

The Cocker Spaniel Club Championship Show -

Sunday 14th July 2024

Judge: Mike Wildman- Oktumi (Bitches)

My sincerest thanks go to the Cocker Spaniel Parent Club of Great Britain and its members for the great honour of being able to judge Bitches at their Championship show. As many people know I got my first Cocker spaniel when I was 15 years young and I have enjoyed watching many great judges over the years enjoy this most special of engagements. So to be given the honour of the appointment, and share it with my great friend and fellow Cocker enthusiast Dawn Young was a dream come true. Big thanks go to my two stewards Neil Goodwin and Lorraine Palmer who helped the ring run efficiently.

I found it most helpful to have my winners back on the table for their critiques where I could get a detailed perspective. I was looking for a well-balanced, sturdy, compact Cocker with correct proportions, a clean outline and busy back end with the sweetest of expressions and I found this in most classes. I was impressed with my final line up and would have happily signed CCs for at least 10 of the entries. It is unfortunate that our system does not have the luxury of awarding any number of dogs "Certificate Quality" gradings even though they may not have won the major award on the day, as is the case at FCI International shows in Scandinavia. I feel that would be a very tangible way of showing exhibitors how highly a judge rated their dogs.

A few observations: Heads varied greatly, a lot lacking work and chiselling, some eye shape and colour being completely off so losing that important softness to the expression which is one of the breed's most endearing features. I was surprised at how many exhibits were poorly conditioned with little or no muscle tone or overweight exhibits that looked the part for their overall appearance but failed miserably on the move due to lacking power and drive in their performance with topline like jelly, rolling or sometimes sagging in the middle. I'm sure this is a lot down to condition. This is a Gundog that needs strength and power in its sturdy body and strong quarters to push through that thicket; it is not a lap dog but a working Gundog. Coarse coated jackets are sadly now the norm due to the Coat King. Patience is all that's required in the Minor Puppy stages and really does pay off for those who are prepared to wait for the coat to be ready to be hand stripped which will maintain the Breed Standard's true flat and silky texture

Balance on the whole was pretty good with many displaying that square, cobby and unexaggerated appearance and the majority were happy and merry with excellent solid temperament.

Only a few suspect bites but dental hygiene was less than acceptable in the majority.

Having had such an enjoyable day, one which I consider the highlight of my judging career, I was disappointed and not a little offended to hear that some observers found my practice of shaking the hands of exhibitors who failed to make the final cut in their class and thanking them for showing to be rude. This amazed me as I considered it polite and respectful, and certainly preferable to the rather dismissive waving of the hands with "I've finished with the rest" as dogs leave the ring unplaced, something we see on a regular basis.

It is an honour when judges are given the opportunity to judge exhibitors' dogs, all of whom should be judged on an even playing field, regardless of who owns or handles them, how they are bred or

where they come from. Perhaps if more people took this to heart and understood the core principles of judging they would get more enjoyment from their dog shows.

Baby Puppy Bitch Any Colour (4)

1st Tavenor's Regaltav Valentina, 5 months old blue with great angulation and well up on her leg. Head is correct for balance, proportions and she scores highly in type. She is a really happy puppy on the move, has excellent action with reach and drive in abundance who held her shape for one so young; full of quality and promise and sound with it. **BBPIS**

2nd Stokes-Harrell's Chezzas Nobody But You, golden with a clean outline, short sturdy and compact, quality head and eye, with the sweetest expression. Straight forelegs and the best of feet, has depth and spring to rib, good width, lovely type, round all through with short hocks. Not as positive moving but good enough, just didn't have the scope of first place.

3rd Terry's Shaggylands Sally Can Wait.

Black/Black and Tan

Puppy (3)

1st Marris Bray's Plaiglen Biker Babe to Helenwood, what a super black puppy who may not immediately have appealed to the ringside but she set the bar high for the Puppy classes later in the day. Loved the make and shape, all quality under all the fluffy puppy coat that is right for its age. Sweet expression with desirable eye shape, Straight forelegs with excellent bone and feet. Neck of excellent length with an impressive forehead, her middle is firm, compact and has great depth, she is broad in her rear quarters with angulation balancing with the front. Merry and sound, she covers the ground so freely with correct carriage and a bustling rear. Sure to be a future star. **BPIS** with my co-judge's full agreement.

2nd Akroyd's Dartemis Love Of Moby of Clydesian, black, finer in type than winner but had a lovely shape and silky flat coat. Rather narrow all through at present. Needs more schooling as she was scuttling on the move and was hard to assess, somewhat overwhelmed by the occasion today.

3rd Vere's Excellent Dream Vom Alserufer Adrona (Imp Deu).

Novice (3)

1st Bindza's Laurelakes It's a Miracle, black with a strongish head but kind expression. Lovely balanced outline and as compact as they come. Sturdy with width & strength throughout and free of exaggeration. Kept her shape on the move and she was merry with tail wagging typically; very correct and all of a piece and well presented.

2nd Stokes-Harrell's Villaspanol Pixies for Chezzas, black and tan that couldn't match the expression of the First place winner today. Her tan markings are clear and correct. Everything is balanced and in proportion. Angles are moderate but on the move she didn't have the class or carriage of 1.

3rd Taylor-Kistner's Merry Cocktails Spice Of Life at Frieljoanipa (Imp Swe).

Graduate (4)

1st Henderson's Pendeledell Ti Amo, beautifully presented black who had the best outline on the move but not when stood. Pleasing head for balance with well-set ears and good eye shape although I would prefer her eyes to be a shade darker. She has decent neck length and is well off for bone and

substance but she could be firmed up a bit to really excel in strength. Lovely natural coat which was well presented and of correct texture.

2nd Eisen's Kerryglow Black Dove, gleaming black who was also well presented, has a lot of quality and has a very beautiful head with correct eye shape and colour, giving the desired expression. She has a presence on the stack and is such a lovely shape. Unfortunately not as compact or cobby as 1 so had to accept second place today.

3rd McShane's Meggiemac My My My Delilah.

Open (2)

1st Van Guyse-Apers Wiggling You Can Boogie - pretty black and great for size make and shape and won this class on her wonderful topline reach and drive. Good length of upper arm, solid and round in body, wide quarters with neat short hocks and quality bone nicely prepared and trimmed to show off her super outline.

2nd West's Sheigra's Simply a Star, very balanced black; cleaner over the shoulders than the first, she has great type and a quality head and eye from the top drawer. Would have liked more padding to the feet. Natural coat of good quality. Very square and compact with excellent proportions but just lost out to the reach and drive of the winner though very sound and an unexaggerated type whose size and femininity are to be noted.

Red/Golden/Liver/Liver & Tan

Puppy (1)

1st Beswick's Kenwad Applause at Cachel, substantial golden who is carrying a little too much body but excels in bone and substance. Structurally very sound but a little too much for me. Excelled in her merry temperament and powerful driving movement with a lovely flat, shiny Jacket. She will be a jewel in the whelping box I have no doubt, having a lot to offer.

Novice (1)

1st West's Jamesfield Just a Star Sheigra, red with the best flat and silky coat, moves with lovely style and carriage, very nice to handle as she flows and is in perfect body condition. Scores in balance, height and angulation with a clean outline and her proportions are perfect. Would like a little more width which should come with maturity as she's only just over a year old.

Open (2)

1st Kaspar's Cze ChCairo Rosmery Tarakim (Cze), golden that is very cockery in type with lots of appealing qualities and good overall balance. Sadly the coat presentation could have been better to show off her quality. Head is balanced and has a sweet expression with nice square finish to foreface. She has a very good topline, very well made quarters but is a little heavy over the shoulder. Still she moved out merrily and with style.

2nd Zemanova's Sunny Day Dermott Int JCH, this golden is smaller in type but made up for it in personality. She is very pretty and has super fine shoulders. She is lovely and short and moves with such bustle, is really pleasing to handle but I would just like a little more of her.

Particolour

Puppy (7)

1st Nuttall's Rosecourt Romance, mid blue of high quality, super balance, so Cockery and square in appearance with a classic outline. She owns the loveliest head with super eye giving a gorgeous expression. She has good flow of neck into the finest of shoulders with correct length and angle to upper arm. Perfect middle piece, ample substance, wide rear quarters and well let down behind, she has good carriage for one so young and uses herself to full advantage, looking a picture in profile. Lovely type all through who, with ordinary luck, should title.

2nd Tavenor's Cassom Dancing Queen at Regaltav, light blue, more substantial than 1, pleasing head which has good balance and ratios, decent length of neck, moderately angled forearm and she has a deep, full, well made body. I would like her a touch shorter coupled but she has a lovely rounded rump with well-made hindquarters. Definitely has the Cassom stamp with lots of quality. Such a happy soul who just couldn't match 1 on the move and whose compactness appealed more. Well turned out.

3rd Nicholas's Nickarlynn Voodoo Magic.

Novice (9)

1st Master's Manchela Pollyana, immense quality all though, immediately drawing my eye as she was a picture of true moderation and balance, so clean in outline and dripping in breed type. Deep, short body, wide hindquarters with round rump and a pleasant head, correct bone and super feet. I did feel slightly frustrated that she was moving so fast and pulling on the lead as this rushing movement really spoiled her outline, losing her Cockery shape and bustle but for type and quality she is outstanding and will always figure when she gets more collected and together in profile when she will soar to the top. Nicely presented.

2nd Flower's Totenkopf All That Glitters, orange with gorgeous expression, smaller in type than 1 but so Cockery in head with lovely stop and chiselling. She is short and square and of lovely make and shape but another who lets herself down on the move though in a different way as she lacks drive and animation. Nonetheless she was a dream to handle on the table and is so Cockery.

3rd Share-Jones's Florendeem French Fancy.

Graduate (5)

1st Norie-Miller's Ryallcourt Silent Witness for Tanrini, light blue with the best outline and shoulders in the class but sadly not as conditioned as I would have hoped for and muscle tone was sadly lacking. However she really has so much quality and is capable of top honours if she had more muscle. Beautiful head and expression, so full of type and quality if a touch longer than ideal but she is so well put together and has a real look of class and quality. Coat presentation is good, she has such a happy disposition and endearing soul ... that expression really won me over. She does hold her outline moving and is sound and happy but could have a bit more purpose and drive.

2nd Willam's Wilmerella Mepthesis Belle, dark blue with a well moulded and balanced head and gentle expression, super length of neck, well laid shoulder but I would prefer a stronger topline. Good width over her quarters and she is well angulated in that department. Moves with purpose and has excellent carriage with one of the best bustling back ends here today. Her merry nature is a real delight ... just loved it! A little loose in the profile and I just preferred the flowing lines of the winner.

3rd Mason's Sandlauga Jester.

Open (9)

1st Whitehead's Sh Ch Ryallcourt Stitch in Time, top drawer light blue who throws out the best classic Cocker outline and her head is to die for with the loveliest of expressions, very balanced and just flows through with super height to length proportions. Very good rib, nicely rounded all over with the best moulded rear, great quarters, fine and well laid shoulder with well angled forearm, so sound and has superb carriage on the move. With her easy stride, full of merriment and so well presented, I was so pleased to award her the Res CC.

2nd Torbett's Sh Ch Kirlinji's Kustom Made, darker blue of super quality and so deserving of her title. She has ample bone and substance, is compact and cobby. Unfortunately when moving fast she loses her outline but is lovely to go over, everything is so well fitting with lovely quality and finish to her head. Top notch type but just not the outline of 1 moving.

3rd Driver's Annilann Miss Magicstar At Beckaby.

Special Open Particolour (other than Blue Roan) (4)

1st Nuttall's Claramand Born to Love with Rosecourt, orange so very Cockery and full of type with a quality head, very full front with good heart room but still comes at you a little wide. Straight front, very good length of neck with superb topline, rib and depth to body. Excels in width of thigh, moves true and with purpose and has an extrovert attitude. In my final cut for top honours, she definitely deserves her title.

2nd Stokes-Harrell's Claramand One Vision Between Chezza's, orange sister to the winner and it's evident as they share so many attributes. She has the sweetest head and is lovely type and style all through. Very compact and had the neatest feet with wonderful bone. Terrific rib and finish to body, soundly made hind quarters, another good mover not quite the reach in front of 1.

3rd Vergne's Clicaper's No Roots (FRA).

ANY COLOUR

Veteran (10)

1st Davies' Kerriglow Honesty JW, black of superb type and quality and who was of a type that was really familiar to me. The head is of superior quality with plenty of work and chiselling and the highly desirable dark eyes and finish to the muzzle. Exceptional body rib and quarters, good width and well let down hocks. Sound and merry mover with bags of energy, she was another I selected for my short list and she is unlucky not to have made her title as she truly deserves her crown.

2nd Parker's Sh Ch. Weyhill Wishlist, super cobby black who fully deserves her title. Very sturdy and compact, toeing in a little but so much to like. Proportions are spot on, deep, short and strong in body. Excellent size and shape and moved well.

3rd Bard's Withiflor Fairy Tale JW.

Minor Puppy (9)

A quality class that was so strong which bodes well for the future. All of the first three were worthy of winning the class

1st Plaiglen Biker Babe to Helenwood.

2nd Harrison's Ryallacourt Modern Millie at Glenbrows, super flashy light blue of the highest quality whose outline was there for all to see. Short backed, super shaped, handled to advantage and already advanced in coat presentation. It was hard to put her Second but I couldn't get past the

intense quality of the black but I'm sure she will reach the top and the first three will change places many times during their careers.

3rd Nuttall's Rosecourt Petitoes.

Puppy (8)

1st Simonelli's Ultra Chic Full Girly Du Moulin De Clemency (FRA), a golden that, whilst not the biggest, smashed it on the move. She still has enough bone and beautiful feet and a lovely merry nature was on display. Loved her sweet head, compact and well-rounded body that was so well balanced. Would like a touch more neck and upper arm but overall her quality and type shone through and the movement was a delight to see ... merry, merry, merry!! So very Cockery and sound, she owned the ring and just had to stay back in the challenge. Very well turned out.

2nd Mahe's Blue VRoland Uny, blue still holding on to her puppy coat - which is not a criticism as it's right for her age. She is quite similar in make and shape to 1 and also has great carriage. Short, square and compact, altogether a quality exhibit of pleasing type throughout.

3rd Duncan's Royal's Friend Zaida's Serenity In Bartonholm (IMP HUN).

Junior (10)

1st Brennan's Sparklette Shines at Charbonnel, gleaming black well up on leg, clean in outline, she has a quality forehead, is very square and sturdy, compact and full of type. I appreciated her full ribs and excellent depth all through her body. Her back is firm with short, well-muscled loins, she has the very best of hindquarters, so broad with a perfectly placed tail and she moves with the best merry action, excelling in drive. All of a piece and so collected and composed, her coat was well-presented. She was in my final and is one I'd happily sign a CC for.

2nd Manchella Pollyanna.

3rd Yilmaz's Anlasana Yeaving Belle.

Yearling (8)

1st Williams' Bitcon Sea of Dreams of Wyndsmoor, blue that commands attention on the move, well up on leg and very soundly made with quality coat texture even if a little out of coat today. Eyes are a touch light but she is sturdy and compact with correct angulation, lovely outline and moved so well. One that I feel has been somewhat overlooked, but not today when she totally deserved this place in a hotly contested class.

2nd McBride's Charmwen Handle with Care at Topday, top quality and I loved her for type and being so feminine. Just lower on leg than the winner and not as positive in action. However, she has stunning type and quality and is super to handle on the table with everything fitting and flowing. She was in good coat and is such a happy mover that she will always appeal. I really liked her but she just couldn't match 1 in overall balance, especially on the move.

3rd Simonelli's Gillian's Hill Ad Astra For Meden Agan (FRA).

Maiden (6)

A difficult class to judge as many of the dogs excelled in different ways.

1st Gilmour's Chavez Glamour Girl, this blue is not immediately eye-catching but has to be gone over to be fully appreciated. She was the best for size, make and shape in this mixed class, is superbly

constructed and so very sound moving, fundamentally neat, compact and cobby and this – coupled with her feminine qualities - is where she scored over 2.

2nd Darby's Pearkim Pompadora Dargess, larger type dark blue girl whose outline and type immediately appealed; I thought she was my winner at initially looking over the class as she looked a picture stood ... cobby, sturdy and square - all appealing qualities. Not quite there for me in profile and a little high in tail carriage which detracted when compared to the flowing lines of 1, although her tail is well set ... just a little proud in carriage. That said, she is of lovely quality all through and looks the sort to breed on.

3rd Gladman's Chativore Sea La Vie.

Novice (7)

1st Gilmour's Chavez Glamour Girl.

2nd Jamesfield Just A Star at Sheigra.

3rd Boogaert's Sous Les Etoiles De Mazame (FRA).

Special Beginners (11)

This was a very good class, the quality being of a much higher level than normally associated with Special Beginners.

1st Bacon's Timbric Doris Day, dark blue who at my first look around on the stack didn't immediately catch my eye. A little out of coat today and not the one I initially had my eye on; that was number 2 but during the hands-on she so impressed me for quality, size and her good basic construction. On the move she really came alive and couldn't be ignored, looking a picture of balance, very sound out and back, pushing off super quarters. Nice presentation too.

2nd Travenor's Cassom Blue Muse at Regaltav, quality blue that couldn't match the movement of 1 today. Very compact with a lovely head, super width all through and a back end to be proud of. Sadly she was a nightmare on the move, rather stubborn and so throwing away all the chances given to her and thus having to pay the penalty. Once she gets her act together she will trouble many others and have a great career, very well conditioned and put down to the minute.

3rd Bindza's Laurellakes Who's That Girl.

Post Graduate (12)

1st Fairbairn and Magigan's Misperros Incandescent at Carmelfair, what a treat she is to go over - nothing flashy but on closer inspection I couldn't fault her construction. Her head is to die for, eyes are divine, wonderful type and so well balanced all through, being so square with perfect angles of front and rear with an impressive upper arm, super ribbing and quarters. I wish she had better feet but is so good over the shoulders and such a sound and happy mover. Shortlisted and one that should easily title. So very Cockery all through.

2nd Masters and Dott's Manchella Little Tease, another out of the top drawer, so balanced and scores highly when stacked with an amazing outline making a perfect Cocker template. I just preferred the winner's front assembly but she has an amazing middle piece, is quite cobby, short and sturdy with a super back end, the quarters being wide and the stifles well turned and everything let down beautifully, moving soundly and with a lot of verve. Put down really well by this expert exhibitor/breeder.

3rd Mitchell's Glowhill Chiquitita.

Minor Limit (6)

1st Simonelli's Meden Agan The Dark Side of the Moon, black of immeasurable quality, she has so much style and completely fills the eye. Classic outline and balance with superior angulation. Quality bone and decent feet but the length of the nails did nothing for them ... they really are too long! Head is so feminine and refined, eyes are excellent and give such a pretty expression. She is so shapely and gives a perfect silhouette both stacked and moving and her condition is exemplary. She moves with swagger and a lot of Cocker character, has a quality coat that was gleaming - what a picture! She was in my short cut and is one I'd happily sign a CC for.

2nd Torbett's Kirlinjis Made You Wait, dark blue potentially for the upper house, not as well laid in shoulder as 1 but I loved the body and quarters, she is so well knit together and her quality can't be denied. Sadly today she was rushing on the move and this threw out her outline so she had to pay the penalty. Get her more collected on the move and she will hold her own in any competition.

3rd Mitchell's Glowhill Sweet Magnolia.

Limit (10)

Super class full of quality the first three would all be worthy of their titles and any of them were worthy of winning the class.

1st Morris's Riondel Solitaire, I loved the size and overall compactness of this dark steel blue and her intense Cockery type. Very neat and all of a piece, she has a quality head with lovely eyes, just oozes femininity and has a short well-knit body with lovely spring of rib. I would like a bit more neck but she is square, compact and a picture of moderation.

2nd Amos-Jones's Cassom Merrilegs, such intense quality to the head giving a sublime expression. Text book construction with an outline to die for. I've always been a huge admirer of this lovely light blue who was my Best Puppy the last time I judged the breed; she is of super type with so much to like but I just would like her shorter coupled. However she moved out so well, demonstratin that typical tail action and she should title with ease and will deserve it,. Beautifully presented by one of our best.

3rd Lewis' Haradwater Vanity Fair At Penmartan (IMP PRT).

Open (8)

1st Volic's Int Ch Odos Kiss My Melon, superb blue with the Wow factor, she just oozes class and quality and reminded me - dare I say it? - of an old favourite of mine, Wiljana Waterfall, with so many feminine qualities. She has such a well moulded head with lovely eye shape and desirable colour giving the most melting of expressions with evident chiselling which finishes it off so beautifully. Exceptional neck and shoulder line flowing into the firmest of topline, straight, sufficiently boned legs, tidy feet, excellent depth through the sturdiest of bodies and she is so very compact with the strongest of rear ends. Short below her hock, she moves so true out and back, covering so much ground. The profile is unbroken going around, she held herself together so perfectly and had that marvellously merry attitude to top it all. Such a happy Cocker who I'd be proud to have in my kennel and she could win anywhere in the world. Her presentation was first class and totally emphasised her quality for all to see. I was delighted to award her the CC and she then went Best In Show with full agreement of my co-judge. Congratulations to her breeder / owner on what must have been the trip of a life time!

2nd McBride's Sh Ch Topday Tiny Dancer, stronger blue whose construction is near perfect and she carries herself with real class and style. There's an awful lot to like about her, I just wish she was more feminine but, that said, I wouldn't take her title away from her as it's fully deserved. Her movement and footfall were text book and a joy to watch and she was so well handled and trimmed.

3rd West's Sheigra Stars In Her Eyes JW OSW ShCEx.

MIKE WILDMAN