

Benefits of Attending a National

This year the Borzoi National had an entry of over 300. For a breed with such diversity there is no better place than a National to see so many borzoi in one place. As a breeder, the classes that I anticipate most are the Bred By classes. This year, the Bred By dog class was spectacular, which unfortunately I can not always say about past entries. So many young dogs with so much potential means our breed has huge opportunities in the future for our gene pool. If you are serious about the next generations – you have to pay attention to what the breeders exhibit in these classes. They should be the best they have to offer. This year the competition was very strong. If you were looking for a stud dog – it would take you months of travel just to visit enough kennels to see what you saw over the course of an hours judging.

A surprising learning experience actually came after the show. The photographers posted hundreds of movement photos to their website, which allowed for casual observation of dogs you may have liked to see in detail that either you were in the same class, or missed while getting coffee. I was surprised at one detail of these movement photos, that there were many dogs that changed their shape as they were caught on film. I like to see a dog that is balanced with movement reaching well out in front and extension behind. Years ago, I complimented this same photographer on a fantastic photo of a young bitch that showed perfect balance, reaching out to the nose in front, and a fully flexed hock behind with toes pointing up, and perfect foot timing. The reply was “the dog has to have the movement before I can get the photo”. In reality, it is hard to take a great photo of a poor moving dog.

A borzoi should have balance in extension, reach and drive. There were many examples of dogs whose top lines changed dramatically on the move. Some were high in the rear, some dropped in the shoulders, others had front extension but lacking in rear drive. Another observation was fronts that lifted higher off the ground than their rears. The front foot and rear foot should be on a parallel plane with the ground. There were too many examples of dogs dragging their rears rather than driving off from behind. On the other hand – you could see example after example of dogs with proper foot timing and balance.

For any serious breeder, attending your National should be part of your learning experience. Another opportunity is to not just sit by the same people, but seek out those who may have a different eye for your breed. Just like looking at the photographer’s photos you may be surprised at what someone else may see.

Your National can provide opportunities you may never have anticipated before, during and even after the show.

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