

The Greater Detroit Afghan Hound Specialty June 1, 2013

Critique by JoAnne M. Buehler, AKC Judge

Thank you to the Greater Detroit Afghan Hound Club for this wonderful invitation to judge their Specialty and to the exhibitors for the high quality of the exhibits. On June 1, 2013, I had a beautiful entry with wonderful depth of quality to evaluate. It is so gratifying to know we still have dedicated and talented breeders active in our breed today.

6-9 Months Puppy Dogs – (Entry 1: Shown 1)

1) Rustic Seabiscuit of Spirit Ridge

This class consisted of one very handsome, masculine youngster of lovely conformation, good balance, carriage and great promise.

9-12 Months Puppy Dogs – (Entry 4: Shown 2)

1) Wynsyr The Wingman T'Zion

Of the four entered, two lovely, promising puppy dogs showed. Puppies go through so many different stages as they grow at various times. On this day, my class winner was more together and improved the more he moved. He is a very good dog with lovely footfall and balanced movement, beyond his stylishness. He has a beautiful length of neck in keeping with his balance and promises great things. A competitor in Winners' Dog, ultimately, he was my RWD and BP.

12-18 Months Junior Dogs – (Entry 13: Shown 12)

1) Winterbourne's Amankata

This was an impressive class of youngsters; many will be winners on another day. Six months is a long time in a growing puppy's life, leading to a wide variety of stages in this class. Despite this, I found a great depth of quality in this class. My class winner this day caught my eye early with his easy movement and sure footfall. With hands on examination, I confirmed his square balance and lovely confirmation under his conflicting teenage coat. He was definitely a competitor in Winners' Dog.

Bred By Exhibitor Dogs – (Entry 13 – Shown 13)

1) Boanne Rustic Power of One

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A Breeder's showcase, this is always my favorite class. On this day, the entry showed great variety in style, balance and movement. My placements reflected the differences and the quality. My class winner is a very masculine dog in excellent physical condition with commanding movement. He is surly a frequent competitor for the points.

Open Dogs – (Entry 2: Shown 1)

1) Rustic Mahali It's All In The Game

The singular competitor in this surprisingly small Open Dog Class entry is the summation of Afghan Hound qualities. Walking into the ring, he owned it; he showed with sparkle and confidence. A masculine dog with the 'look of eagles', he fits our standard nicely with a hard, well-toned body, balanced and natural easy movement. He refused to leave my ring empty-handed this day. Ultimately he was my WD and BOW.

6-9 Months Puppy Bitches – (entry 4: Shown 3)

1) Spirit Ridge Serena's Song

On any given day, these delightful young bitches could swap places and ribbons. As it turned out, they are littermates, nicely consistent and very promising.

9-12 Months Puppy Bitches – (Entry 10: Shown 8)

1) Shylo Moonraker

This was a truly lovely class of young bitches with great depth of quality and promise. Any one of these ladies would be a welcome addition to many a pack of Afghan Hounds. I consistently found lovely eyes, expressions, and balance when judging the entries in the class. My first place winner was very deserving, well-balanced, standard size package with nice details and presence. Ultimately she was my WB from a very competitive group of class winners.

12-18 Months Junior Bitches – (Entry 8: Shown 8)

1) Winterbourne Agha Djari Amansara

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To a breeders' delight, there were many options in this class: a very consistent entry overall, despite a variety of "looks". My class winner is very nicely balanced, compact bitch that uses herself well. She was a definite competitor for winners bitch.

Bred By Exhibitor Bitches (Entry 3: Shown 3)

1) Mithra Ariel of Etrigan

Although small in numbers, this class had a very competitive entry. Each bitch is very deserving of her Championship. On this day the class was won by a patterned bitch who was every bit an Afghan Hound bitch; feminine, rangy, raw-boned – her own 'person' so to speak. When she chooses to show her movement, she is so easy on her big feet with beautiful timing and balance – so captivating. If you missed her given moment, you missed something so often missing in our Afghan Hound show rings today.

American Bred Bitches (Entry 2: Shown 2)

1) Genesis Giselle

This class consisted of two nice bitches in good, mature condition. Both were shown well with nice movement and good conformation. Minor differences placed them one and two on the day.

Open Bitches (Entry 1: Shown1)

1) Mahali Rustic Scarlett Ribbons

Unfortunately being a single entry often works against an exhibit's opportunity to relax in the show ring and be seen at its' best. This bitch was not happy to be in the ring, evaluated or examined. On another day with a different set of circumstances, she could easily be competitive.

BEST OF BREED (Entry 13 [6 – 7]: Shown 13)

To truly have choices – options - is a great joy for a dog show judge; having as many as I had with the Best of Breed entry here is fabulous. Just watching them round the ring initially without bookkeeping, is mesmerizing.

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BOB: GCh. Criston Enchanted

Enchanting in every way, this bitch epitomizes the Afghan Hound for me. Very feminine with a beautiful eye, head, tail set, hipbones; large feet, good bone and body; coming in the ring she said 'I am a contender'.

When she changes from standing to moving, her profile remains the same; head and tail carried high, topline level, all movement easy, balanced and ground covering below her; as if she could carry a glass on her back without spilling a drop. A famous Breeder Judge once said to me, 'there is no mistaking it is the same dog standing and moving'. This is her image and the challenge she gives to other Afghans.

There were many beautiful Afghans in the ring. After evaluating each of the other contenders, she still portrayed Afghan Hound best for me and won the coveted BOB.

BOS: Ch. Boanne's Thunderation

Upon entering the ring his handsome Afghan Hound also announced he was a contender. He is pleasingly standard size, masculine in every way with lovely detailing. His movement is very fluid and easy. On any day a true pleasure to have in the ring.

Watching the Best of Breed competitors entering the ring initially was time - stopping in a sense. Each dog/bitch has the opportunity to tell a story when it circles alone. As observers, we read that story, fitting the pieces together with another time and place. My responsibility as the judge is to prioritize those stories, honoring our breed's history from ages past. Judging this entry was an honor.

As I worked through the individual exams of the Specials entry, I confirmed the first impression of the quality. There were a lot of very competitive dogs and bitches. I compared them each to our standard - my ideal. Many come very close. These dogs are a compliment to their breeders and owners. Each is a quality example of our breed. When I had selected my BOB and BOS, I also choose the following significant award winners (in dog - bitch order).

Select Dog: Ch. Shylo Uptown Strutter

Select Bitch: Ch. Scaramis Girl Power at Regle

AOM: GCh. Xenos Candren

AOM: Ch. Agha Djari's Eye Candy of Sura