

A Study On Heads

While the Borzoi is not considered to be one of the head breeds, when a dog is 30-plus inches tall, the proximity of the dog's head to ours, makes it impossible to ignore. It is the head we see first when a dog approaches, and it is a key element of breed type.

The function of the borzoi is to pursue, catch, and hold live game from hare to wolf. A long, powerful and deep under jaw is necessary to subdue and hold the prey for the huntsman. A strong and deep jaw also provides the foundation for the teeth which should be large. In our standard it reads, *missing teeth should be penalized*. A missing tooth or two would not deter a borzoi from holding its prey, but care should be given by the breeders that missing one will lead to two, and so forth, if not kept in check. Another observation is that Borzoi have a very long jaw, and on first glance, it can appear that the spaces between the teeth are just that - and not missing teeth.

An important part of the jaw is that both the depth and width of the jaw should be in proportion to rest of the head. A snipy muzzle as well as a narrow muzzle when viewed from above, is incorrect. It is preferred that the width between the canines allows for a "u" shaped jaw rather than a "v" shaped jaw. A dished face is undesirable, and it is the fill in front of the eyes (both seen from the side and from the top) that give the borzoi breed type. A roman nose or finish is just that, a finish, not roman headed. The finish is from the cartilage to the tip of the nose, and is not bone structure.

The eyes are obliquely set, and should be dark in color with an almond shape to the eye rim. This shape, color, and set, all lend toward a soft expression. A round eye as well as a light eye is not desired. Of course, dark pigment for the lips, eye rims and nose adds to the expression.

A word on ears, is that they should be "fine" in quality. This means that the leather should be soft and held in a rose shape. It is not uncommon for a Borzoi to raise an erect ear, especially at an outdoor show when some movement catches the dog's gaze. When in repose, they should lie back almost touching behind the occiput. A low set ear or heavy leather detracts from the regal look of this noble hound.

The length of the back skull should be equal to the muzzle when measured from the front corner of the eye. The width of the back skull should be in proportion to the dog. It would be odd to have a fined boned dog with a wide back skull, just as it would be out of proportion to see a large dog with a needle head.

When looking at the borzoi head, keep in mind that the dogs head should be in proportion to the rest of the animal, but don't lose sight of the small finer points that make a borzoi head distinctive.

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