

# General Appearance

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The Finnish Spitz presents a fox-like picture. The breed has long been used to hunt small game and birds. The pointed muzzle, small erect ears, dense coat and curled tail denote his northern heritage. The Finnish Spitz' whole being shows liveliness, which is especially evident in the eyes, ears and tail. Males are decidedly masculine without coarseness. Bitches are decidedly feminine without overrefinement.

The Finnish Spitz' most important characteristics are his square, well-balanced body that is symmetrical with no exaggerated features, his glorious red-gold coat and his bold carriage and brisk movement.

Any deviation from the ideal described in the standard should be penalized to the extent of the deviation. Structural faults common to all breeds are as undesired in the Finnish Spitz as in any other breed, even though such faults may not be specifically mentioned in the standard.

*See Photographic Essay*



# Size, Proportion, Substance

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## Size, Proportion, Substance

**Size**—The dog is considerably larger than the bitch. Height at the withers in dogs: 17½ to 20 inches; in bitches, 15½ to 18 inches.

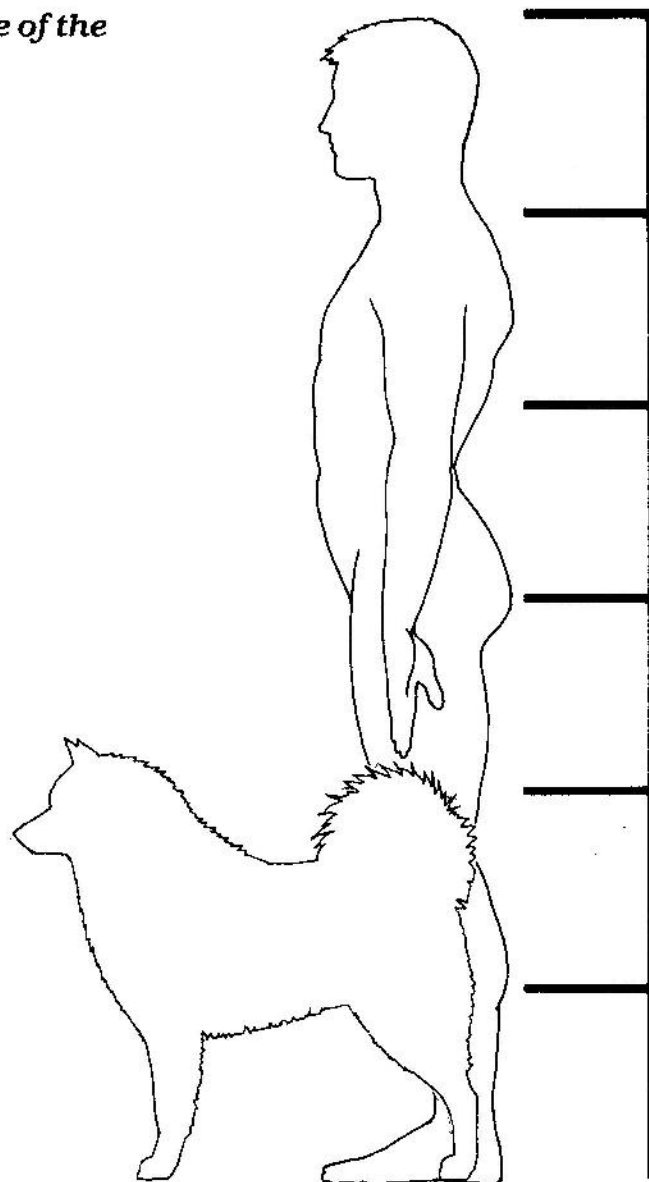
**Proportion**—Square, length from forechest to buttocks equal to height from withers to ground.

**Substance**—Substance and bone in proportion to overall dog.

*Guard coat of one or two inches on forechest and buttocks causes the dog to appear slightly longer than high.*

*The Finnish Spitz should not have the mass of the Elkhound nor be overly refined.*

*This silhouette drawing compares the size of the FINNISH SPITZ to that of a six-foot man. Both silhouettes are drawn to scale.*



# Ideal Heads

## Head

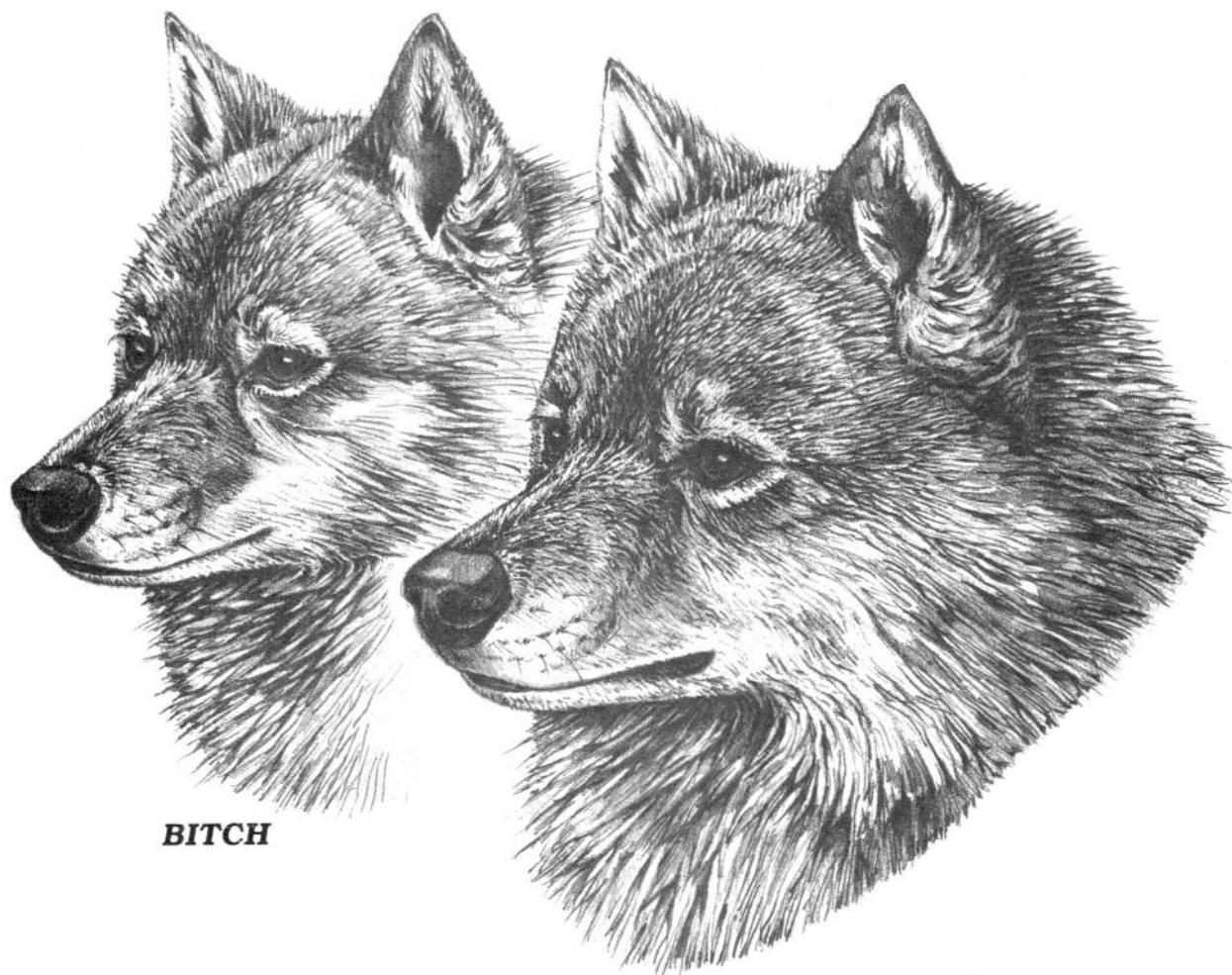
Clean cut and fox-like. Longer from occiput to tip of nose than broad at widest part of skull in a ratio of 7:4. More refined with less coat or ruff in females than in males, but still in the same ratio. A muscular or coarse head, or a long or narrow head with snipy muzzle, is to be penalized.

## Expression

Fox-like and lively.

*The expression of the Finnish Spitz is most important. The fox-like appearance is lost if the head is coarse or overdone.*

*Sometimes the darker markings on the muzzle and forehead give the impression of a scowl. This is not a fault.*



**BITCH**

**DOG**

# Eyes

**Eyes**—Almond-shaped with black rims. Obliquely set with moderate spacing between, neither too far apart nor too close. Outer corners tilted upward. Preferably dark in color with a keen and alert expression. Round, light, running or weepy eyes are to be penalized.



**IDEAL HEAD**

## **SET**

*Obliquely set with moderate spacing  
The outer corners of the eyes are tilted upwards.*

## **SHAPE**

*Almond-shaped with black rims  
Round eyes detract from the desired fox-like expression.*

## **COLOR**

*Preferably dark in color with a keen and alert expression.*

## **EYE FAULTS**



*Set too close*



*Round eye*



*Set too wide*

# Ears

## ***Ears set on high***

Small, erect, sharply pointed and very mobile. When alert, upward standing, parallel, open toward the front with the tips directly above the outer corner of the eyes. Ears set too high or low or too close together, long or excessive hair inside ears is to be penalized.



## **IDEAL HEAD**

*Correct ear set can best be assessed when the dog is fully animated. When he is alert the tips of the ears should be directly above the outer corner of the eyes.*

*As the dog relaxes, greater distance between the tips of the ears can be seen.*

*When judging the Finnish Spitz, providing that correct ear carriage has been determined, one should not penalize a dog for failure to "use" his ears continually.*

## **EAR FAULTS**



**Set too low**



**Set too high**



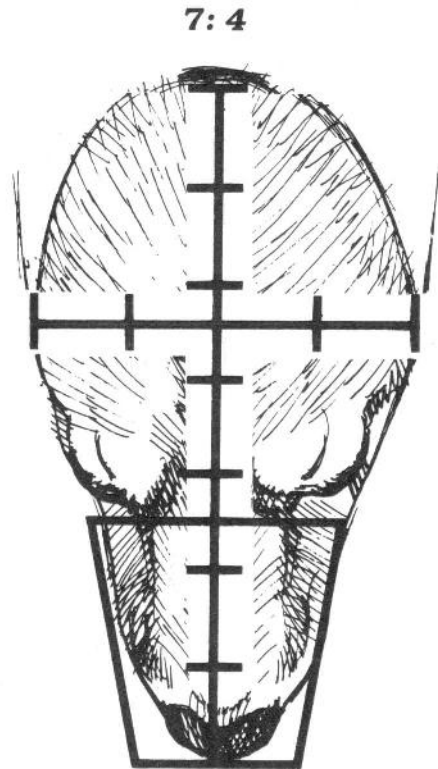
**Hooded**

# Skull and Muzzle

**Skull**—Flat between ears with some minimal rounding ahead of earset. Forehead a little arched. Skull to muzzle ratio is 4:3, with slightly longer skull in males and slightly shorter skull in females acceptable.



Longer from occiput to tip of nose than broad at widest part of skull in a ratio of 7:4. More refined with less coat or ruff in females than in males, but still in the same ratio.



80%

**Nose**—Black. Any deviation is to be penalized.

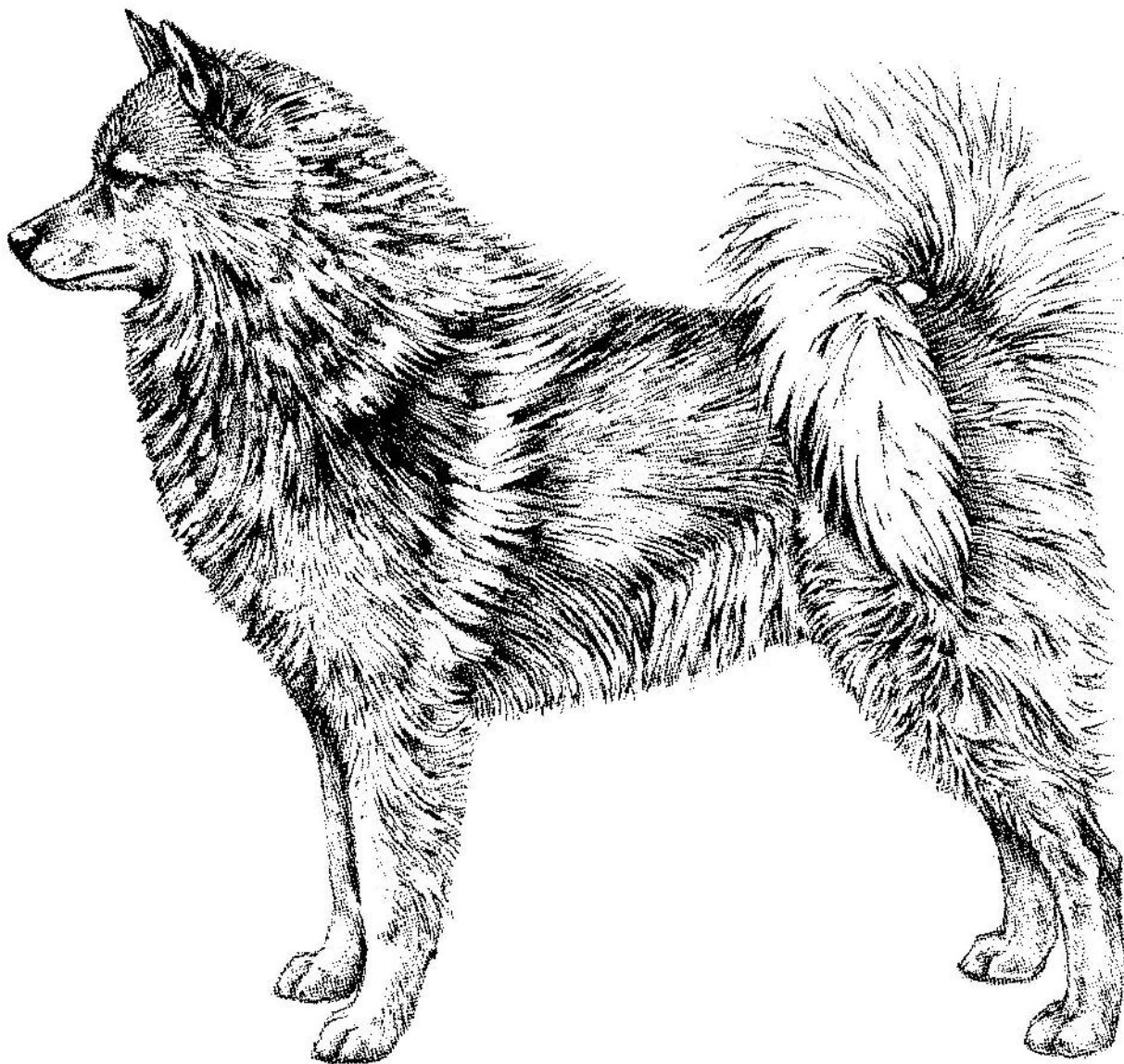
**Lips**—Black; thin and tight.

**Bite**—Level mouth with scissors bite. Any deviation is to be penalized.

**Stop**—Pronounced.

**Muzzle**—Narrow as seen from above and the side; of equal width and depth where it insets to the skull. Tapering somewhat, equally from all angles, so that the circumference of the muzzle where the nose begins is 80% of the circumference of the muzzle at its origin.

# Neck, Topline, Body



**Neck**—Well set; muscular. Clean without excess skin below muzzle. Appearing shorter in males due to their heavier ruff.

**Topline**—Level and strong from withers to croup.

**Body**—Muscular, square.

**Chest**—Deep. Brisket reaches the elbow. Ratio of chest depth to distance from withers to ground is 4: 9.

**Ribs**—Well sprung.

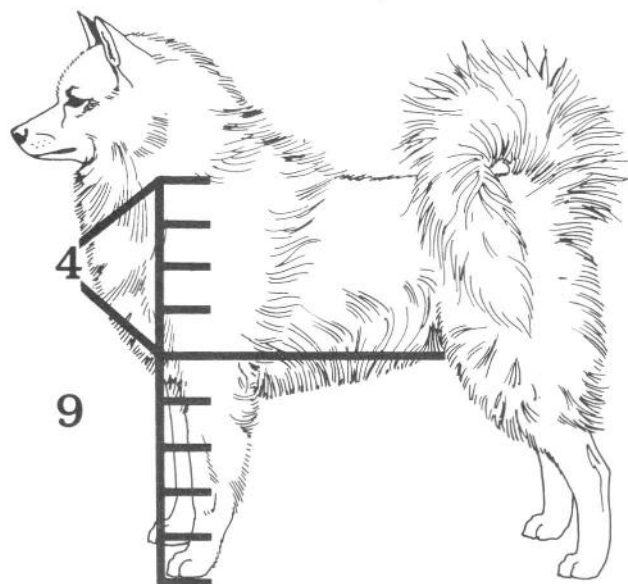
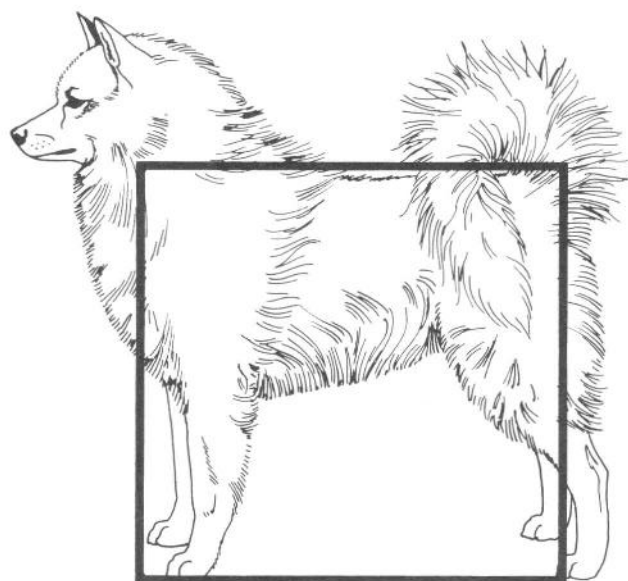
**Tuck-Up**—Slightly drawn up.

**Loin**—Short.

*Dogs are often seen with the chest taking up half or even more of the distance between the shoulder and the ground and this is to be penalized.*

# Neck, Topline, Body

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## Tail

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**Tail**—Set on just below level of topline, forming a single curl falling over the loin with tip pointing towards the thigh. Plumed, curving vigorously from its base in an arch forward, downward, and backward, pressing flat against either thigh with tip extending to middle part of thigh. When straightened the tip of the tail bone reaches the hock joint. Low or high tailset, too curly a tail, or a short tail is to be penalized.

*The Finnish Spitz usually carries his tail over his back. While in the curled position, the tail may move rapidly to express liveliness, a desired characteristic. This is a slight flutter rather than a wide sweeping motion.*

*For assessment of correct tail curl, the dog must carry his tail fully up over his back at some point during the judging. When the dog is not fully animated, he will let his tail go slack.*

*Excessive tail furnishings may give the appearance of a tail which is too long.*



**Correct tail**



# Tail

## TAIL FAULTS



*Too long*



*Too short*



*Too curled*

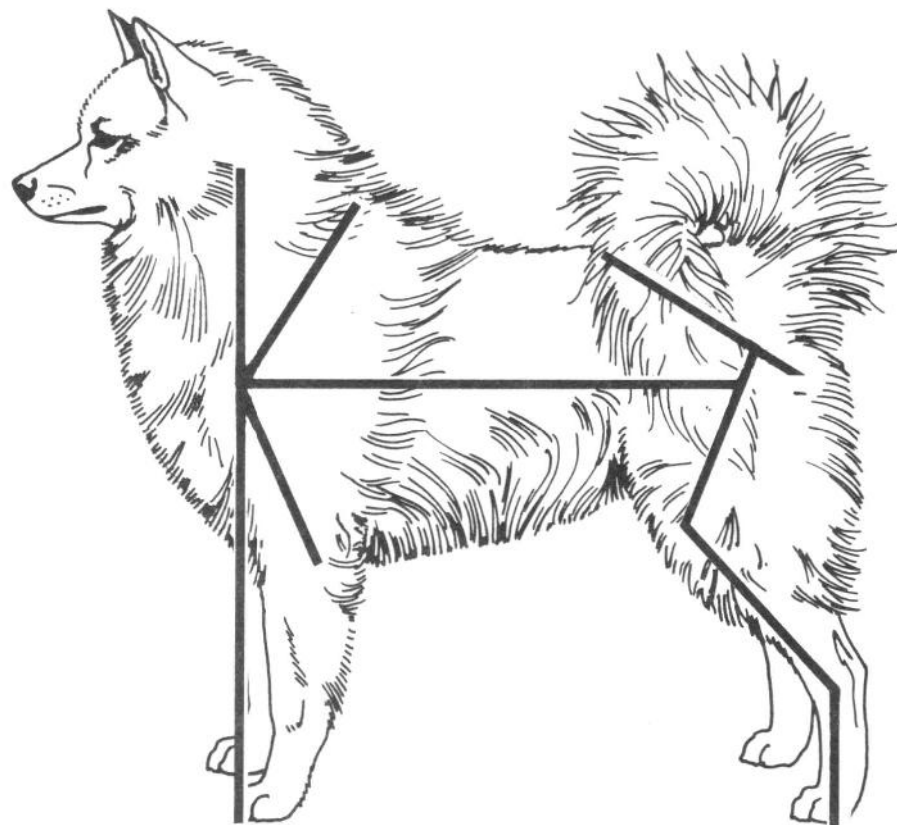
# Feet

*Tight and catlike; preferably round.*



# Forequarters and Hindquarters

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## Forequarters

**Shoulders**—The layback of the shoulders is thirty degrees to the vertical.

**Legs**—Viewed from the front, moderately spaced, parallel and straight with elbows close to the body and turned neither out nor in. Bone strong without being heavy, always in proportion to the overall size of the dog. Fine bone, which limits endurance, or heavy bone, which makes working movement cumbersome, is to be penalized.

**Pasterns**—Viewed from the side, slope slightly. Weak pasterns are to be penalized.

**Dewclaws**—May be removed.

**Feet**—Tight and catlike; preferably round.

## Hindquarters

Angulation in balance with the forequarters.

**Thighs**—Muscular.

**Hocks**—(Rear pasterns) One-third or less the height of the dog. Straight and parallel.

**Dewclaws**—Removed.

**Feet**—As in front.

# Coat

## Coat

The coat of the Finnish Spitz is double with a short, soft, dense undercoat and long, harsh straight guard hairs measuring approximately one to two inches on the body. Hair on the head and legs is short and close; it is longest and most dense on plume of tail and back of thighs. The outer coat is stiffer and longer on the neck and back, and in males considerably more profuse at the shoulder, giving them a more ruffed appearance. Males carry more coat than females. No trimming of the coat except for feet is allowed, not even the whiskers. Silky, wavy, curly, long or short coat is to be penalized.

*The Finnish Spitz must be presented in a natural state and any alteration of the coat by trimming, scissoring or other means must be penalized. No trimming of the coat except for the feet, not even the whiskers is permitted.*

*The Finnish Spitz should not be penalized for lack of undercoat during the normal shedding process.*

# Color

## Color

Varying shades of golden-red ranging from pale honey to deep auburn are allowed, with no preference given to shades at either extreme so long as the color is bright and clear. As the undercoat is a paler color, the effect of this shading is a coat which appears to glow. White markings on the tips of the toes and a quarter-sized spot or narrow white strip, ideally no wider than  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch, on the forechest are permitted. Black hairs along lipline and sparse, separate black hairs on tail and back permitted. Puppies may have a good many black hairs which decrease with age, black on tail persisting longer. Muddy or unclear color, any white on the body except as specified, is to be penalized.

*See the January 1988 issue of the AKC Pure-Bred Dog Gazette for color photographs of the Finnish Spitz.*

*No color preference as long as the color is bright and clear.*

*Regardless of color the undercoat must be a pale shade in order to create the desired "glow."*

*Hairs on the inner sides of the ears, on cheeks, under the muzzle, on the breast and abdomen, inside the legs, at the back of the thighs and under the tail are a lighter shade.*

*White markings on the tips of the toes and a quarter-sized spot or narrow white strip, ideally no wider than  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch, on the forechest are permitted. Until the amount of white is such that it alters the desired appearance of the dog it should be penalized to a lesser extent than structural faults of the same degree.*

# Gait

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The Finnish Spitz is quick and light on his feet. He steps out briskly, trots with lively grace, and tends to single-track as the speed increases. When hunting he moves on his toes at a gallop. The angulation called for permits him to break into a working gait quickly. Sound movement is essential for stamina and agility.

*Dogs should be gaited on a loose lead at a moderate trot.*

*Due to the straighter front and rear angulation which is necessary for his working gait (the gallop), he does not cover as much ground per stride at a show-ring trot, but compensates through the desired quickness of movement.*

*Should the dog break into a gallop while gaiting he should not be penalized, as this is his natural working gait.*

# Temperament

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## Temperament

Active and friendly, lively and eager, faithful; brave, but cautious. Shyness, any tendency toward unprovoked aggression is to be penalized.

*The Finnish Spitz is initially cautious with strangers and this should not be mistaken for shyness.*

# Ring Presentation

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*Individual examination of the Finnish Spitz should not be conducted on the table.*

*The Finnish Spitz is keenly aware of his handler and may not easily be distracted by a judge who whistles or makes other sounds to attract his attention.*

*The Finnish Spitz should be shown on a loose lead.*

*The more animated the dog becomes, the more likely he is to bark while in the ring. Barking should be neither encouraged nor faulted.*

*In the group judging situation if the judge rearranges the order of breeds for gaiting, the Finnish Spitz should be placed in the section with the Dalmatian. The Finnish Spitz' quickness of movement allows him to cover ground rapidly.*

# Reading List

**Cavill, David. *All about the Spitz Breeds*. Michael Joseph; distributed by Merrimack Publishers' Circle, 1984, 168p. \$15.95.**

see Chapter 10 "The Finnish Spitz."      **Merrimack Publishers Circle**  
47 Pelham Road  
Salem, NH 03079  
(617) 887-8199

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**Pure-Bred Dogs/American Kennel Gazette. January, 1988 issue (forthcoming).**

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