

# BMDCA JUDGES' EDUCATION



*An Overview of Breed Type, with **Highlights**  
From the Standard*

*All text in **BLUE** are direct quotes from the AKC Breed Standard.*

# The Bernese Mountain Dog



The Bernese Mountain Dog pre-dates the Roman invasion of Switzerland 2000 years ago. This striking, symmetrically marked dog has always been used as a farm dog, a companion in driving small numbers of cows...

# Working Heritage



and working as a cart dog, pulling wagons laden with milk or cheese. The emphasis for this breed is its **BALANCE**, strength, sturdiness and an even, gentle temper. Nothing is exaggerated. **At all times remember this breed's working heritage.**

# TIMELINE – BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOGS AND THE BMDCA

## 1899-1956

- 1899 Beginning of breed recognition in Switzerland, First public mention of the Durrbachlers written by Probst in the newspaper Centralblatt.
- 1907 The Schweizerischer Durrbach Klub is founded in Burgdorf, Switzerland, and a breed standard is defined. Four Durrbachs were placed in the Swiss stud book, signaling breed recognition by the Swiss Kennel Club (SKG).
- 1908 Swiss Standard for the breed established. First Bernese gain entry to the Swiss stud book.
- 1910 Berner Sennenhund Club holds show judged by Albert Heim, who begins selecting for preferred markings while judging.
- 1926 First Bernese introduced to the US from Switzerland but unregistrable with AKC.
- 1937 AKC recognition granted for the Bernese Mountain Dog. AKC adopts breed description and standard, derived from the standard current in Switzerland.
- 1948 Accidental outcross Female BMD to male Newf. Seven pups whelped.
- 1951 First set of minor revisions made to the Swiss breed standard.
- 1951 Female from outcross litter (with appearances of a Newf) bred to pure male BMD. Eight pups whelped, one male and one female marked like BMD.
- 1952 BMD marked female from 1951 litter bred to pure BMD male. Five pups whelped all marked like BMDs.
- 1956 Swiss Kennel Club introduces temperament testing for all breed stock.

# TIMELINE – BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOGS AND THE BMDCA

## 1962-2003

- 1962 First AKC title earned by a Bernese (Aya of Verlap) was in OB (owned by Mary Alice Eschweiler nee Horstick).
- 1966 Sanctuary Woods' Black Knight receives 4th place in Working Group at Riverside Kennel Club show.
- 1968 BMDCA founded, membership:62 and 43 registered Bernese.
- 1970 First BMDCA Standard Committee convenes.
- 1973 Swiss breed standard revised.
- 1973 BMDCA achieves AKC sanctioned status.
- 1974 Bernergarde database established.
- 1980 Eng. CH Folkdance at Forgegan wins Working Group at Crufts. First BMD to do so.
- 1980 First revision to the US Bernese standard. Committee members Sylvia Howison, Esther Mueller and Mary Alice Eschweiler (nee Horstick).
- 1985 Ch Shersan Chang O'Pace V Halidom wins the Working Group at Westminster KC.
- 1990 Second revision to the US Bernese standard adopted by the AKC.
- 1990 BMDCA initiates first judge's education program at its National Specialty.
- 1991 First official BMDCA draft test, Westford, MA, 12 entries.
- 1992 BMDCA publishes the Illustrated breed standard.
- 1993 Swiss breed standard revised.
- 1999 Ch Mentmore's Windy Meadow wins the Working Group at Westminster KC.
- 2003 Swiss breed standard revised, temperament section revised to disqualify aggression, anxiety and distinct shyness.

# The Sennenhund Breeds



Bernese Mountain Dog



Greater Swiss Mountain Dog



Entlebucher



Appenzeller

# Balanced and strong



Dogs measure 25 to 27.5 inches at the withers, bitches 23 to 26 inches with gender differentiation. Though appearing square, this breed is slightly longer than tall. Sturdy bone is of great importance. The body is full, meaning a good deep chest, well-sprung but not barrel ribs, and little tuck-up.



Two mature dogs naturally presented.





Our breed is slow to mature.  
Here they are at age 8 years!  
This bitch and dog are two years old  
and....





# Gender distinction



**Males are 25 to 27.5 inches. Bitches measure 23 to 26 inches.**

**The bitch on the left retains her femininity as well as type and substance.**

This mature bitch and young dog both have nice bone and strong heads with soft expressions.

# Skull is flat on top and broad



**Head:** Expression is intelligent, animated and gentle. Eyes are dark brown, slightly oval in shape with close fitting eyelids. Ears are medium, set high, triangular in shape, hang close to the head when in repose. When alert the top of the ear is level with the top of the skull. This head has a full muzzle, correct proportions, correct ears and eyes, yet nothing is to excess.

# Well-defined but moderate stop



**Skull is flat on top and broad, with a well-defined but not exaggerated stop. Muzzle is strong and straight, full in every dimension. Lips are clean as this is a dry-mouthed breed.**

# Physical examination is necessary to determine true structure.



**The neck is strong, muscular and of medium length. The topline is level from withers to croup.** Because of heavy hair on a naturally presented dog, the topline should be felt rather than visually evaluated.

# MODERATE ANGULATION.

## Well-balanced



- The chest is deep and capacious with well sprung but not barrel shaped ribs and brisket reaching at least to the elbow. The loin is strong, croup broad and smoothly rounded to the tail.
- The solid, broad body and straight back provide the muscle power for these dogs when doing draft work.

# Forequarters



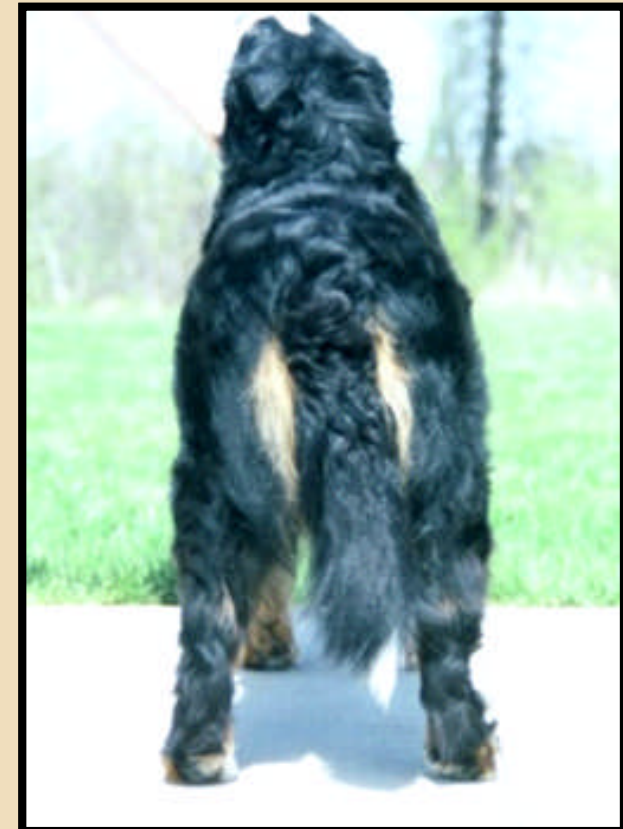
- **The shoulders are moderately laid back, flat-lying, well muscled and never loose.**
- **The legs are straight and strong and the elbows are well under the shoulder when the dog is standing.**
- **Pasterns slope very slightly, but are never weak. Feet are round and compact with well arched toes.**

Shoulder angulation can be detected with the hands, and this combined with study of the dog's movement will reveal the correct condition. An incorrect short front gait may find its root in a steep shoulder and/or a short upper arm.



# HINDQUARTERS

Thighs are broad, strong and muscular. Stifles are moderately bent, hocks well let down and straight as viewed from the rear.



## TAIL – CARRIAGE AND STRUCTURE



**The tail is bushy. It should be carried low when in repose. An upward swirl is permissible when the dog is alert, and but the tail may never curl or be carried over the back. The bones of the tail should feel straight and should reach to the hock joint or below. A kink in the tail is a fault.** These characteristics are to be determined by running the hand down the entire tail and checking length and correct vertebral alignment.

# Coat with bright natural sheen



The coat is of great importance as it should be able to shed rain or snow and protect the dog in inclement weather. **It is thick, moderately long, slightly wavy or straight with a bright, natural sheen.** The coat should lie from front to back and should be neither open nor too soft or wooly.

This is a true curly coat – often found on young puppies, but should not be on an adult dog.

**Extremely curly or extremely dull looking coats are undesirable.**



# Beautiful coat and type - NATURAL

**The Bernese Mountain Dog is shown in NATURAL coat and undue trimming is to be discouraged.** Sculpting and stripping should not be rewarded. Ears and feet may be trimmed to make them look tidy. A good Bernese Mountain Dog coat requires little grooming and sheds dirt easily.



# Specific markings



**Type, soundness and balance should be considered first.** Color and markings, with emphasis on symmetry, are very specific but perhaps have been overrated in our selection of breeding stock. **Markings other than described are to be faulted in direct relationship to the extent of the deviation.** Excessive white is more of a problem than too little white. The standard describes *ideal* markings; variations are to be expected. All the dogs presented above are acceptably marked.

# Allow for variations!



Be aware that more white may cause the head or chest to appear broader than it is. We have many optical illusions in this breed!

Which head is the best?



Same head - Different markings



# Gait: Slow trot with strength



**The natural working gait of the Bernese Mountain Dog is a slow trot, with no wasted action.**

*Videos of gaiting dogs are available from the disk's main menu.*

# Never Sharp or Shy, a lovely bitch



The temperament is of utmost importance. **A self-confident, alert, good-natured dog, never sharp or shy.** Imagine a dog pulling a cart focused on the task at hand. The dog works at a steady pace, not rushed or distracted, with an outlook that is calm but alert, interested and kind.

# Serious Faults

- Overshot or Undershot Bite
- White legs or a white collar

# Disqualifications:

**Blue Eye Color.**

**Any ground color other than black.**



# Can the dog do the job?



When watching the Bernese Mountain Dog in the show ring, imagine that this dog would willingly be able to pull a cart unaccompanied to the cheesemaker. As a final note, the dog on the left is able to do so with or without a white tip on its tail!

# POINTS TO REMEMBER:

§ Large

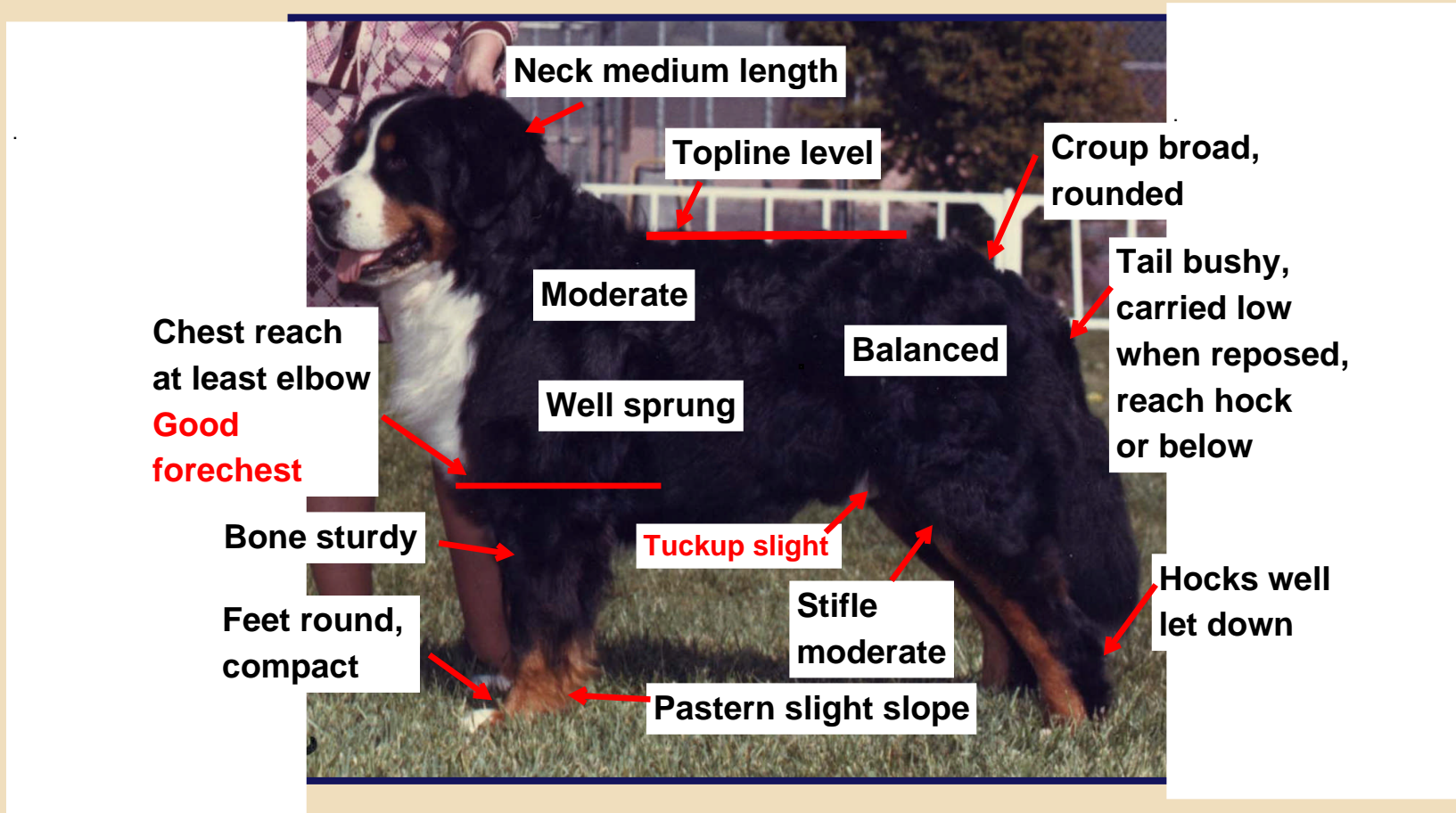
§ Sturdy bone is of great importance

§ The Bernese Mountain Dog is shown in natural coat, undue trimming is to be discouraged

§ The natural working gait of the Bernese Mountain Dog is a slow trot

§ The temperament is self-confident

# A farmer's working companion



ed  
red



Thank you for your interest in the Bernese Mountain Dog. This presentation has been intended as a pictorial introduction to type, style and substance. We encourage review of the resources and materials included on this disk as you continue your studies.