at Eastriding

Open Bitch (4)

1st Lillies' Freeway Remembrance

I loved this girl as she is altogether my cup of tea. I want to say she is 'old fashioned' in style but mean that in the very best sense of the word. She is perfect for size, moderate throughout with a compact and neat outline that appeals very much. The very sweetest of well-balanced and feminine heads with dark eyes and such a dreamy expression. Super reach of neck and a properly constructed forehead, with well laid shoulder and correct angle and length to upper arm. Good bone and compact neat feet. Her frame is so well filled and she is deep and substantial in body. Let herself down a little in the challenge, deciding she had had more than enough of this particular dog show!

2nd Taubmans' Meltarose Madelaine at Meonstoke

Liver girl of four years, taller than 1st but still okay for size. Lovely head showing plenty of work, with excellent chiselling. Elegant in outline with a beautiful arched neck flowing into a well laid shoulder and good forehead. Plenty of substance and enough bone. Pasterns and feet could be slightly better. A little soft in topline today but is only shortly off a litter and can be more than forgiven for this. Huge credit to her owner for turning her out in such super condition with cracking presentation.

3rd Topliss' Sandylands Send My Love

Veteran Bitch (5,2a)

1st Dunsdons' Seaspring Becalmed

Lovely black and white veteran of ten years young. Looks so good for her age. Correct for size, compact and neatly proportioned, exactly as I like them. Another with a sweet and well-balanced head. Lovely expression from those dark eyes. Good reach of neck into an excellent forehead that is almost hidden by such a lot of coat. She possesses an equally good rear with enough bone and still very nice feet. Very well bodied. Sound and moved well enough to take this class over some much younger exhibits.

2nd Wests' Grosbreuil Abricot Regal

Liver and white, and the youngest in this class. In super condition and beautifully presented. Stronger in head than 1st. Very moderately made throughout and a very sound mover.

3rd Wests' Meonstoke Cherry Blossom at Grosbreuil

Special Beginners Bitch (4)

1st Le Clercs' Hunterheck Lost In A Spell

See GB

2nd Wilsons' Calvdale Padlurowncanoe

See NB

3rd Hoare's Crackerjanne Cleo Laine

Presidents Special Open Stakes Bitch (2)

1st Proctors' Petranella Perfick Bliss

Feminine headed bitch with dark eyes and gentle expression. A little long cast but is well bodied with a good deep chest. Enough bone. Nicely presented coat and she moved well.

2nd Williams' Cobhay Fancy Phlox

Dark liver girl out of an altogether smaller mould. Compact and unexaggerated. Preferred the head and expression of one. Moved well though and was well handled.

Dave Mitchell (Judge)