

WELSH HOUNDS

By Norm and Randee Perkins

photos courtesy of the author



We have a vested interest in this breed. Our Gleeson is a Welsh Hound who hunted for four years in Conway Valley, Wales. His days are now numbered; he is 15 years of age. As he nears the end of his path, we feel a tremendous loss in our hearts, since he is our last connection to our life spent abroad. Gleeson made a difficult transition to life as a pet from his previous life in the hunt pack. We feel he has had the best life, hunting early in his life with 80 other pack dogs and then becoming a family member with us. How many dogs really get to work at what they are bred for and cuddle in bed for the last 11 years of their lives? We are very honored to have had the chance to be part of his life. I hang on to every moment I can spend with him now. We are blessed to have had so many great years with him.

The Welsh Hound is a distinguished, rare breed which is commonly overlooked and rarely seen outside the hunting packs. Native to Wales and known to many as the Welsh Foxhound, they are not AKC or KC registered. High strung and overly independent, the Welsh Hound is used in fox and mink hunting packs, each requiring a different methodology. With a firm hand in discipline, the Welsh Hound is responsive, intelligent, loyal, and happy by nature. The heritage of this ancient breed traces back to the Celtic Hound.

The Welsh Hound has been in existence in Wales since well before William the Conqueror arrived and is certainly their oldest existing native breed. All other hounds arrived with William or gradually moved east through Asia and Europe, finally to arrive in England. It was from some of these newcomers that the present day English Foxhound, Harrier, and Beagle have

evolved over the centuries. Throughout this time the Welsh Hound has remained virtually unchanged. They are the right hound for a tough job in a tough place. Mink hunting is a hard and difficult occupation for a hound with water deep and turbulent and river banks harsh and densely covered, but the Welsh invariably come out on top.

The Welsh Hound is broken or rough coated, of medium size, having longer ears than the English Foxhound, and built of a slightly narrower line. Noted for their strong scenting ability and loose tongue, the Welsh Hound will actually speak before the English Foxhound, who waits, making certain that he is on the correct line. Welsh Hounds have good temperaments and get along well within the pack. They have a terrific jump and are more suited to open country. A hunt is made up of Welsh, Fox or Fell, and Otterhounds, each type performing differently. The fastest and most generous with his voice is the Welsh, known as the screamer, who will notify the huntsmen they are on a scent. The huntsmen wait to listen for the Foxhound to confirm it is the correct line. However, the scenting ability of the Welsh Hound and Foxhound are no match for the Otterhound, who directly leads the huntsmen to their prey. The huntsmen then direct the hounds away and the feisty Jack Russell is sent to corner the prey.

Evolution of the Welsh Hound

Four breeds whose histories are linked over hundreds of years are the Otterhound, the Welsh Hound, the Griffon Vendéen, and the Fauve de Bretagne. The Griffon Vendéen evolved with the help of the Breton Hound (the Breton race colonized Brittany from Wales

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As I am based in the UK, it is a resounding no. We have very, very few handlers over here in any breed, and long may it stay that way in my opinion. Everyone has a fair chance in our rings, although of course some have a fairer chance than others.

6. **What is the average price for a show dog of your breed? A pet?**
£500 to £1000
7. **What changes would you like to see in your breed?**
Health testing being mandatory before any breeding can take place. We do not have a problem in our breed, but one could creep in and by the time we knew, it would be endemic. Why not make sure if never gets to that situation?
8. **What is the most common judging mistake in your breed?**
Recognizing correct movement. An Afghan's movement is special and unique. Unfortunately, few have correct movement in my opinion; the kind that makes you go WOW when you see it. I am always mystified when a judge moves off dogs, then places the one with the poor movement (i.e. flashy and legs flying) over the one that moved correctly with balance, drive, and that magical moment of suspension that makes them look like they are floating around the ring.
9. **Who do you hope reads this?**
Anyone who is interested in the opinions of others and has an open mind, of course.
10. **How do you want to be remembered in the sport of show dogs?**
As someone who loved her dogs, enjoyed the sport, and acted with dignity and integrity at all times. One can hope, eh? **BONUS: Share some words of wisdom to better your breed.** Love them first, show them second, and always remember we each take the best dogs home with us at the end of each show.

EDNA (MIDGE) MARTIN, KAIHORN AFGHAN HOUNDS

1. **Why did you choose your breed?**
They are beautiful, funny, and wonderful friends.
2. **What is the most distinctive characteristic of your breed?**
Snooty attitude, wonderful coats, fun to live with.
3. **Which kennel has given the most to the breed?**
TBen-Ghazi, Sunny's Grandeur, Dureigh, and Mecca.
4. **Who is the foremost authority in your breed? Who is the most popular judge in your breed?**
I cannot respond to that one... too hot a potato.
5. **Is yours considered a "handler breed"?**
No, though some handlers have done a disservice to the breed.
6. **What is the average price for a show dog of your breed? A pet?**
No answer.
7. **What changes would you like to see in your breed?**
Better fronts. More attention paid to the essentials of breed type and correct construction.
8. **What is the most common judging mistake in your breed?**
Putting up flash and trash instead of correct and functional.
9. **Who do you hope reads this?**
Not my family.
10. **How do you want to be remembered in the sport of show dogs?**
Passionate about preserving the integrity of my breeds, judging impartially to the standard, AND producing wonderful dogs.

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around the fifth century AD). It seems highly likely that these early hound breeds exchanged countries and borders many times over. The Celtic hunting dog was of rough hair, as were the hounds of Gaul. There is also evidence of Staghound blood from hounds owned by the Reverend John Russell. The other strain which came into the picture was from the famous Margam Abbey Hounds, obtained from a continental monastery, all black and tan St. Huberts. Staghounds were almost always light color, lemon and white or faint badger pied. The Margam Abbey hounds were said to be heavy headed with a touch of rough coat.

So what or which happened first? Did the early Welsh accompany their masters on their journey to Brittany and marry with the Breton Hounds? Or did the Breton and Griffon Vendéen types come to England and settle into existing Celtic hunting packs? Whichever happened first, there is no doubt that it did happen. One trait the Welsh shares with the original Griffon Fauve Breton Hound is the inclination to riot. Not the best attribute needed in a pack.

With the Grand Griffon Fauve extinct, the other two sizes have strengthened. The Grand Griffon Vendéen has had a revival, but not as popular as the Briquet, Grand Basset, and Petit Basset Griffon Vendéen Hounds.

The last connection of all these hounds is the Otterhound, which owes part of its history to the St. Hubert Hounds, more commonly known as the forerunner of the Bloodhound, the main influence of the old Margam Abbey hounds.

Since the Welsh Hounds are bred by the huntsmen, each dog is registered in the Welsh Hound Stud Book within the Welsh Hound Association. Due to this breed's lack of exposure, it would be worth cultivating a wider interest among the public so that the Welsh Hound could have root stock preservation and extend part of their heritage.

With hunting eliminated in their native land, it would be a tragedy for this ancient breed, which was carefully bred as the Welsh Hound, to become extinct.

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Wyuszyn China Doll

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