

VIZSLAS

Hungarian Breeds Dog Tour Continued

One of the highlights, for me, of the August 1982 tour was the "Vizsla Day." After our tour of the Hortabagy, Debrecen, viewing the herding breeds, wining and dining with owners of those breeds we spent the night at Lake Balaton, then crossed the lake by ferry and drove to a beautiful spot where the Vizsla owners and their dogs, both smooth and wirehaired, were waiting for us.

The contrast was remarkable! The two groups seem to be worlds apart. An explanation for this is of course simple: the Secretary General of the Hungarian Kennel Club is a Vizsla owner/breeder. The kick-off for the day's events was marked by pomp and ceremony—complete with flying flags, beautiful horses with elegantly attired riders (no, not csikos), the traditional hunting horn music, the Vizsla owners in their colorful hunting clothing, and the official welcoming speeches.

After the impressive, colorful welcoming ceremonies, it was back on the bus and we caravanned to another area where the field demonstrations began. The distinctive sound of the hunting horns heralded the start of each event.

One event was in a field with moderate to heavy cover, some green crop I didn't identify. Here the Vizslas demonstrated their ability to find and retrieve dead game. Huge rooster pheasants, enormous hares, and roebucks, a small deer, was used. All game was considerably larger than anything our dogs normally have to retrieve in our trials, yet there was *not one* oversized Vizsla in evidence, and all demonstrated fine retrieving ability. Sometimes the game was larger than the dog retrieving it.

Once again we changed locations, this time driving to a small lake for the water retrieving of ducks. In my opinion, the wirehairs excelled in this exercise. Many people on the tour had not seen a Wirehaired Vizsla before and they were very much impressed. That is the closest we came to converting any of those Puli, Kuvasz, Komondor owners to our kind of dog! In the water demonstration the dogs displayed great swimming ability, stamina and eagerness to retrieve the ducks. Since the ducks were alive and swimming this took some doing!

Another exercise was lining the dogs up in a long row, about six feet apart, putting them on a "down" and leaving them. The owners walked away a short distance and turned to face the Vizslas. Guns were then fired over the dogs, who of course remained in their positions. In field trials or just actual hunting their dogs are trained to drop to the ground in a "down" position when guns are raised to fire (a real no-no here.)

After the dogs had individually demonstrated their water retrieving abilities, the entire lot of smooths and wirehairs were all turned loose at once and hit the water with a mighty splash and rushed to find, overtake, catch and retrieve a duck. The "winner" was a smooth bitch owned by Zsuzsa Farkashazi, wife of the Secretary General of the Kennel Club.

After these events were completed, we once more hopped aboard the bus and caravanned to a delightful picnic area nestled in the woods. We were served another delicious, seam-splitting meal, washed down of course by that wonderful Hungarian wine!

Photo Competition

On arriving back at the Olympia Hotel in Budapest, we were greeted by rows of pictures of the Hungarian breeds adorning the walls of the lobby and hallways leading to the dining rooms. The next morning before the Breeders Conference began, the official announcement of the winners was made and Secretary General Miklos Farkashazi presented the awards. Beautiful Herend porcelain and bronze medallions of the breeds were awarded a lucky few. Arline Lovett received one for a Geraldine Lamb photo of "George and Jolie"; Judy Heiser accepted one for Nica Lyon; and I accepted one for Connie Johnson. Several of the rest of us received the medallions for our photos that were hung, but did not receive placements.

Also in the lobby of the hotel that morning, we were able for the first time to buy copies of the Hungarian breeds standards. A few copies of the now out of print "Dogs of Hungary" were also available, but unfortunately, not in English. This was our first glance at the new standards for Vizslas, revised since we were there last. (These were printed in the last column.)

The first speaker at the Breeders Conference was Miklos Farkashazi, and he went over the new standards. We were given a chance to ask questions, and the color and disqualifying of dysplastic dogs was questioned. The fact that sand can differ in shades from pure white to dark tan was pointed out. Also that it takes x-ray vision to see dysplasia in most dogs in a ring.

An entire column could be written about the comments of the other speakers at the conference. Besides Mr. Farkashazi, we heard from the Secretary of the Hungarian Vizsla Club, Dr. Montostori Lazslo, the President of the club, a lady whose name I neglected to write down, and the President of the French Vizsla Club, Mr. De Clercq.

In another column I will discuss further the views of the speakers, and try to describe the International Dog Show.—*May Carpenter, Box 22461, Carmel, CA 93922*