



They answered

A.1. Short coat, easy to keep, lazy, get along with livestock and other dogs and great guard dogs along with being protective of children.



The breeds indifference to humans (other than their own) should not be taken as poor temperament as they can be very distrustful of strangers.



A.2. Today, compared to 20 or even 30 years ago the percentage of excellent examples is the less. The percentage of mediocre examples is the same. The percentage of poorer examples has increased.

A.3. 1. Breed typeif you saw the dog across a paddock does it instantly say Rhodesian Ridgeback



or are you left wondering is it xxx or yyy or, a mix of all!

2. Physical soundness.

3. Ridgeso long as it is within acceptable limits I'm not looking for the perfect ridge on a poor specimen.

4. Fronts, fronts, frontsso many poor fronts in our breed.

5. Eyes So many incorrect including size, shape and colour.

A.4. The breeds indifference to humans (other than their own) should not be taken as poor temperament as they can be very distrustful of strangers.

A.5. Light wheaten to red wheaten nothing else acceptable. Mahogany is not within these two shades nor is fawn, cream or yellow. Black or

brown nose. Relatively important for camouflage for the dogs original purpose.

A.6. Hips, elbows, DNA testing for Degenerative Myelopathy, Dilute Blue, JME (new test and a Juvenile form of Epilepsy), Heart Certification. The biggest concern is skin issues as these have a hereditary basis at worst and familiar at best. The breed also has a polygenetic condition - The Dermoid Sinus.

Sharon Taylor

Usakose Rhodesian Ridgebacks

A.1. I have had Ridgebacks since 1990 and bred my first litter in 1994. As I then had horses and a young family the Ridgeback was very suited to my lifestyle. Athletic, muscular, short coat, good guard and great family dog.

A.2. Some improvement in consistency. Whilst many dogs do have breed type, the style does vary but not quite as much as it did 20 years ago.

A.3.

1. Breed Type, first.

2. Ridge, the hallmark of the breed, the ridge is what makes this breed different from every other breed. On a scale of 100, approximately 20% should be based on the ridge.

3. Movement, this breed was developed for a specific function. It is a hunting dog. In this capacity the dog may be required to gait for 20 kms before it even gets to the prey (such as a lion which it would then need to hold at bay in its pack until the hunter arrived with the gun). Efficient long striding movement is of the utmost importance.

4. Power and Elegance. The power should come from soundness and conditioning, the elegance comes



I would include this wording in the FCI standard (which we currently use).

“At the trot, the back is held level and the stride is efficient, long, free and unrestricted. Reach and drive expressing a perfect balance between power and elegance”



from style, presence and carriage
5. Correct bone, not too heavy and not too light. A hunting dog that must be agile but also able to pull down game. Too heavy bone = not agile, too light bone = lack of

We asked Breeders

Q.1. How long have you been breeding Rhodesian Ridgebacks? Why are they your chosen breed?

Q.2. How do you think the Rhodesian Ridgebacks currently being exhibited in Australia compare to those shown 20 years ago?

Q.3. Could you list in order of priority the 5 most important points you think a judge should look for in a Rhodesian Ridgeback?

Q.4. If you were able to add a sentence to the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed standard what would it be?

Q.5. How important is colour in the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed?

Q.6. Does the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed have any significant health problems?

strength.

A.4. I think the USA standard wording for Gait is far more descriptive and accurate and I would include this wording in the FCI standard (which we currently use).

“At the trot, the back is held level and the stride is efficient, long, free and unrestricted. Reach and drive expressing a perfect balance between power and elegance”

A.5. Some faults are far worse than others. Bad conformation is a shocking fault. Colour is not a



shocking fault. The FCI standard is far more unforgiving (on colour) as to the requirements in comparison to the USA standard (elaboration) which is far more forgiving. Like any fault, take it into consideration when judging the dog but keep it in perspective.

A.6. The Ridgeback is a relatively healthy dog. However, this is because the majority of Breeders health test quite extensively and make informed decisions. The breed is certainly not one that is of concern to State controlling bodies with any health complaints/issues with breeders.

Cheryl Currie

Caprivi Rhodesian Ridgebacks

A.1. I purchased my first RR from Melbourne in 1974 after months of trying to find a breeder. “Sandy” (Bulawayo Red Lady) was about 5 months old and her sire and dam were from the first couple of litters bred in Australia. At that time I was involved with competitive horse riding and I wanted a dog which was big enough to come out horse riding with me and also one that would be a friend and companion and sleep on my bed. My mother spent her childhood in Rhodesia and they always had Ridgebacks on the farm so she was very familiar with them and convinced me that a Ridgeback was the right dog for me. 43 years later I have to agree!

A.2. Before I answered this question I looked up some old catalogues from specialty shows and national shows in the 1990s and I have no doubt that some of those winners would be successful in the ring today. Unfortunately the photographs in the catalogues are not sufficient quality to scan and include with this feature. The breed was more moderate years ago without the extreme rear angulation sometimes seen today and there have been fads of “red with no white” and also ‘the bigger the better’ but on average the breed in Australia has not changed too dramatically in my opinion. In America today some Ridgebacks are square and leggy which is not what the standard calls for and which was rarely seen 20 years ago.

A.3. When I judge specialties I look for movement/soundness, type, overall balance, correct ridge and a confident temperament.

A.4. I would be more specific on movement. It currently reads “straight forward, free and active” and I would like to add “soundness is of extreme importance”. The stride

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should be effortless and should cover the maximum amount of distance with the minimum amount of effort. Over-reaching, high-stepping, loose elbows/pasterns and weak hocks should be heavily penalised.

A.5. I think color within the standard requirement of light to red wheaten is important but no preference should be given to either light or red. In the original standard acceptable colors were "Brindles, fawns, sables, whole colours or



I would be more specific on movement. It currently reads "straight forward, free and active" and I would like to add "soundness is of extreme importance". The stride should be effortless



mixed with white" however this was changed in the following years so that only shades of wheaten are now acceptable. In today's standard,



black shading through the coat is 'highly undesirable' and makes the coat look 'muddy' and unattractive. Sometimes dogs with black shading are arguably sable which is incorrect in today's standard. White, to me, is of little consequence and I would never penalise white feet/chest on an otherwise quality dog. From a breeder's perspective, white is easy to clear whereas in some lines dark shading continues generation after generation and whilst often excessive dark hairs will clear in young puppies, there is no guarantee that the body shading will clear as the puppy ages.

A.6. Unfortunately with the recent increase in the number of

inexperienced breeders and the resulting increase in the number of litters born, some health issues have arisen. Years ago it was rare to hear of any health issues other than dermoid sinus, but today it is fairly common to hear of various conditions. Probably the most common would be heart defects and skin allergies. There are a number of DNA tests that are available for conditions such as degenerative myopathy so breeders are now in a position to control issues before they become widespread.

**Rosemary Green
Chilolo Rhodesian Ridgebacks**

A.1. Some of our fondest childhood memories are associated to the dogs we both had. Thus, the need to have a canine companion was always strong and led us to the Rhodesian Ridgeback. Although Sue's love affair with this breed began in the early seventies thanks to a neighbour who had two 'lion dogs' from Rhodesia, we didn't acquire our first Ridgeback until 1990.

A.2. Apart from a welcome and marked improvement in temperaments, the adoption of the FCI country of origin breed standard in 1998 introduced and placed emphasis on the word elegance that in turn has significantly influenced the breed. Suffice to say, it is fundamental to maintain a balance between strength and elegance.

A.3. 1. First and foremost Breed Type (... and all the elements below facilitate the establishment of breed type)

2. Outline and symmetry (includes size & weight)

3. Correctly evaluate the ridge (unique characteristic that is regarded the hallmark of the breed)

4. Understand the function [big game hunting & protection (contrary to popular belief they did not kill lions) they are neither scent nor sight hounds but dual purpose utility hounds). This understanding will in turn aid the evaluation of the Ridgebacks' effortless movement which is straightforward, free and active (efficiency and endurance are key words).

5. Typical head (this helps establish breed type with its specific ratios, level parallel planes, flat skull, wrinkles when in repose, round dark or harmonising with coat colour eye, well defined stop, and powerful deep clean muzzle)

A.4 Actually, I would reinstate the

term 'Handsome and upstanding' from the old breed standard into the general appearance section of the country of origin breed standard adopted by the ANKC as this term for me still epitomizes the breed.

A.5. I have no colour preference when judging the ridgeback providing the coat colour and pigment



I would reinstate the term 'handsome and upstanding' from the old breed standard into the general appearance section of the country of origin breed standard adopted by the ANKC as this term for me still epitomizes the breed.



colour of the ridgeback in front of me conforms to the breed standard. I have always found it interesting why colour is such a hotly debated topic, as I find our breed standard



to be explicit in terms of what is and is not desirable and the need for a 'wheaten' banded hair.

A.6. Dermoid Sinus (congenital issue associated with the ridge), Degenerative Myelopathy (DM) * and more recently the discovery of a significant correlation between Rhodesian Ridgebacks and Juvenile Myoclonic Epilepsy (JME) *

* denotes available genetic tests to determine carrier status

**Sue & Steve Codgnotto
Ozrhode Rhodesian Ridgebacks**

A.1. I have been involved with this breed for over 27 years. I started breeding around 1995 I think.

I fell in love with Rhodesian ridgebacks on my first visit to Africa, where I was fortunate enough to spend some time on a farm with a lovely family who owned a pair of ridgebacks. I actually took part in a jackal hunt with both dogs and saw at first-hand how magnificent they are in the field. The dogs were used to control the jackal population from decimating the local tribes goats, which they used for m milk

and meat.

A.2. 20 years ago the Ridgebacks were more of type to each other, whereas these days there is more variety being shown and bred. I believe this is due to more availability of dogs through importation of semen. Like many other breeds I believe we have diversified too far and need to have a good look at what's being produced. Everybody seems to have their own interpretation of the breed standard, and that with the availability of importing semen has created a more diverse looking dog from that of 20 years ago. One of the other issues is, we seem to be flooding the show ring with several puppies from the one breeding. I don't think we are being subjective enough about our breeding, certainly not on assessment of puppies. I am always amused to see 3 or 4 puppies from the one litter being shown, when clearly they, to me are not of show quality. To me show quality means breed quality, that's what the challenge certificate represents. Perhaps people should take time to read it when they win one.

A.3. 1: Type. 2: Eyes (both colour & shape). 3: Angles (lack off & over angulated). 4: Height & Length to proportion of dog (does it look balanced). 5: Movement (correct both from front & rear, as well as side movement).

A.4. Form for Function, which is something most breeds these days I would think wouldn't be able to do.

A.5. Colour is a personal choice. I have owned both light wheaten and red wheaten ridgebacks and don't mind either as long as the animal is to my liking. The only issue I have with colour is that some have taken too far in both directions. I have seen ridgebacks that are fawn and cream in colour being shown, and some that are obviously mahogany in colour which is not to the standard.

A.6. In this country we seem to be seemingly free from most hereditary diseases. We are now testing for (JME Juvenile myoclonic epilepsy). There are more dogs that have been bred from semen from other countries, which have found this issue in our breed. We do mandatory health checks like cardio and obviously do hip and elbow x-rays for dysplasia. Dermoid sinus is not a serious issue as it was some years ago, certainly not to my knowledge. If there is more openness about our own breeding than this a better situation for us as breeders to eliminate these diseases and take those affected out of the breeding program.

**John Cassar
Kinshasa Rhodesian Ridgebacks**

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#7 All Breeds Tasmania

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Judging the RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK

By ROSEMARY GREEN

The Rhodesian Ridgeback is a hound developed in southern Africa and the parent Club was formed in Bulawayo in 1922. Ridgebacks were originally developed as a triple purpose dog - hunting, guard and companion and the breed was originally classified for a short period of time in the gundog group although the standard was drawn up using the standard for the Dalmatian as a base. The breed standard was accepted in 1924 by the South African Kennel Union now known as Kennel Union of Southern Africa. Ridgebacks would often travel with hunters over long distances and would then be expected to have enough strength and stamina to hold at bay large game such as lions and larger buck or pull down smaller game such as wild pigs and smaller buck. To be successful at this type of hunting, they needed to be confident, balanced, athletic, muscular and have an easy, very efficient stride so they could cover many kilometres and then produce a burst of speed to bay/pull down the quarry.

When judging the Ridgeback, one should look firstly at the overall picture of the dog and ask yourself 'can this dog do what it was originally developed to do?' The dog or bitch should give an impression of strength, balance and agility with no exaggerations. It is best to ask the exhibitor to move the dog round the ring before standing for examination. This enables the judge to see how the dog moves, see the overall type and balance, and if the dog is at all unsettled, then moving around the ring will help to settle it. Always give the exhibitor time to set the dog up for examination and always approach either directly from the front or a 45 degree angle so the dog can see you coming. Look at the head and expression, nose to stop equals stop to occiput equals the width of the skull. Ears are medium size, hanging level with the top of the skull and lie close to the cheeks. Moderate stop and eyes must be round! This is a common fault in the breed with many displaying almond shaped eyes which is often accompanied with insufficient stop. There is an anomaly in the standard regarding eyes where it states 'eye colour should harmonise with the coat color' and in another place 'eyes should be dark'. Either way, light eyes are offensive and give a harsh expression which is undesirable even in a brown nose exhibit. A brown nose should be accompanied by an amber eye, not a yellow eye. The expression, which should be soft and intelligent, depends on dark eyes and wrinkles on the skull when the ears are forward. Although the standard calls for a scissor bite, a level bite would not affect the way in which they hunt and a judge would be forgiven for not penalising a level bite too heavily

on an otherwise excellent specimen. The underjaw should be strong and while there is no call for full dentition, missing teeth are not desirable. Make sure the dog has underjaw and do not be fooled by big lips/flews!

Moving on from the head, the neck should be medium length, strong and free from dewlap and should flow cleanly into well laid shoulders. Often judges will chat to the exhibitor and Ridgebacks will sometimes back away if they hear a strange voice above and behind their line of vision. Particularly with a nervous dog, do not talk! The shoulders should be sloping to enable the dog to have a free, unrestricted stride and the upper arm should be of sufficient angle and length to allow the front legs to stand



underneath the withers. Forward set shoulders are a very common problem in the breed worldwide and are highly undesirable in an active, functional hound such as the Ridgeback. Bone on front legs should be oval and strong and the dog should stand four square on compact, well arched toes (not cat feet which are often accompanied with straight pastern) and slightly sloping pasterns.

The forechest should be visible from the side view and the chest should be well filled between the front legs without being over-exaggerated. Hollow, cathedral chests are common and should be penalised. The ribs should extend well back to allow plenty of lung and heart room. Ridgebacks



are NOT square. The body should be slightly longer than their height and as a general rule, there should be two thirds rib and one third loin between fore and hind quarters. Lack of ribbing is also a common problem and affects the stamina and strength of the dog overall. There should be shape to the underline, not straight through like a Labrador, but certainly not tucked up like a whippet. The brisket should extend to the elbow and they are a 50/50 dog ie the distance from wither to elbow/brisket should equal the distance from elbow/brisket to the ground. They should be balanced and neither leggy nor top heavy.

There should be no dipping or roaching of the topline and the hind-

quarters should be strong with good width of thigh and second thigh and a ridgeback should always be presented in fit condition showing good muscle tone and development. The tail is neither high nor low set and should flow off the topline. Often when a ridgeback stands for examination, the tail will be held between their legs which should not be penalised. The tail should reach at least to the hock and should not be carried up and over the back.

The height for females is 61 to 66 cms (24 – 26 inches) and for males is 63 to 69 cms (25 – 27 inches). Do not fall into the trap of ignoring exhibits on the lower end of the height standard. This often indicates a lack of understanding on the part of the judge as a 61cm female and a 63cm male are perfectly able to perform to the requirements of the standard if built correctly.

There seems to be a common thought that ridgebacks should be red with no white. This is incorrect. The standard calls for light wheaten (not cream) to red wheaten (not mahogany) with white permissible on chest and toes and dark hairs allowed only around the muzzle and on the ears. Body hairs should be banded with shades of wheaten and the color should never be a flat red like an Irish Setter. White is not linked to any health issues as in some other breeds and when judging I personally

would not penalise white feet on an otherwise outstanding specimen.

Ridges come in many shapes and lengths but they should start on or just behind the shoulder and should taper to finish at a point between the hip bones. The ridge should be shaped like the flat of a broadsword and should not bulge out or be so narrow as to have no tapering effect. There must be only 2 crowns (whorls of hair) and these must be opposite each other and not more than one third down the ridge. The section in front of the crowns comes in various shapes, but it should always be symmetrical. Crowns not opposite each other are referred to as 'off-set' and a very slight degree of 'off-set' on an otherwise outstanding specimen is acceptable. More than two crowns should be heavily penalised.

Last but definitely not least is movement which should be 'straight forward, free and active'. This means no flicking of pasterns, no elbowing out, no cow hocks and they should never high step or over-reach which indicates an imbalance of front and rear angulation. They should hold a level topline and move smoothly and easily with good reach from well laid shoulders and powerful drive from muscular hindquarter and low set, strong hocks. Faster is not better and exhibits should not race around the ring but should cover the ground with minimum effort.

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The Breed Standard

HISTORY: The Rhodesian Ridgeback is presently the only registered breed indigenous to Southern Africa. Its forebears can be traced to Cape Colony of Southern Africa where they crossed with the early pioneers' dogs and the semi-domesticated, ridged Hottentot hunting dogs. Hunting mainly in groups of two or three, the original function of the Rhodesian Ridgeback or Lion dog was to track game, especially lion, and, with great agility, keep it at bay until the arrival of the hunter.

The original standard, which was drafted by F.R Barnes, in Bulawayo, Rhodesia, in 1922, was based on the Dalmatian and approved by the South African Kennel Union in 1926.

The Rhodesian Ridgeback is still used to hunt game in many parts of the world, but especially prized as a watch-dog and family pet.

GENERAL APPEARANCE:

The Rhodesian Ridgeback should represent a well balanced, strong, muscular, agile and active dog, symmetrical in outline and capable of great endurance with a fair amount of speed. The emphasis is on agility, elegance and soundness with no tendency towards massiveness. The peculiarity of the breed is the ridge on the back, which is formed by the hair growing in the opposite direction to the rest of the coat.

CHARACTERISTICS: The ridge is the escutcheon of the breed. The ridge must be clearly defined, symmetrical and tapering towards the haunch. It must start immediately behind the shoulders and continue to the hip (haunches) bones. The ridge must contain only two crowns, identical and opposite each other. The lower edges of the crowns must not extend further down the ridge than one-third of its length. A good average width of the ridge is 5 cm (2ins).

TEMPERAMENT: Dignified, intelligent, aloof with strangers, but showing no aggression or shyness.

HEAD AND SKULL: Cranial Region: Skull - Should be of a fair length (width of head between ears, distance from occiput to stop, stop to end of nose, should be equal), flat and broad between the ears; the head should be free from wrinkles when in repose.

Stop - Should be reasonably well defined and not in one straight line from the nose to the occipital bone.

Facial Region - Nose - Should be black or brown. A black nose should be accompanied by dark eyes, a brown nose by amber eyes.

Muzzle - Should be long, deep and powerful.

Lips - Should be clean, closely fitting the jaws. Cheeks - Should be clean.

EYES: Should be moderately well apart, round, bright and sparkling, with intelligent expression, their colour harmonising with the colour of the coat.

EARS: Should be set rather high, of medium size, rather wide at base and gradually tapering to a rounded point. They should be carried close to the head.

MOUTH: Jaws strong with a perfect and complete scissor bite, i.e. the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws. The teeth must be well developed, especially the canines or holders.

NECK: Should be fairly long, strong and free from throatiness.

FOREQUARTERS: The forelegs should be perfectly straight, strong and well boned, with the elbows close to the body. When viewed from the side, the forelegs should be wider than viewed from the front. Pasterns should be strong with slight spring.

Shoulders - Should be sloping, clean and muscular, denoting speed.

BODY: Back - Powerful. Loins - Strong, muscular and slightly arched. Chest - Should not be too wide, but very deep and capacious; the brisket should reach to the elbow. Forechest - Should be visible when viewed from the side. Ribs - Moderately well sprung, never rounded like barrel-hoops.

HINDQUARTERS: In the hind legs the muscles should be clean and well defined with good turn of stifle and strong hocks well let down.

FEET: Should be compact and round with well arched toes and tough, elastic pads, protected by hair between the toes and pads.

TAIL: Should be strong at the root and gradually tapering towards the end, free from coarseness. It should be of moderate length. It should not be attached too high nor too low and should be carried with a slight curve upwards, never curled.

GAIT/MOVEMENT: Straight forward, free and active.

COAT: Hair - Should be short and dense, sleek and glossy in appearance but neither woolly nor silky.

COLOUR: Light wheaten to red wheaten. A little white on the chest and toes is permissible, but excessive white hairs here, on belly or above toes is undesirable. A dark muzzle and ears permissible. Excessive black hairs throughout the coat are highly undesirable.

SIZES: The desirable heights are: Dogs 63 cms (25 ins) to 69cms (27 ins) Bitches 61cms (24 ins) to 66cms (26 ins)

WEIGHT - The desirable weights are: Dogs 36.5kgs (80 lbs) Bitches 32 kgs (70 lbs)

FAULTS: Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportions to its degree.

NOTES: Male animals should have two apparently normally developed testicles fully descended into the scrotum.