

The Judges Talk About Welsh Springer Spaniels

Sh. Ch. Ferndel Cecilia, often named as an all-time favorite among breeders, is Britain's top producing dam of all time among all breeds.



We asked Welsh Springer breeder-judges:

1. When did you first come across a Welsh Springer Spaniel? What attracted you to the breed? Please briefly outline your involvement with the breed as an owner, breeder, handler and/or judge.
2. What are the most important characteristics to keep in mind for anyone wanting to become a good Welsh Springer judge? Are there any special considerations when judging Welsh Springers?
3. Do you feel that the current standard in your country is adequate? If not, what changes would you like to see?
4. Have you had experience with Welsh Springer Spaniels in foreign countries? How do you feel the breed differs from that in your country, if at all?
5. Please mention two or three Welsh Springers not owned, bred or shown by yourself that you particularly admired, and tell us what you most admired about each. Which one of those that you have been involved with was best?

**DR. KARIN BROSTAM BERGLUND
DON'S SPANIELS (TOGETHER WITH
ANNICA HÖGSTRÖM & LENA RÖSIÖ)
KNUTBY, SWEDEN**

Approved by the Swedish Kennel Club (FCI) to judge Clumber, Welsh Springer, English Springer, American and English Cocker Spaniels.

1. I first met the Welsh Springer Spaniel when I bought my first dog, a Clumber, and I fell immediately for their looks, elegance,

the way they look at you like you are the answer to all their dreams, and their merry temperaments. I thought they were the most beautiful dogs I had ever seen and I still think that. A good Welsh Springer gives me goose bumps.

Because of my studies it took until 1988 before the first of many Welsh Springers came to live with me. It was an English bitch, Weslave Winter Breeze, and she fulfilled all my expectations. With her as a foundation I have, together with Annica Högström and later Lena Rösiö, bred numerous champions in many countries. The most well-known in the U.S. is probably Am. Ch. Don's Still Waters Run Deep. As a stud he had a great impact on the breed. I have shown Sweden's only two all-breed BIS-winning Welsh Springers, and have handled also in the U.K.

2. The obvious and classical answer to this question is the head – but to me what really distinguishes an excellent Welsh Springer from the rest is in the overall appearance, the unique look of elegance and refinement combined with strength and durability, balanced all through and with typical spaniel movement with plenty of push and drive and a wagging tail. That is what Welsh Springers are about for me.

3. I normally judge them according to the FCI/ U.K. breed standard, and I am content with that. I do, however, miss the points that were taken out a few years back, for

instance that the head should never be coarse and that they should not be long and low.

4. I think the top dogs in the U.S. would compete very well with the best ones in the U.K. and in Scandinavia. I think type in the U.S. was more different from the rest of the world 15 years ago compared to today.



Karin Brostam Berglund with WSS puppies.

Even if the type looks slightly different comparing Scandinavia, the U.K. and the U.S., I think in all show scenes most of them are within the standard type-wise. Presentation and trimming is different in the U.S., which make them look more different than they are.

5. The bitch GB Sh. Ch. Ferndel Cecilia is one of the best I have seen; she really combined elegance and strength the way I like them to. The Dalati kennel produced many dogs over the years that really took my breath away. To mention one – one of their last – GB Sh. Ch. Dalati Afan had it all. Of our own, BIS BISS Ch. Metzgard's Moonlight Valley, still today the top-winning Welsh Springer in Scandinavia. I am not sure, though, who I would put first if he met our BIS BISS Ch. Don's Season Flavor, who combines type and elegance with beautiful conformation, too rare in this breed.

**SUSAN RIESE
STATESMAN WELSH SPRINGER
SPANIELS
BREMEN, GA.**

Approved by AKC to judge 16 Sporting breeds and Junior Showmanship.

1. I first became aware of Welsh Springer Spaniels when I saw the May 1975 cover of the *AKC Gazette*. The picture showed a strong, well-built spaniel with an intelligent, expressive head. This dog appeared to be able to do what it was bred for — work in the field day in and day out. I later learned that the dog was Sh. Ch. Deri Darrell of Linkhill, a successful British show dog at that time, but to me he was a real dog.

We acquired our first Welsh Springer in 1975, Ch. Sugari Saga of Sylabru. Besides being a strong, tireless hunter who gained her championship easily, 'Girl' was the dog that showed us the Welsh Springer behavioral traits that we came to cherish. She was a loyal, biddable, non-dominant companion, and we continue to strive for these qualities in our breeding program today, along with health, type and sound structure.

We have bred and owned a combination of over 70 champions, including specialty, Westminster and American Spaniel Club winners. We are particularly proud of the number of Statesman dogs that have hunting titles. Two memorable wins allowed us to enjoy this combination of beauty and hunting ability: in 2004 Ch. Statesman's Tennyson JH, WDX won Best Field Dog in Show at ASC and in 2008 Ch. Bentcroft Statesman's Logo WD won that award.

2. Welsh Springer Spaniels are versatile dogs. The three most important qualities in

my mind are: muscling, rectangular outline, and effortless movement.

Welsh Springers are upland hunting dogs, working birds and small game. They should be muscular and strong enough to break through any cover they encounter during the hunting day. They should also have the physical ability to retrieve game of various sizes.

The outline is unique and definitely an important aspect of functional form — rectangular due to pronounced point of shoulder and wide, well-muscled thighs. It would be impossible to have a defined point of shoulder without good shoulder layback and the accompanying return of the upper arm, which places the front leg well under the body. I think C. Bede Maxwell said it best when she referred to Welsh as being "low-stationed á la Welsh."

Finally, a correct Welsh Springer must have effortless movement. Movement should also be coordinated. You should be able to see the athleticism of the breed while at the trot.

Judges need to keep in mind that the breed has had ongoing problems with bent forearms, loose elbows, too much leg, roached and dipping toplines, steep croups, and long, hyper-extending hocks. Wide front movement without convergence has also become a bigger problem in recent years.

3. I was part of the breed standard committee that added clarification to points that had only been mentioned (or were not included at all) in the previous standard. If I could add anything to our current standard it would be to stress the need for effortless, coordinated, athletic movement. The length and carriage of undocked tails also needs to be addressed in the standard.

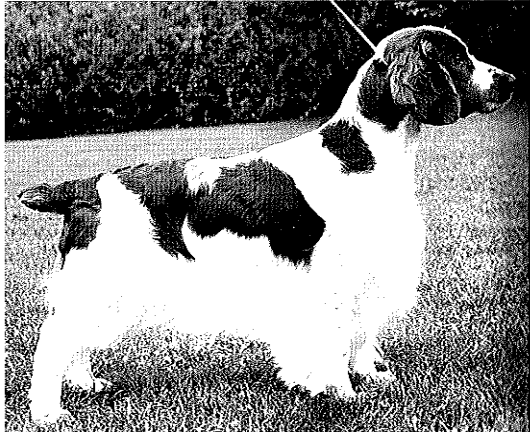
4. I traveled to Scandinavia multiple times. I appreciate the FCI method of critiquing dogs and awarding CCs or CACIBs. I wish we had a system in this country to allow the individual evaluation of a dog to include a written critique.

Because Scandinavian registries require that Welsh Springers be screened for hip and eye problems prior to breeding, it became a "clearing house" for me as a breeder. Being able to see dogs firsthand and then easily gather health information allowed me to import puppies and frozen semen. Some of these acquisitions (including Ch. Merry One's I'm A Statesman and Ch. Don's Still Waters Run Deep) have had a major, positive impact on the breed in America.

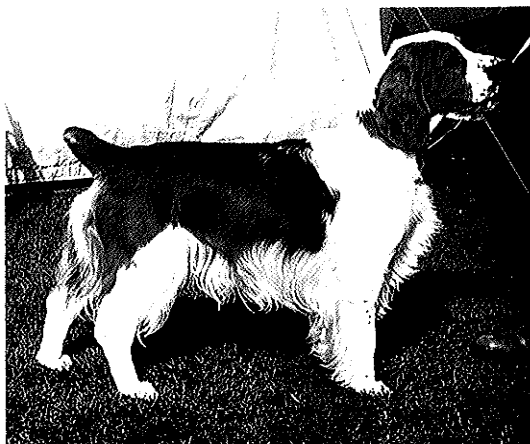
5. Three dogs stand out in my mind as outstanding Welsh Springer Spaniels. The first is Int. Fin. Norw. Ch. NW-85, 86 W-87,



All-breed and specialty Best in Show winner Ch. Don's Season Flavor, bred and owned by Karin Berglund.



All-breed and specialty Best in Show winner Norw. and Swe. Ch. Metzgard's Moonlight Valley is the all-time top-winning Welsh Springer in Scandinavia.



GB Sh. Ch. Dalati Afan, from the great Dalati kennels of Noel and Dodo Hunton-Morgan in Wales.



Susan Riese of Statesman Welsh Springer Spaniels.



Meghen Riese Bassel owner-handled Ch. Bencroft Statesman's Logo WD, as a veteran, to Best Field Dog in Show at American Spaniel Club in 2008 under Dr. Clyde Shaw. Photo Ashbey.

88 Delkens Turul. Bred in England and exported to Marjo Jaakkola (Benton WSS in Finland) as a puppy, his head, proportions, bone, body, topline and rear were exceptional. I had the privilege of staying with him on two of my trips to Finland. Adding to his structural qualities, he was also a strong swimmer and very birdy. He produced many lovely, healthy, top-winning offspring.

Although I have only seen her in photographs, Dalati Hefin, bred by the Hunton-Morgans in Great Britain, had a long, well-set neck with good fore and aft angulation, beautiful bone, deep body and correct topline. She was a good producer and became the foundation for John Thirlwell's Ferndel breeding program in England.

Finally, Trigger of Tregwilym epitomizes the proportions, angles, bone and body for a Welsh Springer. There is no doubt in my mind that he was built to work all day.

Ch. Bencroft's Statesman's Logo WD is the best Welsh that I have bred or owned. He is correct structurally, and I love his proportions, angles, neck, topline and movement. He did some exceptional winning, always handled by my daughter Meghen (both in the field and show ring) and has also done well by his puppies.

JOHN THIRLWELL FERNDEL WELSH SPRINGER SPANIELS TYNE AND WEAR, ENGLAND

1. I first came across Welsh Springer Spaniels as a teenager while showing Irish Setters and was attracted to them for their appearance, size, character and colour. I have had them since 1976 and have owned or bred 30 U.K. champions, with many more overseas. Ch. Ferndel Copywrite became Top Gundog in the U.K. 2003, while his mother, Sh. Ch. Ferndel Cecilia, holds the record of Top Brood Bitch among all breeds in the U.K., with more champion offspring than any other bitch since records began.



AKC STANDARD FOR THE WELSH SPRINGER SPANIEL

General Appearance — The Welsh Springer Spaniel is a dog of distinct variety and ancient origin,

who derives his name from his hunting style and not his relationship to other breeds. He is an attractive dog of handy size, exhibiting substance without coarseness. He is compact, not leggy, obviously built for hard work and endurance. The Welsh Springer gives the impression of length due to obliquely angled forequarters and well developed hindquarters. Being a hunting dog, he should be shown in hard muscled working condition. His coat should not be so excessive as to hinder his work as an active flushing spaniel, but should be thick enough to protect him from heavy cover and weather.

Size, Proportion, Substance — A dog is ideally 18-19 inches in height at the withers and a bitch is 17-18 inches at the withers. Any animal above or below the ideal to be proportionately penalized. Weight should be in proportion to height and overall balance. Length of body from the withers to the base of the tail is very slightly greater than the distance from the withers to the ground. This body length may be the same as the height but never shorter, thus preserving the rectangular silhouette of the Welsh Springer Spaniel.

Head — The Welsh Springer Spaniel head is unique and should in no way approximate that of other spaniel breeds. Its overall balance is of primary importance. Head is in proportion to body, never so broad as to appear coarse nor so narrow as to appear racy. The skull is of medium length, slightly domed, with a clearly defined stop. It is well chiseled below the eyes. The top plane of the skull is very slightly divergent from that of the muzzle, but with no tendency toward a down-faced appearance. A short chubby head is most objectionable. **Eyes** should be oval in shape, dark to medium brown in color with a soft expression. Preference is

for a darker eye though lighter shades of brown are acceptable. Yellow or mean-looking eyes are to be heavily penalized. Medium in size, they are neither prominent, nor sunken, nor do they show haw. Eye rims are tight and dark pigmentation is preferred. **Ears** are set on approximately at eye level and hang close to the cheeks. Comparatively small, the leather does not reach to the nose. Gradually narrowing toward the tip, they are shaped somewhat like a vine leaf and are lightly feathered. The length of the **muzzle** is approximately equal to, but never longer than that of the skull. It is straight, fairly square, and free from excessive flew. Nostrils are well developed and black or any shade of brown in color. A pink nose is to be severely penalized. A scissors bite is preferred. An undershot jaw is to be severely penalized.

Neck, Topline, Body — The neck is long and slightly arched, clean in throat, and set into long, sloping shoulders. Topline is level. The loin is slightly arched, muscular, and close-coupled. The croup is very slightly rounded, never steep nor falling off. The topline in combination with proper angulation fore and aft presents a silhouette that appears rectangular. The chest is well developed and muscular with a prominent forechest, the ribs well sprung and the brisket reaching to the elbows. The tail is an extension of the topline. Carriage is nearly horizontal or slightly elevated when the dog is excited. The tail is generally docked and displays a lively action.

Forequarters — The shoulder blade and upper arm are approximately equal in length. The upper arm is set well back, joining the shoulder blade with sufficient angulation to place the elbow beneath the highest point of the shoulder blade when standing. The forearms are of medium length, straight and moderately feathered. The legs are well boned but not to the extent of coarseness. The Welsh Springer Spaniel's elbows should be close to the body and its pasterns short and slightly sloping. Height to the elbows is approximately equal to the distance from the elbows to the top of the shoulder blades. Dewclaws are generally removed. Feet should be round, tight and well

arched with thick pads.

Hindquarters — The hindquarters must be strong, muscular, and well boned, but not coarse. When viewed in profile the thighs should be wide and the second thighs well developed. The angulation of the pelvis and femur corresponds to that of the shoulder and upper arm. Bend of stifle is moderate. The bones from the hocks to the pads are short with a well angulated hock joint. When viewed from the side or rear they are perpendicular to the ground. Rear dewclaws are removed. Feet as in front.

Coat — The coat is naturally straight flat and soft to the touch, never wiry or wavy. It is sufficiently dense to be waterproof, thornproof, and weatherproof. The back of the forelegs, the hind legs above the hocks, chest and underside of the body are moderately feathered. The ears and tail are lightly feathered. Coat so excessive as to be a hindrance in the field is to be discouraged. Obvious barbering is to be avoided as well.

Color — The color is rich red and white only. Any pattern is acceptable and any white area may be flecked with red ticking.

Gait — The Welsh Springer moves with a smooth, powerful, ground covering action that displays drive from the rear. Viewed from the side, he exhibits a strong forward stride with a reach that does not waste energy. When viewed from the front, the legs should appear to move forward in an effortless manner with no tendency for the feet to cross over or interfere with each other. Viewed from the rear, the hocks should follow on a line with the forelegs, neither too widely nor too closely spaced. As the speed increases the feet tend to converge towards a center line.

Temperament — The Welsh Springer Spaniel is an active dog displaying a loyal and affectionate disposition. Although reserved with strangers, he is not timid, shy nor unfriendly. To this day he remains a devoted family member and hunting companion.

Approved June 13, 1989
Effective August 1, 1989

2. Important breed characteristics for me would be firstly that of a symmetrical, compact spaniel with the distinctive colour of rich red and white, not too big, yet with substance and the look of a spaniel built to work.

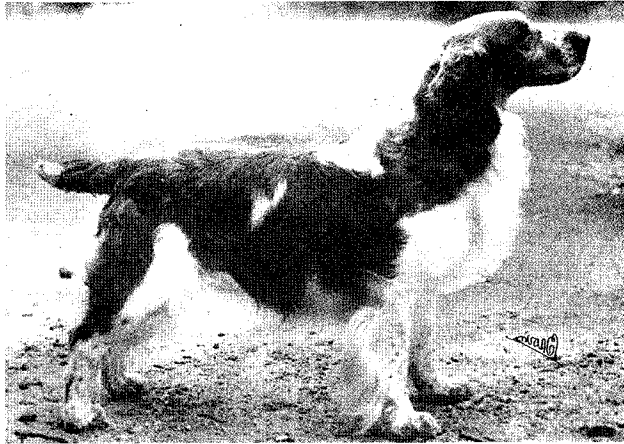
3. The breed standard is fairly clear in its description; however, more depth on certain points such as heads would be an advantage to those trying to learn about the breed.

4. I have seen Welsh Springers in many countries around the world, judged them in the U.K., all of Scandinavia, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, Holland, South Africa, USA, Australia and New Zealand. On the whole each country has had a reasonable proportion of typical, good examples of a Welsh Springer. The type does not vary too much, just depth of quality, possibly due to level of popularity and lack of a large gene pool in some countries. Most countries, however, have a few dedicated breeders who endeavor to improve the breed.

5. Welsh Springers not owned by myself that I admired would have to be those from the Dalati kennel of Noel and Dodo Hunton-Morgan who were great breeders, producing many excellent Welsh Springers. My favorite was Sh. Ch. Dalati Rhian, a classical bitch full of breed type with that extra special quality a great dog has. Of my own it would be between my foundation bitch, Sh. Ch. Dalati Hefin, a true Welsh with excellent neck and shoulders and super hindquarters who is behind all my champi-



Int. Fin. Norw. Sh. Ch. Delkens Turul was the first Welsh Springer to win a Gundog Group at an international championship show in Finland, where he was imported and owned by Marjo Jaakkola.



Trigger of Tregwillym, from the kennel of Cliff and Mary Payne. Tregwillym had a significant influence on the breed in Great Britain in the 1960s and 1970s. Sh. Ch. Golden Tint of Tregwillym broke records in the late 1960s by winning 33 CCs.

ons and many more, and the other Sh. Ch. Ferndel Cecilia, a fifth generation on from Hefin, who still processes many of her ancestor's qualities.

**MEGHEN RIESE BASSEL
STATESMAN WELSH SPRINGER
SPANIELS
BREMEN, GA.**

Approved by AKC to judge Welsh Springer Spaniels and English Springer Spaniels

1. I am a second generation Welsh Springer breeder. My mother, Susan Riese, purchased her first Welsh Springer Spaniel in the mid 1970s and I have never been without the breed. It is a passion for both my mother and I, and we enjoy co-breeding together. We have bred and/or owned over 70 champions. Statesman dogs have also earned over 20 AKC hunting titles and numerous WD and WDX titles. These titles are meaningful because I feel it is important to maintain the struc-



John Thirlwell of Ferndel Welsh Springers, with Sh. Ch. Ferndel Cecilia, England's all-time Top Brood Bitch.

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**KC-ENGLAND
STANDARD FOR THE
WELSH SPRINGER
SPANIEL**

General Appearance — Symmetrical, compact, not leggy, obviously built for endurance and hard work. Quick and active mover, displaying plenty of push and drive.

Characteristics — Very ancient and distinct breed of pure origin. Strong, merry and very active.

Temperament — Kindly disposition, not showing aggression or nervousness.

Head and Skull — Skull of proportionate length, slightly domed, clearly defined stop, well chiselled below eyes. Muzzle of medium length, straight, fairly square. Nostrils well developed, flesh coloured to dark.

Eyes — Hazel or dark, medium size, not prominent, or sunken, or showing haw.

Ears — Set moderately low and hanging close to cheeks. Comparatively small and gradually narrowing towards tip and shaped somewhat like a vine leaf.

Mouth — Jaws strong with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

Neck — Long, muscular, clean in throat, neatly set into sloping shoulders.

Forequarters — Forelegs of medium length, straight, well boned.

Body — Not long. Strong and muscular. Deep brisket, well sprung ribs. Length of body should be proportionate to length of leg. Loin muscular and slightly arched. Well coupled.

Hindquarters — Strong and muscular, wide and fully developed with deep second thighs. Hindlegs well boned, hocks well let down, stifles moderately angled, neither turning in nor out.

Feet — Round, with thick pads. Firm and cat-like, not large or spreading.

Tail — Previously customarily docked. **Docked:** Well set on and low, never carried above level of back. Lively in action. **Undocked:** Well set on and low, never carried above level of back. Lively in action. Feathered. In balance with the rest of the dog.

Gait/Movement — Smooth, powerful, ground covering action; driving from rear.

Coat — Straight or flat, silky texture, dense, never wiry or wavy. Curly coat highly undesirable. Forelegs and hindlegs above hocks moderately feathered, ears and tail lightly feathered.

Colour — Rich red and white only.

Size — Approximate height: dogs: 48 cms (19 ins) at withers; bitches: 46 cms (18 ins) at withers.

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.

Last Updated - September 2007

Welsh Springer Judges,
Cont. from page 203

tural and mental soundness needed to work in the field. I began my judging career in 2005 at the age of 25.

2. First and foremost the Welsh Springer is a spaniel. He must have the gentle, smooth, unexaggerated lines of a spaniel, along with a rectangular silhouette and a strong topline. Correct proportion, balance, and efficient movement are major areas contributing to a good Welsh Springer Spaniel. Above all they should never be leggy or Setter-like.

The topline should show no sign of weakness. There should be no tendency toward a roach or a dip, and this cannot be stressed enough. This applies both standing and in motion. On mature dogs there will be a layer of muscling that develops over the loin. This muscling, in combination with a very gently rounded croup, adds the very slightest of curves. However, the muscling over the loin is so slight that it is typically only "seen" by your hands during examination. Since this muscling comes with maturity, younger dogs may not have developed it yet.



Meghen Bassel with her BIS winner at the Swedish WSS Club show in Gränna, Sweden, Int. Nord. Ch. Iagos All 'Bout The Money. Photo Helms.

Efficient and effortless movement is also extremely important. The legs should tend to converge toward a center line on the move, both coming and going. This breed is expected to have the structural qualities to allow him to work in the field all day. A few trips around the ring should be an easy task for a sound Welsh Springer, and it should never appear to take the dog much effort to do so. The fewer steps it takes to get somewhere the better.

The Welsh Springer's head should be

unexaggerated and balanced. A slightly rounded back skull, divergent planes, dark eye, and chiseling under the eye make for a pleasing head with a kind expression.

At the moment the breed could use improvement in fronts, topline and movement. Wide front movement caused by a poor front assembly, loose elbows, weak or roached topline and lack of effortless reach and drive are commonly seen today. Unfortunately we are also seeing a number of "setter" dogs. Health (especially hip dysplasia) and temperament have greatly improved in America over the past 20 years. The

majority of WSS breeders are dedicated to breeding healthy dogs, and the improvement is a direct result of their efforts.

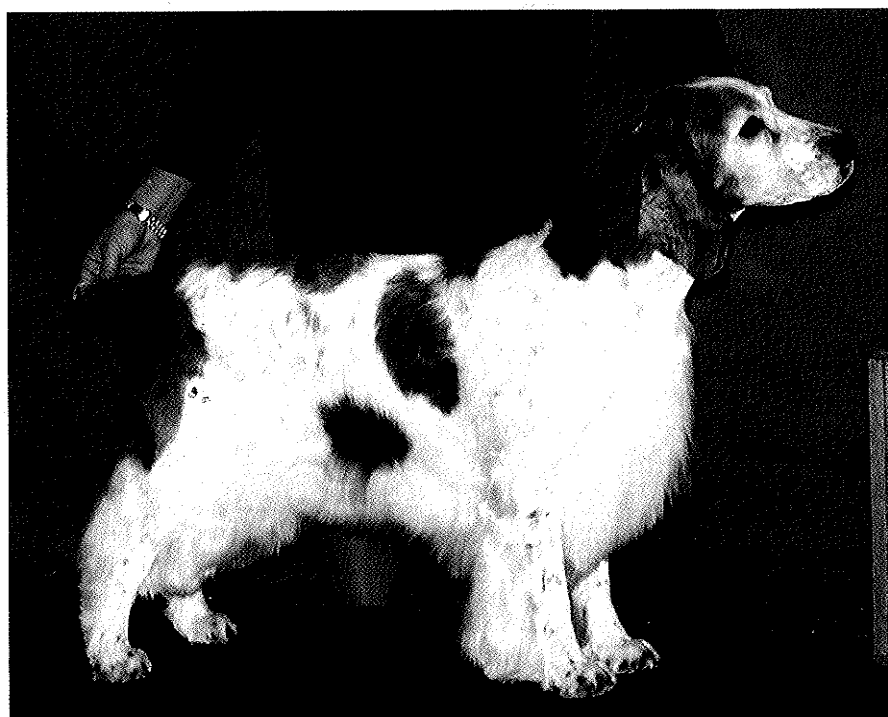
3. I believe that the current breed standard is quite good, emphasizing a workmanlike spaniel with a rectangular outline. It is uncomplicated, yet descriptive. However, I do feel that it is missing a couple of things. First, I would like to see the word "athletic" appear in the general description. Also, I feel that the undocked tail should be addressed in the standard.



Dalati Hefin, with owner John Thirlwell, winning under Mr. Wilkinson at East of England championship show in 1979.



GB Sh. Ch. Northey Storm Cloud winning a Group with her owner-handler Christine McDonald. Photo Nijhoff.



Ch. Statesman's Autumn Amberlynn, among the top-winning bitches in the U.S., pictured at 9 years of age. Photo Cowdrick.

4. The Welsh Springer Spaniel is one breed worldwide, without distinct styles based on region. The trimming styles or presentation may be slightly different, but the dogs are the same. Breeders can import and export between countries, and the dogs typically fit in wherever they go. I have traveled to Scandinavia for the breed a number of times and most recently judged an entry of over 90 Welsh Springers at the WSSK Show in Gränna, Sweden.

5. Sh. Ch. Ferndel Cecilia has to be at the very top of my list. Although I've never had the opportunity to see her in person her photos show a typey, balanced bitch with a lovely front, deep body and a long ribcage.

The bitch, GB Ch. Northey Stormcloud, bred and owned by Christine McDonald in the U.K., and the dog, NORDV-94 NUCH NV-88-89 SV-89 SV-90-91-92 SV-94 Metzgard's Moonlight Valley, owned by Annica Högström and Karin Brostam Berglund in Sweden, would both have to make my list as well. Both were top-notch Welsh Springers of beautiful type. You can see the true beauty of the Welsh Springer in these two and get the feeling that they could do the job they were bred to do.

I feel that the best dogs to represent Statesman in the show ring have been Ch. Bentcroft Statesman's Logo and the bitch BISS Ch. Statesman's Autumn Amberlynn. These half-siblings have correct rectangular proportion, exceptional front angulation and shoulder layback, smooth lines, effortless side movement, and slightly

converging front movement. Ch. Statesman's Ruffian, dam of 16 champions, and her daughter Ch. Statesman's Arista JH SH WD ('Risty') could be considered our finest producers. Risty's most successful offspring include BISS Ch. Statesman's Llandharan Abbey, FIN EST Ch. Statesman's Unbridled, Ch. Statesman's Affirmed and Ch. Statesman's Spectacular Bid.

DOUGLAS A. JOHNSON CLUSSEXX SPANIELS BLOOMINGTON, IND.

Approved by AKC to judge all Sporting breeds, 20 Hound breeds, the Sporting Group and Best in Show.

1. I remember first seeing the breed when I was in college in Northern Virginia in the late 1980s. Laddie Carswell was showing Ch. Fracas Little Caesar, and doing some Group winning when the breed was not really doing much of that. This dog went on to win the first BIS award in the breed. Having both Clumbers and Sussex at that time, I was attracted to the Welsh Springer's uniqueness but was also limited in space and couldn't have one. Nearly 20 years later, with my involvement with two top breeders in Sweden, I was able to get a wonderful male from their kennel. He was the type I had grown fond of while visiting their country. It was a pleasure to

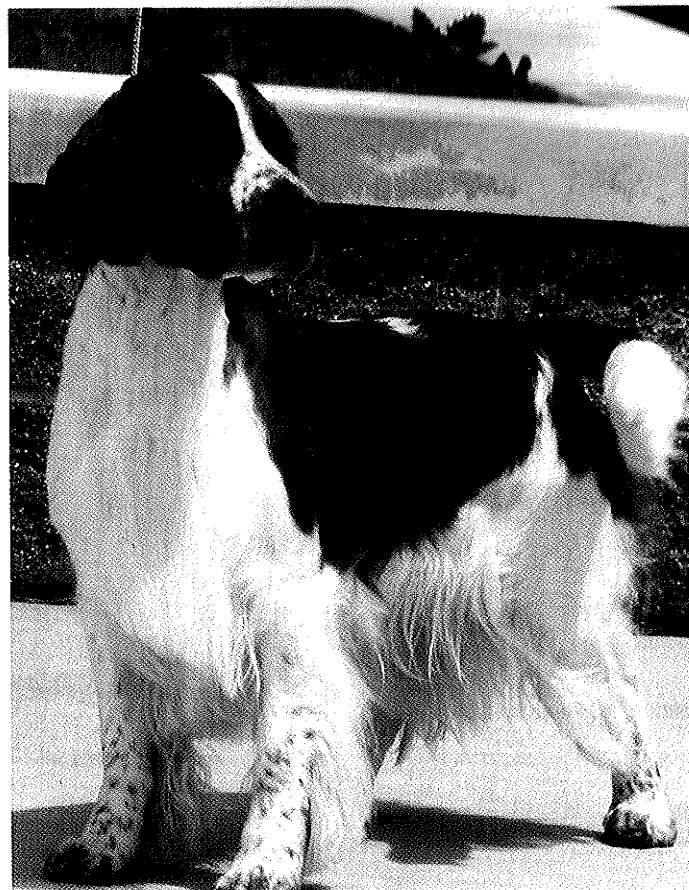


photo: Susan Riese

Ch. Benton Ivy League, bred by Marjo Jaakkola and owned by Adrienne Bancker, was a multiple National Specialty and all-breed Best in Show winner, and the top Welsh Springer in the U.S. in 2004. Photo Riese.

watch the breed in these foreign countries, as the consistency and level of quality was much higher than what I was seeing in the States.

2. I really find this breed fun for judges to learn if for no other reason than that they have some unusual traits. The Welsh Springer Club of America is very active for the breed, including a wonderful judges' education program for new judges and knowledgeable people to present for the club. Personally, I think it is most important to define the head shape and all of the details that go along with it: the wedge shape, the dome, the planes and ear shape, the eyes, the pigment, and that beautiful expression that would melt your soul. Then the body proportions: the square within the rectangle (not too short and not too long), completed by the roundness of the croup and the correct tailset.

I would also explain that the front end assembly of the breed is challenged. The lack of fill and the cathedral fronts, com-



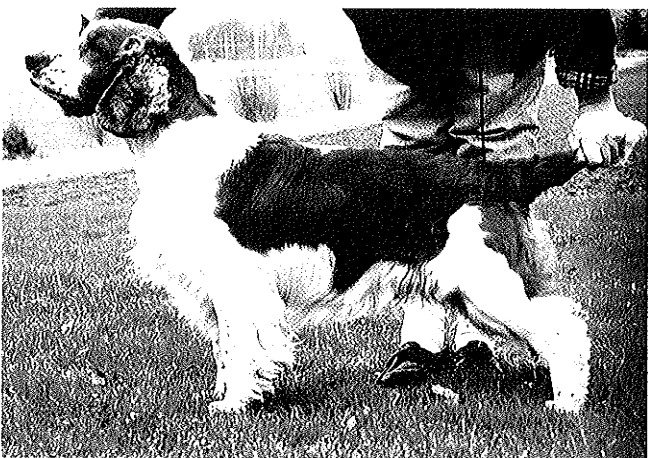
Doug Johnson awards Best of Breed to Ch. Benton's Ivy Garden in 2004. She was bred in Finland by Marjo Jaakkola and owned in the U.S. by Faye and Wes Skoczylas. Photo Ashbey.



National Specialty Best in Show winner Ch. Rolyart's Full of Grace, bred and owned by Cindy Ford and Shelley Traylor and co-bred by Deedra and Shawn Feltus. Photo Booth.



Dutch and Lux. Ch. Wessel van de Weidezoo, owned by Kennel Van Snellestein, bred by Mr. and Mrs. A. van de Water of Holland. 'Wessel' was Netherlands WSS of the Year 1982 and 1983 and won the Dutch WSS Club show in 1982, 1983 and 1984. Photo Glackin.



Ch. Don's TVA Soldora Segel.

bined with elbows out instead of under the body, make a great percentage of them move wide in front.

3. As I said, the parent club in America is extremely pro-active in educating judges. However, in the standard I would change the explanation of the topline. I personally don't believe that the topline is any different from most other sporting spaniel breeds; it is the same construction as the Clumber, Sussex, Field and English Cocker Spaniels. The topline is level, carried level, with a slight rise over the loin and a tailset that is typical to most spaniels – slightly below the level of the back line – yet carried level. One should feel the roundness of the croup even if you can't see it.

4. I have watched this breed outside of the U.S. in England, Scotland, Sweden and Australia. Frankly, I find the breed to excel outside America as a general rule. The top 30 percent of the breed in the U.S. would be competitive in other countries. Most of today's best kennels here have benefited from imports for many, many years. This is a global group that is looking for international stock to use in

their breeding programs. Welsh Springer breeders worldwide set a high bar on health clearances. The breed is more defined abroad, with the cream of the crop being stronger and more prolific. There are more dogs of higher quality to pick from in these other counties.

In the States the range of differences in the classes, and from region to region, is more diverse than what you would find from country to country overseas.

All of this is not to say that our very best dogs couldn't compete with the very best of other countries, because I know they can, but I believe that overall the breed has more depth abroad, in my opinion because of the greater number of breeders and greater number of litters being born. In order to take a breed forward one must produce generations of quality dogs. In the States there is not the breeding activity or the level of show success that this breed has seen in other countries and as a direct result there is less interest in them.

5. Ch. Don's TVA Soldora Segel, Ch. Bencroft Statesman's Logo, Ch. Benton's Ivy League, Ch. Benton's Ivy Garden, Ch. Rolyart's Full of Grace; these three dogs and two bitches represent the type of dog I like in this breed. Classics in their own right, each possesses the essential breed characters that make them dogs of great distinction. Each has the proper proportions, super heads and correct topline. From an aesthetic point of view, I would make Ch. Bencroft Statesman's Logo my very favorite. **DR**