

BOUVIER **DES FLANDRES**

BREED MAGAZINE

Let's Talk Breed Education!
SHOWSIGHT

HAIR OF THE DOG

HERDING BREED COAT REQUIREMENTS

BY SUE VROOM

SHOWSIGHT magazine is deeply saddened to report the passing of AKC Executive Field Representative, Sue Vroom. We are indebted to the former professional handler for her many contributions to this publication and to the sport of dogs. Our sincere condolences are offered to her family, friends, and colleagues.

Listed below are the breeds in the Herding Group whose standards contain very specific coat requirements. Coat requirement descriptions have been taken from each standard as they are written.

Australian Shepherd – "... medium texture... weather resistant and of medium length. The undercoat varies in quantity with variation in climate... Non-typical coats are *severe faults*."

Bearded Collie – "... outer coat is flat, *harsh*, strong and shaggy..." *Severe fault* is a "...long, silky coat. Trimmed or sculpted coat."

Belgian Malinois – "... straight, *hard* enough to be weather resistant..."

Beauceron – "... coat is... *course*, dense..." DQ – "Shaggy Coat."

Bouvier Des Flandres – "A tousled double coat... outer hairs are *rough* and *harsh*... Topcoat must be *harsh* to the touch... A flat coat, denoting lack of undercoat is a *serious fault*..." A "silky or woolly coat... is a *fault*."

Briard – "The outer coat is *course*, *hard and dry* (making a dry rasping sound between the fingers)."

Canaan Dog – "Outer coat-straight, *harsh*, flat-lying..."

Rough Collie – "The well-fitting, *properly-textured* coat is the crowning glory of the Rough variety of Collie... The outer coat is straight and *harsh* to the touch. A *soft, open* outer coat... regardless of quantity is *penalized*... The texture, quantity and the extent to which the coat "fits the dog" are *important points*."

German Shepherd Dog – "... double coat of medium length... hair straight, *harsh* and lying close to the body... *Faults* in coat include soft, silky, too long outer coat, woolly, curly, and open coat."

Norwegian Buhund – "Outer coat is thick and *hard*..."

Old English Sheepdog – "Coat... of a good *hard texture*... *Quality and texture of coat to be considered above mere profuseness*. Softness or flatness of coat to be considered a *fault*."

Shetland Sheepdog – "... outer coat consisting of long, straight, *harsh* hair... *Faults*... wavy, curly, soft or silky."

Swedish Vallhund – "Medium length hair, *harsh*... Fluffy coats... are a *serious fault*. *The following faults are to be so severely penalized as to effectively eliminate the dog from competition: Fluffy Coat*..."

Hair... is it the sole defining characteristic of a Herding breed or is it one key element among other essential qualities? A defining characteristic by direct definition means that without possessing this particular type component, the breed ceases to be the breed. Most will agree that

the Maltese coat is his defining characteristic. The white, silky hair makes him what he is. A Yorkshire Terrier is not a Yorkie without the luxurious, single-coated, dark steel blue curtain of hair. These are examples of dogs whose sole function on the planet is to look the part and be a home companion, even though the one breed was originally bred down from farm ratters; this no longer being the attraction to own one.

Bouvier's have the distinction of being one of the highest functioning AKC recognized breeds, anatomically designed for great diversity in their duties and responsibilities. This demands a variety of essential physical characteristics in order to perform vital tasks. An efficient, well-constructed body means the difference between a tireless farm worker and a porch pooch. Compact, short-coupled, well-boned, deep-chested, and proportionately balanced front to rear are essential for maximum functional efficiency.

Coat quality and texture is one of the physical components that enable the dog to more effectively perform his outside duties in varying weather conditions and climates. In hot, dry, and humid areas, the cuticles of the hair shaft and the top coat open to allow air to flow to the skin and cool the body. (Many of us complain about our "fuzzy hair" in hot humid weather.) In cold, wet weather conditions, guard hair and undercoat act as a seal, and close to protect the skin from moisture and warm the body. The skin and coat are the thermal protectors that function as a sensor mechanism to shield and aid in survival in harsh conditions.

Upon touch, one may expect to feel a variation and a range of texture qualities depending on the weather and the temperature. In evaluating the characteristics of hair, one must remember that it is a living organism on the body of a living thing for a specific reason... protection. It acts and feels differently in various climate conditions because it is doing its job. A fur pelt will feel the same to the touch in all conditions as it has been stripped from the body of an animal. The coat is no longer living. Why, when evaluating fur on a live animal, are we expecting to feel the

HAIR OF THE DOG



same thing in all weather conditions? It would not be functioning properly if the texture was the same in tepid humidity as opposed to a dry, 50-degree climatized air conditioning.

The ratio of guard hair to undercoat is an important consideration in evaluation. In humans, each hair follicle yields one strand of hair. In canines, one hair follicle is possessed of both properties—undercoat and guard hair. The density of the coat is of crucial consideration. If the coat is comprised of silky or woolly texture and quality, it will not have the ability to provide protection, no matter what the conditions are. Poor quality coat can be a genetic trait, or it may be indicative of a nutritional deficiency or a coat that has not been cared for properly; essentially, poor condition. In both cases, this would be a consideration for evaluation in a show ring by a judge.

Given the variables of coat quality and the external conditions that affect it, should undue emphasis be placed on it to the exclusion of other physical characteristics in the show ring? Why does it seem that many discussions with a judge in regards to the evaluation of a Bouvier START with only the coat; its texture and trim without mere mention of any structural components? Bouviers are not the *only* Herding breed with a very specific coat texture requirement as specified in its breed standard (see standards listed previously), yet very seldom do we hear judges say that the reason for not awarding an otherwise quality Briard a ribbon was because the hair failed a make a dry rasping sound

when rubbed between the fingers, and was not hard and dry. There is no question that this feature of the Briard is inherently important, but it is not the first thing one typically remarks on. It would appear that the Bouvier seems to be the only herder whose primary consideration is a fur pelt held up by four legs and a spine to the sacrifice of other functioning aspects. If ribbons are to be awarded based solely on this, then a study of what a correct Bouvier coat is made up of (and the properties that make it so and in which climate conditions) is necessary. Bouviers are not hard-coated Terriers.

On exam, the initial visual assessment of the dog should give one an impression as to whether the coat's density would have the capability to protect the body in a variety weather conditions. A hands-on inspection should confirm texture and the ratio of undercoat to guard hair. As far as the outline of the body in regards to the trim, on stepping back several feet, one should be able to notice the tips or ends of the guard hair rather than a uniformly blunt-cut hair shaft that is more typical of a Bichon or a Poodle... breeds that do not require a harsh, tousled coat. Do not mistake a "tousled" coat with an "open" coat. An open coat lacks the sufficient undercoat to provide protection. This does not mean that the hair cannot be stripped, mucked-out, and trimmed to create the pleasing body outline of a show ring finish.

Learning how to correctly evaluate an all-weather coat—and becoming familiar with the properties that make it so—is the key to the appreciation of the Herding breeds. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR, SUE VROOM

My relationship with the Bouvier des Flandres started in the early 1970's as the owner of a large boarding and training facility in southern California. My trainer-in-residence, Dan La Master, did protection training and police work, specializing in the Bouvier. This is when my admiration and attraction to the breed began. I obtained my AKC Professional Handler's license in 1976 and joined the Professional Handlers' Association shortly thereafter. I was also a charter member of the AKC Registered Handler Program. After my marriage to Corky in 1981, we were fortunate to have campaigned a number of Bouviers; nine ranked #1 in the nation. Some career highlights for Corky and I include being awarded the last Best in Show on a Bouvier from the Working Group in December 1983, before the formation of the Herding Group, with Ch. Galbraith's Faire La Roux. A few years later came the Top Dog All-Breeds award for Ch. Galbraith's Iron Eyes with 101 Bests in Show, making him the top-winning Bouvier in breed history, a record that stands to date. We handled both Iron Eyes and his son, Ch. Ariste's Hematite Dragon, to Herding Group Ones at the Westminster KC, then a first for the breed at the Garden.

Bouviers have played a huge role in my life—191 all-breed Bests in Show and four National Specialty wins. I have enjoyed close relationships with many of the top breeders of the breed. It is due to their dedication that Bouviers have been beloved family members for 40+ years. I served as show chairman for the Southern California Bouvier des Flandres Club for eight years, American Bouvier des Flandres Club JEC from 2009 until 2013, and have been a member of the SCBdFC and the ABdFC since 1993. Having bred 100+ champions of several other breeds, I am currently a member of AKC's Breeder of Merit program.

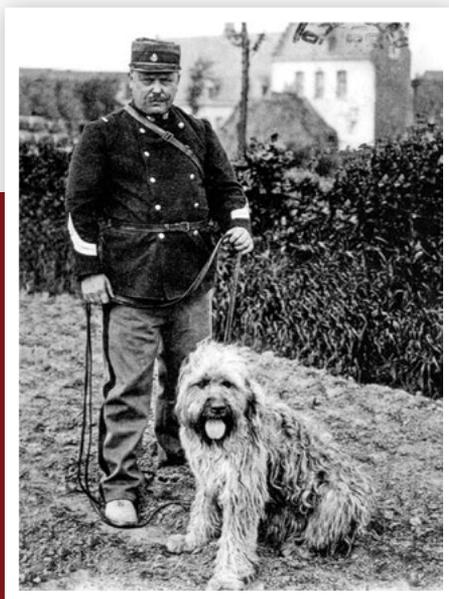
Since my retirement as an all-breed handler in February 2005, I have been employed by the American Kennel Club as an Executive Field Representative.

A Farmer's DOG

BY THE JUDGES' EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF
THE AMERICAN BOUVIER DES FLANDRES CLUB

Let's take a trip back in time. Let's go back well over a hundred years to the country of Belgium, prior to the industrial revolution. The land is lush and level in the lowlands, but the climate, while temperate, is frequently damp. Up in the mountains to the North, the climate gets much colder and the land is rocky and poor. It is here that you own a small farm; no more than twenty acres. It is here that you scabble to house and feed your growing family. You own very little; a few head of dairy cattle. The days are long and you need help to complete all the chores. There is no money to pay for a helper, and a horse is expensive to buy and feed. For the farmers of Belgium, a dog was the answer. A *bouvier*, the Belgian word for a drover's dog. Not a breed yet; merely a farmer's dog.

But what kind of dog to help with all the work around the farm? You needed a dog capable of moving the cows into the field in the morning and bringing them back to the barn at night. Or driving them to market down tight country lanes. Once you had milked, you needed a dog to pull a cart—laden with the heavy milk jugs—to market. (And, perhaps, to pull you home if you had spent some of your money at the local pub.) You wanted a dog to help churn the butter and work the gristmill stone. At night, the dog that you required would remain outdoors to guard the farmyard from intruders... not only humans, but the large gray wolves of the European continent. And he needed to be an easy keeper, living off table scrapes. You did not need a specialist, but a combination of a herding dog and a cart dog... a dog with no exaggerations. A dog that was willing and physically able to do what you asked of him.





First, the dog needed to be powerfully built with an imposing presence. (Cows will challenge a dog, and they are capable of a kick to the side, backed by a thousand pounds.) a dog with well-sprung ribs and strong bone to absorb the kick should he find himself in the wrong place at the wrong time! A compact, short-coupled dog capable of quick turns and short bursts of speed to head off the stock if they decided to wander from the path. A dog with an easy, balanced, ground-covering gait, so he would not tire. A dog with a thick double coat because he was asked to work in all weather conditions; a coat that kept him warm and shed water. A dog well-muscled, especially in the rear quarters, and broad across the chest and back to push into the harness to move a heavy cart to market—often miles away. But a dog not too large, for he needed to be agile as well, to dodge the cow kick, to jump the fence, and to chase off an intruder. He needed to be spirited, bold, and fearless. He was loyal and resolute;

a sensible dog that took his rest when he could, for he worked all day and all night. A high-strung dog would not do. He needed to be even tempered, for he controlled a good part of the world he lived in.

This is the dog that fanciers were thinking of when they gathered in 1912 to come up with a standard of perfection that would forever change the *bouvier* of Belgium into the Bouvier des Flandres. When describing the body of the Bouvier, they used the term “well-muscled” seven times, and “wide” and “broad” five times. This is the blue-collar working dog they admired and wished to advance. While a Bouvier in proper coat and trim can be quite striking, he is never an elegant dog. Underneath the trappings of the dog show, the Bouvier must still possess the qualities that made him indispensable to a poor Belgian farmer. A Bouvier des Flandres must always remind you, in body and mind, that he is still a farmer’s dog; the Dog of Flanders. ■

A Final Thought

FROM THE ABDFC JUDGES' EDUCATION COMMITTEE:

During several recent televised dog shows, the announcers have stated that a Bouvier moves cattle with his head. I believe they are conflating the herding term “to head” stock (which simply means moving to the front of the animals to turn them) and using the Bouvier’s broad, flat skull as a battering ram to move a cow. A nano second of thought should tell you that this is never going to happen! A Bouvier moves cattle by working off its flank, driving them forward using the full power of his presence and an occasional, well-timed heel nip.

Q&A ON THE BOUVIER DES FLANDRES

LINDA CLARK

I live in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Outside of dogs, my husband and I do volunteer work and I love to shop. I've been in the dog world for 39 years, showing for 34 years and I've been judging since 2012.



YVONNE SAVARD

I live in Pitt Meadows, British Columbia, Canada. I work full time as a Veterinary Pharmaceutical Territory Manager. I went to my first dog show in 1969. I've been showing dogs for 47 years and judging for 20 years.



DR. ROBERT D. SMITH

I live in St. Stephens Church, Virginia and am retired after a career in the fields of education and economic development. My wife, Polly and I began our dedication to the sport of purebred dogs in 1960, showing German Shepherd Dogs. In 1963, Polly bought me an American Foxhound puppy for a Christmas present. Needless to say, Foxhounds became our primary breed. Later, after I had started judging, we showed and bred Welsh Terriers. I was approved to judge American Foxhounds and Beagles in 1969 and judged my first show in March 1970.



1. Describe the breed in three words.

LC: Powerful, compact and intelligent.

YS: Square, bold and steady.

RS: Big, square and hard-coated.

2. What are your "must have" traits in this breed?

LC: The must have traits are balance, compact, substance, movement, coat texture and temperament.

YS: Square, correct movement, proud, bold, moderate front and rear angulation with overall correct balance.

RS: Must haves are square body and hard coat.

3. Are there any traits in this breed you fear are becoming exaggerated?

LC: Rears are over-driving and backs and loins are becoming too long.

YS: The breed is leaning too much to the generic show dog with hair. Also concerning is the straight front with too much rear, too long in body and over-extended gait with improper head carriage.

RS: I don't know of any required traits that are being exaggerated, but as far as undesired traits are concerned, I think there are far too many specimens that are too long in body.

4. Do you think the dogs you see in this breed are better now than they were when you first started judging?

LC: Yes, with educational seminars, mentors and health testing, the breed is becoming much better as a whole.

YS: In some aspects yes, for instance better heads with good muzzle depth and width as well as coats. In some ways, no—there is more over exaggeration of movement, longer bodies and loss of the square picture, thereby losing breed-specific type.

RS: The breed may be somewhat improved during this period, but the breed had a lot of good ones when I first started to judge them. I do think there are a lot more Bouviers being shown now, and so we see a lot more that are not so good.

5. What do you find Bouviers to have most and least consistently?

LC: Substance is the most consistent in my rings. Coat texture, compactness and balance are the least consistent things I see.

6. Where do you find Bouviers to be most and least consistent?

YS: They are most consistent in Australia and least in North America.

RS: I think the most consistency is found in Canada; the least in the Deep South and the mountain states.

7. How do you estimate size in a Bouvier, given that oversize and undersize are one of only three severe penalties under the standard?

LC: I look at them and ask myself, 'Can they do the function that they were bred for? Are they agile? Are they balanced?'

YS: We see out of standard Bouviers winning in spite of the severe penalty. The size range in Bouvier is very

large—24½" to 27½" for dogs and 23½" to 26½" for bitches. We do not have a disqualification for height, so judges need to look at overall dog. Bouviers today run the full gamut of sizes. We have an "ideal" size in our standard—26" for dogs, 25" for bitches. If the dog or bitch appears way out of range, that's your call.

RS: First of all, I think judges are much more likely to find ones that are too small than too big. Ironically, ones that are too large are more likely to win than ones that are too small. That is probably because people are more likely to confuse "big" with "giant."

8. With the standard calling for a scissor bite and a severe penalty for overshot or undershot, do you penalize a level bite?

LC: Scissor bite please, with the rare exception being if the dog is outstanding enough to override the level bite.

YS: I do not penalize a level bite. Bouviers have dropped center incisors as well; this is not an issue for me if the side bite has correct occlusion and full dentition. The standard does not mention full dentition; however, for me it goes with a strong, broad, well filled out muzzle.

RS: I do not penalize a level bite.

9. Have you ever excused a Bouvier for a foreign substance or a dyed coat?

LC: No, I have not.

YS: No, I have not. That being said, it is a more common practice than one would think. When I judged the 2007 National, I was surprised at how black my hands were upon completion. I will make it known to the handler that I know and likely not place the dog. I check for color alteration, particular pigment coloration of noses and eye rims. If sprays are used, (the mouth wash smell that is a dead giveaway) that alerts me to really check the coat as obviously the handler thinks the coat needs masking. A good Bouvier coat only requires water.

RS: I have not. Regarding suspected dyed exhibits, I do not think dying can be proven without taking hair samples and having them examined under a microscope. As for foreign substances, that too would be hard to prove, so my alternative is to just penalize the exhibit.

10. What part does grooming play in your placements?

LC: At least one-third, symmetry is important in standing and in movement.

YS: This is a hands-on breed, if you scissor the coat, then the texture is gone. The "prettiness" of the grooming does not influence me; correct preparation of the coat will.

RS: According to my interpretation of the standard, the Bouvier should be shown with a minimum of grooming, so my policy is to fault excessive grooming.

11. What can Bouvier exhibitors do to make your judging process easier?

LC: Exhibitors should show a well-socialized dog in good physical condition with correct grooming of the coat presenting a good outline and correct texture.

I like exhibitors to show me the bite.

YS: Slow them down; do not race with this breed.

More handlers ruin good dogs by trying to get them to move like Sporting dogs.

RS: Learn how to condition your dog's coat and how to properly present the Bouvier as well as bring in a well-conditioned dog.

12. What do you think new judges misunderstand about the breed?

LC: I believe they misunderstand the head width and plane, the coat texture and the powerful balanced movement.

YS: They judge on silhouette. This is a breed that can be sculptured to look correct by hiding length, masking head size and planes of muzzle to top skull. Use your hands, find the layback, the length of neck, the return of upper arm, the withers, where the front legs are set, the length of rib cage vs. length of loin and the rear angulation. Look for sickle hocks, at head carriage and at front reach and rear drive follow through—get past the coat. There should be minimal lift of front and rear legs; no excess kick or lift of that front or rear.

RS: I think what most judges, both old and new, do not understand is the proper Bouvier coat.

13. Is there anything else you'd like to share about the breed?

LC: This is a breed that is very loyal to its owner and property. The Bouvier must have a job and purpose in life. They are intelligent, yet can be stubborn and strong willed.

The owners of a Bouvier need to have the time for proper training and grooming. Being a very athletic and highly trainable breed, the Bouvier also needs socialization and training. I believe the Bouvier is an asset to the Herding Group.

YS: Do not get caught up on the special of the day, there are good dogs out there that get over looked because they are not with a known name. Please judge the dog. Always remember: square, compact, agile, steady and proud.

14. And, for a bit of humor: what's the funniest thing you've ever experienced at a dog show?

LC: Being interviewed by Borat (www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTIBXN7bgjA).

YS: I was judging at the International Show in Sidney, Australia and was in the Toy ring. Suddenly this loud commotion began. I went to find the source of the noise and it was a large nearby tree filled with cockatoos—I mean hundreds—that got into an argument about something. It was amazing to see and not one Toy dog spooked at the noise. ■

JUDGING THE BOUVIER DES FLANDRES

by NANCY EILKS



This article is not meant to be a thorough guide to judging the Bouvier des Flandres. That level of detail is available through the Judge's Education Committee for the breed. This is intended to be a refresher of some of the most important aspects of the breed for those judging our Bouviers.

The Bouvier is a combination of general farm dog and guardian, being shown in the herding group. He still has a strong work ethic, even temperament and a belief that his teeth should not be used unless necessary. In the general appearance section in the standard the terms used to describe his demeanor are agile, spirited and bold, yet serene, well behaved disposition, steady, resolute and fearless character. As such, it is important to treat him with respect but not fear. If you are afraid of this breed, please do not agree to judge it.

Be aware that the dog often has hair in front of its eyes, and if the groomer has left extra fullness, the dog may not be able to see you well. Approach the dog at a slight angle. Reach under the chin and proceed with your examination. Do not be afraid to push the hair back to see the eyes. Those eyes looking back at you should impart confidence, intelligence and maybe the impression that he is examining you as much as you are examining him.

Some dogs are trained to stand for long periods of time, but generally Bouviers tend to become impatient at being made to stand still, or if they think the exam is taking too long. They may start to clack their teeth or chew their moustaches. Proceed efficiently, and try to ignore their antics.

Like most of the herding breeds, we want our Bouviers to have good reach and drive, and efficient movement.

Our standard calls for a square breed, with a short loin and our standard calls for moderate angulation. This construction does not allow for excessive reach and drive. There is a tendency to reward pretty flashy movement that may include a lot of lift, especially in the rear. On the opposite extreme is the balanced dog with short mincing steps. Please reward the dog with good reach and drive that is also balanced with a smooth efficient stride having the "harmonious, free, bold and proud gait" described in our standard. The dog should be light on his feet moving with little apparent effort while maintaining a level topline.

You may be confronted with a range of styles in your ring. The Bouvier standard was a compilation of three distinct styles. The Bouvier Roulers was a tall black hard coated dog. The Bouvier Ardennes (or Paret type) was a



Cropped-Untrimmed: Equally acceptable, ears can be either cropped or untrimmed.



The herding instinct: Introduction to sheep, having fun.

much smaller dog, mostly tawny, sorrel or gray in color with pricked ears and a long tail. The Bouvier des Flandres was the middle sized dog of the three, being a gray and brindle. As long as the individual dog meets the standards requirements for size, square and not too racy nor too bulky, each style is equally acceptable.

A final important point is the coat. Bouvier coats are an important aspect of the breed, and very subject to manipulation through grooming, management and climate making it difficult to judge well. Our current show Bouvier seems to have gradually developed into a breed where appearance of the dog and grooming of the coat seems to take precedence over other factors; the more coat the better. The coats are profuse, puffed and fluffed, blown dry and sculpted to perfection. It sometimes appears that we have competition

in Bouvier Topiary. We, as judges seem to be losing sight of the proper texture and grooming.

The standard describes a “rough-coated dog of notably rugged appearance”. You can only judge what is in front of you, but please look for the following coat qualities:

- Harsh texture to the outer coat (not soft, not hard, but harsh. Weather-proof. Raspy, like a Briard)
- Presence of undercoat. There is usually plenty, as groomers leave it in to add body and lift to the coat. But sometimes overzealous stripping may remove most of it.
- No tendency to silkiness or wooliness, nor curliness. Some natural wave in the coat is quite acceptable, but not curly like a poodle, which only adds to wooliness.

The standard states “trimmed, if necessary, to a length of approximately

2½ inches. The coat may be trimmed slightly only to accentuate the body line. Overtrimming which alters the natural rugged appearance is to be avoided.” A properly stripped and prepared ‘jacket’ on a Bouvier should lay down, following the outline of the dog. It should be held a bit away from the body by a layer of undercoat. It will often present a wavy, almost marcelled look, giving the “touseled” appearance described in the standard. When moving the coat will stay in place—not flow like a Bearded.

With all of this coat I have watched judges get lost in it or confused by it. You must look beyond the hair, imagining the naked dog underneath. This is where you have to—MUST—trust your hands to tell you what your eyes may not see. You have to be able to find what is under the haircoat or you will never find the correct animal to reward.

One of the biggest errors in judging our breed is to not find the actual dog, or not judging it as the true working animal that the standard describes.

I ask you to help in assuring we do not fall prey to the generic dog show syndrome. Heads up, beards flying and feet flailing may catch your eye, but is not what our standard asks you to reward. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nancy Eilks, along with her husband, have bred Bouviers for over 35 years under the Blackstone prefix. Nancy is actively involved in the



American Bouvier des Flandres Club having served in many capacities. Nancy is a founding member of the Northeastern Illinois Bouvier des Flandres Club, and had been a member of the Badger Kennel Club and the Wisconsin Schutzhund Association for many years, again serving in many capacities. Nancy has bred or handled over 85 Bouvier Champions and multiple obedience titles. Nancy is a Breeder/Owner/Handler and is now also an AKC judge and is active in UKC events, as both exhibitor and judge. Nancy has judged two Bouvier regional specialty shows, and both futurity and breed classes at the National Specialty.

BOUVIER DES FLANDRES

SURVEYS ON THE BREED

NANCY ALMGREN



1. In order, name the five most important traits you look for in the ring.

I look for balance, movement (comes with balance), bone, attitude and coat. Actually, attitude might come after balance.

2. What, if anything, do you feel non-breeder judges get wrong about the breed?

Coat. The standard calls for a tousled coat, not the heavy undercoated, sculpted coat seen in the ring today.

3. What do handlers do in presentation that you wish they would not?

Move the dog too fast.

4. Cropped or uncropped ears? Do undocked tails affect judging?

Cropped is my personal preference for Bouviers I own or breed, but uncropped is also in the standard. I don't differentiate. Uncropped is fine, but I abhor a natural tail. It's not in our standard. It's NOT how the breed was developed.

5. What traits do you see popping up these days that are going in the wrong direction? What's better?

Bouviers are shorter backed, but losing a neck. We are getting back to more moderate dogs with really fine breeders throughout the country.

6. Has your Bouvier competed in any performance events? Did that experience affect judging decisions? Can today's show Bouvier still perform the functions for which he was bred?

I have not had the time to work my Bouviers in any kind of performance events. I blame myself, not them. I'm lucky if I can keep their coats up. I'm always proud of owners who prove how well round-ed the breed is. We've got a lot of owners who show their dogs in the conformation ring and then go into the obedience and herding rings. Our national specialty includes many multi-faceted events for our breed. I think the Bouvier is only limited by its owner and I'm the classic case.

7. What previously campaigned Bouvier come close to your ideal? Please explain.

I'm still in awe of Galbraith's Iron Eyes, owned and bred by Dave and Joan Galbraith. He was handled by Corkie and Sue Vroom and assisted by Van Pusey. It was almost the perfect storm of perfection. He won over 100 Best in Shows (which is still the record to beat). Iron had bone, coat and attitude. He owned any ring he was in.

Today, I'd say anything bred by or handled by Elaine and Louise Paquette of Quiche Kennels. They have a strong breeding program that they augment with Dutch imports from time to time. They have the capacity to keep the dogs with the most potential so they have their choice of major contenders. If you add to that, their ability to groom and condition their dogs to perfection, there's no surprise they have the top Bouviers year after year.

8. How does the breed in North America compare to other parts of the world?

The US standard allows a larger dog. And, while fawn is in both the US and FCI standard, we do not fault a fully pigmented fawn Bouvier. Nor should we. It would be difficult to show one in Europe though. In the past, US breeders were more inclined to have health tests done on their breeding stock than their European counterparts. I'm not sure that's true anymore. I think European breeders are more apt to test for hip dysplasia today.

9. Do you have anything else to share?

I think Facebook has done a lot to connect Bouvier lovers from around the world. I love getting updates from Russia and England about their shows and "family flights". Thank heavens Facebook offers translations, otherwise I'd just have to look at the pictures. There's a real Bouvier bond between owners and Facebook gives me access to these besotted Bouvier owners all over the world.

RICHARD LAKE

1. In order, name the five most important traits you look for in the ring.

Square outline, short back, good lay back of shoulders, balanced front and rear, proper coat, head to match body, good bite.

2. What, if anything, do you feel non-breeder judges get wrong about the breed?

Straight front, washed out colors and improper colors that are not in the standard.

3. *What do handlers do in presentation that you wish they would not?*

Over grooming, coloring coats and trying to move the dog with its head up.

4. *Cropped or uncropped ears? Do undocked tails affect judging?*

My personal preference is cropped ears, but in judging it is one of the last things. Tail is to be cropped until the standard is changed.

5. *What traits do you see popping up these days that are going in the wrong direction?*

Getting too small and losing bone and substance.

6. *Has your Bouvier competed in performance events?*

I have Bouviers that are conformation and obedience champions, as well as high in agility trials.

7. *What previously campaigned Bouvier come close to your ideal? Please explain.*

There have been some wonderful dogs over the years; the one that sticks out is Ch Leevy Astra La Petite Colline that excelled in substance, movement and temperament.

8. *How does the breed in North America compare to other parts of the world?*

Some North American dogs have been top dogs in the world.

9. *What sets the Bouvier apart from the Black Russian and Giant Schnauzer?*

I believe the temperament of the Bouvier sets it apart.

10. *Do you have anything else to share?*

The Bouvier is an ideal, wonderful family dog that is very intelligent and loves to please—he is also good with children.

NANCY EILKS

1. *In order, name the five most important traits you look for in the ring.*

Square and cobby build. Harsh coat. Easy and efficient movement. Appearance of power yet agile. Intelligent expression.

2. *What, if anything, do you feel non-breeder judges get wrong about the breed?*

The proper coat is difficult to understand. The harshness properly stripped. I also see a lot of poor movement and lack of good physical condition being rewarded.

3. *What do handlers do in presentation that you wish they would not?*

There is too much trimming and fluffing, but more annoying is having the dogs gait around the ring too fast with their heads held up high.

4. *Cropped or uncropped ears? Do undocked tails affect judging?*

I am a traditionalist and personally like the cropped and docked look of the breed. That said, I have shown and bred many that have not been cropped. I have seen undocked Bouviers in performance events but have yet to see an undocked Bouvier shown to me. I would find it hard to look at, but if the set is proper and carriage reasonable, I don't believe I could disregard a good dog for such a man-made fault.

5. *What traits do you see popping up these days that are going in the wrong direction? What's better?*

Proper coat preparation is giving way to clipping and scissoring. A good coat can survive such treatment, but a marginal coat cannot be improved by these methods. Too much use of product in the coats is starting to show up. Lack of balance in movement is becoming the norm. Heads and bites have improved. Light eyes are rarely seen. Size has gone from being too big, to being too small and seems to have moderated.

6. *Has your Bouvier competed in performance events? Did that experience affect judging decisions? Can today's show Bouvier still perform the functions for which he was bred?*

In years past, my husband and I have trained in obedience and some Schutzhund. We worked our show dogs. Some of my dogs are too large and less agile, but could still do the work. Some of today's show dogs are not balanced enough to hold up for a long day of work. If the dog being shown today has the willingness to work, he would still be able to do the job. Some of that drive is missing.

7. *What previously campaigned Bouvier come close to your ideal? Please explain.*

Early on in our showing, we saw a dog called Beaucrest Ruffian and the look of that dog is what comes to my mind as the ideal. He was moderate in all aspects, cobby and powerful looking. He had a confidence and presence that stuck with me.

8. *How does the breed in North America compare to other parts of the world?*

Mostly the breed looks different due to the grooming. Underneath they are not all that different. The American dogs may tend to be heavier and shown in poorer condition.

9. *What sets the Bouvier apart from the Black Russian and Giant Schnauzer?*

The Black Russian is larger, softer coated and a more high-powered dog. They also carry more angulation than the Bouvier. The Giant Schnauzer is quite different in the head, being rectangular where the Bouvier is more square. They are narrower in body and elegant. Elegant is not a word used to describe a Bouvier.

10. *Do you have anything else to share?*

So much of our breed, as with other breeds, is about the character of the breed. Please do not accept poor temperament. Also, please DO go over the dogs, but they

Bouvier Q&A

may not be appreciative of a full body massage from a stranger. With the amount of coat, what you see may not be what is there. Don't be fooled by pretty grooming. There is no excuse for any product in the coat.

DEBBIE LONG GSCHWENDER

1. In order, name the five most important traits you look for in the ring.

Square dog, nice reach and drive, level topline and tail-set, head in proportion to body and good coat.

2. What, if anything, do you feel non-breeder judges get wrong about the breed?

Most non-breeder judges get fooled by the grooming or just don't understand the need to put up a SQUARE dog, one with a short loin. Over emphasizing the coat properties, it's an owner/handled breed with owner/handlers doing the grooming. And most of them do not know how to properly maintain a coat for the show ring. Also, Bouviers are not necessarily a flashy breed and most judges go for the flash, not correct structure and movement, they need a well laid back shoulder with a moderate rear.

3. What do handlers do in presentation that you wish they would not?

Move the dogs too fast.

4. Cropped or uncropped ears? Do undocked tails affect judging?

I prefer cropped, but uncropped ears do not bother me. I do not care for an undocked tail.

5. What traits do you see popping up these days that are going in the wrong direction? What's better?

Wrong direction: straighter shoulders and overangulated rears, LONG loins. Better: coat texture and cleaner moving dogs on the down and back.

6. Has your Bouvier competed in performance events? Did that experience affect judging decisions? Can today's show Bouvier still perform the functions for which he was bred?

Yes, I have competed with a couple Bouviers in Herding Trials. Yes, it has affected what I look for in the ring. And yes, the Bouvier can still perform many of the functions he was bred to do. He was and still is an all-round farm dog.

7. What previously campaigned Bouvier come close to your ideal? Please explain.

Ch. Avalon Frontier Sleeping Lady Webber. He had a wonderful temperament, good substance, good coat and was a very nice moving dog.

8. How does the breed in North America compare to other parts of the world?

I think there are some breeders in North America who do a very nice job of trying to improve the breed. Here

in the US, we are most definitely producing Bouviers that are equal to anywhere in the world.

9. Do you have anything else to share?

Handlers/Owners need to take the time to learn the proper way to trim a coat. The jacket is to be 2½ inches long and should be tousled.

RICK GSCHWENDER



1. In order, name the most important traits you look for in the ring.

1. Temperament equable, steady, resolute, fearless character
2. Compact, short-coupled
3. Powerfully built, strong boned, well muscled
4. Back short, broad, well muscled, firm level topline
5. Harsh double coat
6. Expression bold and alert

7. Free, bold, proud gait, reach in balance with driving power
8. Shoulder blade and humerus form angle slightly greater than 90 degrees
9. Chest broad, brisket extending to elbow
10. Proportions of skull to muzzle 3 to 2
11. Hindquarters firm, well muscled with large, powerful hams
12. Moderate angulation at the stifle
13. Scissor bite
14. Toplines of muzzle and skull parallel
15. Feet rounded, compact, toes close and well arched
16. Beard and mustache

2. In order, name the most serious faults.

1. Color chocolate brown, white, or parti-color
2. Deviating from minimum or maximum size limits
3. Undershot or overshot
4. Long-bodied
5. Skull not well developed
6. Coat too long, too short, silky, or woolly
7. Sickie or cow-hocks
8. Topline weakness
9. Slabsidedness
10. Steep shoulders
11. Slanted croup
12. Yellow or light eyes
13. Short, squatty neck
14. Upper thigh too straight or too sloping
15. Snipey muzzle
16. Ears too low or closely set

3. Which movement characteristic is most important?

Balance, being square I will forgive a little on side movement when a dog is square.

4. Which movement fault is the most serious?

Sickle and cow-hocks.

5. What 4 to 6 essential characteristics must a Bouvier have, that you look for when you judge?

Temperament, compact, substance, head in proportion to body, balanced movement and good topline.

JEANETTE NIEDER



1. In order, name the five most important traits you look for in the ring.

During my first look, I want to see a compact Bouvier with balanced and harmonious proportions including head to body with a slightly

arched neck and balance of dry, harsh top coat to undercoat. On the go around, I look for a free, proud, balanced gait with equal reach to drive. Hands on, I want a well-muscled dog with the substance being in the bone and muscle not in the weight of the dog. Skull to muzzle proportion 3:2 with parallel planes, correct set ears and a U-shaped lower jaw permitting strong white teeth in a scissors bite.

2. What, if anything, do you feel non-breeder judges get wrong about the breed?

I think non-breeder judges get more right than wrong when they judge the breed. No one can go wrong if they judge dogs and judge by the standard. If fellow judges ask my opinion, I caution them not to get caught up with size and discount a well-made dog with great breed type that may appear too small or too large compared to the competition. That could be the only dog within the standard with the others being over or under the size range. Our standard permits one to choose the best dog within the size ranges.

Don't be drawn to a tail that is carried straight up at all time. If you follow your hands down the hind leg you will probably find a straight stifle leading to a straight hock. Though set high, the tail is aligned naturally with the spine and carried upright in motion.

Get your hands into the coat. Though I love to hold a beautiful Bouvier head in my hands, I don't consider the Bouvier to be a head breed. The head—though impressive—is in proportion to the body. Often it is the mustache and beard that shapes the head making it appear larger. The Bouvier is a trotting breed. I prefer to see the

handler move the dog on a loose lead letting the head go slightly down and forward to allow a level firm topline with the foot striking under the nose when moving.

3. What do handlers do in presentation that you wish they would not?

I want handlers to show me the dog they want me to see. It's my job to find the real dog. If a dog can be shown on a loose lead without cranking up the head, you have my attention! String them up and race them around without reach or drive and I'm thinking, 'All show and no go!'

4. Cropped or uncropped ears? Do undocked tails affect judging?

Not in the show ring. Our standard states IF cropped: "... They are to be a triangular contour and in PROPORTION to the size of the head." I focus on the placement of the ear whether cropped or uncropped. As for the tail, again I quote the standard, "Tail is to be docked, leaving 2 or 3 vertebrae" and "Any deviation from this (standard) is to be penalized to the extent of the deviation". I honor the breed's traditions.

5. What traits do you see popping up these days that are going in the wrong direction? What's better?

In my opinion, work on keeping good scissor bites in the breed. Over the years the bites had improved dramatically but we need to keep them. Head proportions have improved. The most common head fault is the 50/50 head that many may consider to be impressive in scale. The back skull will be broader with a shorter, plushier muzzle. Remember the old timers described it as a "Belgian brick" (not a cobble stone).

Watch out for stuffy necks that might be a result of steep shoulders. A dog with straight shoulders and rear can appear to be balanced standing but you will see the proof in the movement. As a breeder you can work on improvement incrementally. As a judge you have to work with the dogs presented to you on the day and remember Mrs. Clark's advice to choose the soundest of the typiest dogs and then be a little bit forgiving.

6. Has your Bouvier competed in any performance events? Did that experience affect judging decisions? Can today's show Bouvier still perform the functions for which he was bred?

I believe the standard is a job description for breeds with form following function. I have tried obedience, herding, tracking, carting, barn hunt and agility (though not competitively) over the years and they have served as therapy dogs. I am an advocate for giving the Bouvier opportunities to work. The key is really the owner's time and wherewithal to commit to the performance events. I have bred dogs that have multiple titles (thank you Robbie Avery) and can do it all—thanks to their owners' understanding of the breed and commitment to the versatility of the Bouvier. And, yes I do ask myself as I judge, 'Could this dog herd? Cart? Do they have the alert, bold expression to be watchful?'

Bouvier Q&A

7. What previously campaigned Bouvier come close to your ideal? Please explain.

This is the toughest question, because I have been so fortunate to have seen many really beautiful Bouviers over the years. I can name outstanding dogs and bitches from every breeding program that shaped my interpretation of the ideal Bouvier and fear omitting a great dog and expect that a month from now, I will say, "I should have mentioned..." I will also focus on dogs that I have never judged. Each of these dogs presented as compact, moderately angled and balanced dogs standing. They moved with equal reach and drive covering ground with ease whether on or off lead. The head proportions and angles met the standard and fit the body. Where they perfect? Close enough for me.

I traveled quite a bit and was honored to see these dogs in their homes as well as in the show ring. Ch. Glenmiller's Bandit, brought me to Bill Miller for our first show dogs sired by Ch. Quiche's Gabriel (I loved to watch Gabriel move) out of Bandit's dam, Angel. This led me to their get; Ch. Glenmiller's Uranus Voltron (Risk) and Glenmiller's Uproar (Rory). These dogs trained my eye to beautiful heads, balance, proportion and easy movement. Am Ber Can Du Ch. Dayan Claudia v Hagenbeek, a Dutch import, was at his most impressive free-stacking at the end of a long lead. His front was under him showing equal length of shoulder to upper arm. His rear was balanced. The Dutch grooming style focused on a powerful front leaving more coat on the throat, shoulders and neck. I was thrilled when a dog I co-owned with Kurt and Kitty Reifert of Moondance Bouviers, Ch. Celebrant Gil-Galad de Ceara, "Cowboy" was the other Bouvier standing at the last in the middle of the ring with Dayan Claudia during a European Style completion. Cowboy took the trophy and I knew that was a hard won win with very worthy competition. Both dogs had endurance, free movement and the ability to free stack because they were sound with moderate angulation and balance. A Dayan Claudia son, Am. Can. Ch. Moondance Nigel was another dog that would take my breath away. His dam was sired by Ch. Quiche's Geoffrey, Am. Can. Ch. Laurendell's Gretel and her sister Ch. Laurendell's Gidget De Quiche were two of my favorite bitches. Their dam, Ch. Adele's Kristen kept the same balance and movement as a Veteran Bitch as she had as a youngster. Other

great bitches were Ch. Dela Baie's La Joy, Ch. Angel and the Madrone Ledge's imported and home bred bitches that remain in my mind's eye especially a bitch called Val. And that is just the early years of my involvement in the breed. During that time, "Arco" Ch. Zarco Iris vd Cerbrushof, "Arco" was another balanced, free moving dog imported by Quiche Kennels. Breeding programs of Netherlands, Belgium, Canada and the US produced the balance and proportion, reach and drive of easy bold movement with the nuances of breed type including correct head proportions and coats that formed my vision of a great Bouvier. I never saw Ch. Beaucrest Ruffian in person but his photo made me wish I had the chance to go over him.

More recently, my favorite dogs include Pat Murray's Int'l Ch Trust-Dusty V.D. Vanenblikhoeve, CGC, ROM. Watching him own the ring and then seeing him at home playing with his sons illustrated the bold, confident, yet equable temperament of the breed. He covered as much ground in the ring as he did free on his property. Again, I am focusing on dogs that I have not judged and it is only the looming deadline for this article that has me move to the next question.

8. How does the breed in North America compare to other parts of the world?

In my opinion, the North American Bouviers definitely hold their own anywhere in the world. I watched the Bouvier males enter the ring at the 2011 World Dog Show in Paris. Two dogs caught my eye, but one made me say, "That's for me!" As I checked the catalog, I found he is from a US breeding program! I also had the pleasure to meet a great Bouvier in Ireland. I attended the All Ireland Dalmatian Show and they knew the one Bouvier begin shown at that time. They assured me he would be at the Cork show the next weekend. I looked for the Bouvier, praying that there was one feature that I could praise—instead the dog filled my eye and could easily have successfully competed here in the US. Throughout the years, European, Canadian and American breeders have sought the best on both sides of the ocean to improve their breeding programs and continue to do so today.

9. What sets the Bouvier apart from the Black Russian and Giant Schnauzer?

First the origins of the Bouvier are from the Belgian Lakenois and possibly the "Grey Hound" (Irish Wolfhound)

**“THROUGHOUT THE YEARS,
EUROPEAN, CANADIAN AND AMERICAN BREEDERS HAVE
SOUGHT THE BEST ON BOTH SIDES OF THE OCEAN TO
IMPROVE THEIR BREEDING PROGRAMS...”**

Bouvier Q&A

brought by the monks to Belgian. The Giant is the largest of the Schnauzers with German Pinscher behind them. The Black Russian Terrier has the Airedale Terrier and Bouvier behind them. So the addition of the terriers does add to the apparent differences. The Bouvier is moderate with round bone dog compared to the oval bone and leaner lines of the Giant Schnauzer. The ear crop, eyebrows and beard with the longer arched neck smoothly joining the closely groomed topline accentuates those longer lines. The Giant will appear totally square with the length of the back equal to the height from the withers to the ground, length of the skull to the withers is longer giving them a more elongated neck than a Bouvier.

Compared to the larger Black Russian the Bouvier is of more compact proportions with the double coat trimmed to 2½ inches. The Black Russian carries a coat that may be as long as 6 inches. The length of the Black Russian's head is approximately the same as the length of the neck that with exact measurements given for the proportions of the back. Bouvier heads are skull to muzzle at 3:2 and in proportion to the body. The Black Russian chest may be at or below the elbow but the Bouvier's chest reaches the elbow. A Bouvier breeder asked me what I thought of her new puppy. I looked in at the puppy bitch in the crate and asked Micky when did she get her 5-month-old Black Russian puppy? The puppy clearly had the larger appearance and exact proportions of the Black Russian.

The one word to describe each breed that readily comes to my mind is Bouvier: agile, Giant Schnauzer: elegant, Black Russian: powerful.

10. Do you have anything else to share?

The Douglas Adams quote, "If you try and take a cat apart to see how it works, the first thing you have on your hands is a non-working cat" applies here. The dog is the sum of its parts and how it uses them. As you evaluate the Bouvier, step back and put the whole picture together again and ask, "Can this dog herd?"

MARIKO SAUM

1. In order, name the five most important traits you look for in the ring.

A square, powerful free moving dog, good lay back, level top line, good sized correct proportioned head.

2. What, if anything, do you feel non-breeder judges get wrong about the breed?

That size is not important, how important a level topline is to determine a correct working structure.

3. What do handlers do in presentation that you wish they would not?

Throw bait in the ring, especially when they do not pick it up.

4. Cropped or uncropped ears? Do undocked tails affect judging?

The AKC standard calls for a docked breed, I prefer cropped ears for a working breed.

5. What traits do you see popping up these days that are going in the wrong direction? What's better?

Bites are better, but the heads are becoming too narrow and the fronts too straight.

6. Has your Bouvier competed in any performance events? Did that experience affect judging decisions? Can today's show Bouvier still perform the functions for which he was bred?

Yes, all my personal Bouviers must herd and protect. I can appreciate that "form follows function". I do see many that are still built to do the jobs for which the breed originated.

7. What previously campaigned Bouvier come close to your ideal? Please explain.

GCH Jack Of Hearts des Clanmoore. He was not a large dog and had the most correct coat I have seen in a long time. He was—and still is—extremely athletic.

He required very little effort to move stock and could work all day and then some more. Absolutely gorgeous head, correct head plains and beautiful bite with full dentition. He also has a great temperament.

8. How does the breed in North America compare to other parts of the world?

Our Bouviers are a little larger than their European counterparts, but well built for the most part.

9. What sets the Bouvier apart from the Black Russian and Giant Schnauzer?

Their athleticism, more compact, yet powerful build.

10. Do you have anything else to share?

Bouviers originated as an all around farm dog, necessitating their ability to perform multiple tasks. Those tasks included, but were not limited to, herding all types of livestock, protection of livestock, persons and property and cart pulling. ■



GCH Jack Of Hearts des Clanmoore (Photo by Randy Roberts)

LIVING WITH THE BOUVIER DES FLANDRES

By Cindi Stumm & Fritz Dilsaver



Photo courtesy of Judy Casper.

The Bouvier des Flandres originates in the European region of Flandres. Their name means cow herder or cow herder from Flandres.

They were bred to be a versatile farm dog and was used to herd cattle, guard the family and the farm, pull carts, and help the farmer and the family with a multitude of tasks.

The Bouvier worked as a service dog in both World Wars. They were used as a messenger, a sentry dog, and as a search dog to locate ammunition and mines.

Bouvier loves spending time with their family and being able to go with you when you go out or just spending quiet time by your side in the house makes for a happy Bouvier. They are deeply devoted to the family and love being a part of the action.

As soon as you bring your puppy home it is important to start showing the puppy the rules and the guidelines of the household. The puppy will be calm and attentive and eager to please you. They learn very easily and tend to retain what they have learned. You need to be very consistent and be in charge while laying out the ground rules of the life of your new Bouvier. They will grow

into a much happier dog when everything is clear to them and they have a boss to follow. They like to have structure in their lives. If this is not made clear the Bouvier will make up his own rules and test you to see what he can and cannot do. Even though the Bouvier has a strong personality, they are a sensitive breed. They react better to kindness and gentle commands with confidence and leadership rather than the hard drill sergeant approach to enforce guidelines.

You have the power to mold this cute, fluffy fur ball you brought home into a bright, loyal, well-mannered, obedient adult, stable and confident!



Photo courtesy of Judy Casper.

Early socialization is very important. Exposure to as many situations, people, sights, sounds and experiences helps ensure the puppy will grow up to be a well rounded, stable adult dog

Puppy kindergarten is the first good place to start. Also inviting visitors over regularly, and taking the puppy to as many places as allows (stores, shopping centers, etc). Taking the puppy for short walks to meet the neighbors and others on the street is also good beginning training for your new puppy.

One of the wonderful traits this breed possesses is that what you teach them they remember. They are not a dog that needs repetition or refresher courses. This is true for commands and behavior.

There is a good story that proves that trait. A girl had a service dog for her MS and the dog was getting on in years and she thought she should find another puppy to bring home to start training to be her new service dog. She would have the old Bouvier train him, at the same time the owner would take him to training to teach him the tasks he would need to do to carry on when the old girl could no longer do her job or was gone. The puppy took to the training right away and seemed like he was going to be a good candidate to take over when the time was right. The trainers were very impressed with how quickly the puppy picked up on all his jobs. However, shortly after going through quite a bit of training the owner of the dog noticed that

the young dog was not following through at home. After awhile, they thought that maybe the dog would not be a good service dog after all. Then the old girl had a back problem and at 14 years old had back surgery and had a bit of difficulty at first recovering but then made a full recovery and continued her job until she could no longer do it and she past away. The young dog was there when she passed and he returned home and immediately took over as the service dog they originally thought he could be. Everyone decided he did not want to take over the old dogs job until it was necessary. But, he never forgot his commands and when he needed to do them he was right there willing and able to carry through.

**“One of the wonderful traits this breed possesses
IS THAT WHAT YOU TEACH THEM THEY REMEMBER.”**

“THEY ARE GREAT READERS AND CAN NATURALLY DETECT WHEN DANGER IS PRESENT.”

Bouvier dogs are dogs that like to think that it was their idea to do something. So you need to know your dog very well and be one step ahead of him and be creative in having your dog do what you want them to do but let them think it is their idea.

If properly socialized and a strong bond made from an early age with your Bouvier then you can be sure that your dog is learning the trait of reading situations. They are great readers and can naturally detect when danger is present. This is not something that needs to be taught.

A great example of this is a true story. A girl raised her Bouvier right by giving him lots of socialization. She took him to work with her everyday and the dog attended

meetings and traveled with her all over the country. He was always well behaved and friendly, quiet and calm. By the time the male Bouvier was 5 years old the girl gave up ever thinking that the dog would be protective. She had hoped he would be because she was single and active and wanted to be able to count on the dog if the situation came up that she needed him.

Two weeks after his 5th birthday she was on her way home from a meeting and stopped for gas. She was driving her Porsche and the dog, of course, was with her in the back seat. While she was pumping gas and washing the windshield a man came over and asked her for money. When she told him “no” he walked around

behind the pumps and came towards her from behind the car waving his fists and screaming obscenities at her and demanding money. When he came closer to the girl, the dog flew out of the window leaping at the man and used his head to the chest to push him up against the gas pump. The dog sat up close right in front of him and stared. When the man tried to get away, the dog immediately raised up on his hind legs and again butted him with his head to the chest and against the pumps. This time he sat closer with a very low growl. By that time the police arrived and walked over got the handcuffs out and the dog stepped aside letting the officer take the man away. While the officers



Photo courtesy of Judy Casper.



Photo courtesy of Judy Casper.



talked to the girl about what happened they told her how impressed they were with the dog and asked where she had had him trained? They used to work allot with the Bouviers and missed the breed. She laughed and said she had only taken him to puppy kindergarten classes.

That story shows one of the wonderful characteristics of the Bouvier. It demonstrates that the Bouvier will do whatever it takes to take care of the situation, no more and no less!

The Bouvier is a very multifunctional dog and has been used for many purposes in the lives of the people that own them. They have been used in police and military work, watchdogs and family guardians.

They have also been used as service dogs and search and rescue dogs. Their qualities can be used to participate in competitions or real life work in herding, tracking, and carting. They compete in many levels of obedience, agility and protection sports.

The Bouvier is not one for exercising himself. He will wait to go with you on a walk or out to play with him. They need regular exercise, but if you don't take him out they will be happy just laying around waiting. Once you get them out they are happy to be out to exercise.

Before making a decision to own a Bouvier it is important to talk to good, long time breeders and evaluate if you are the right owner for a Bouvier. ■

CONS

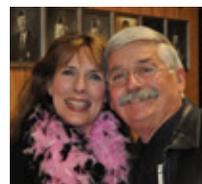
- Lots of grooming
- Things stick to the coat
- Beards get wet while drinking and they shake all over
- If you are gone to long, they may get bored and boredom can make for trouble such as digging, chewing, or barking or maybe some sort of destruction
- Without proper training and direction they will try to take over the house and may become unruly
- Needs to be exercised
- The Bouvier is a big dog and takes up space in the house and car

PROs

- Loyal
- Easy to train
- Good with children, good family dogs
- Protective
- Calm and quiet indoors
- Versatile and can be trained for almost anything
- Sensible and thinks on his own
- Good memory for commands and people
- Does not shed the way you normally think of shedding but you will find puffs of hair to pick up

BIO

Cindi Stumm and Fritz Dilsaver have been actively breeding, training and showing the Bouvier for over 40 years.



They are an AKC Breeder of Merit and use the prefix ARISTES for their two breeds the Bouviers and the Black Russian Terriers. ARISTES means Protector God of Hunter and Herdsman. They are very passionate about the breed and are always available to help anyone who may have questions or need their help of any kind. When breeding they pay special attention to temperament and health issues. They have traveled all over the world showing their dogs. Their dogs have won National specialties and Best In Shows in many countries and have won special honors over the years. They love the breed and can't imagine living without a Bouvier in their lives.

BOUVIER DES FLANDRES: From Lowly Origins

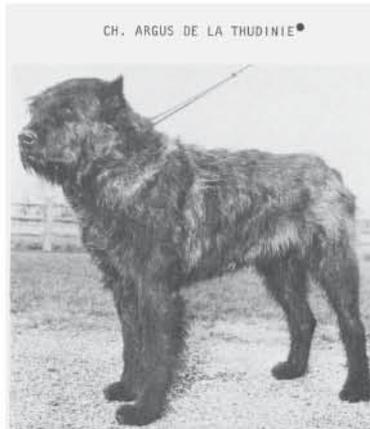
By Kevin Taylor

As late as 1927, the varieties of Bouviers listed in show catalogues of the Societe Royal St. Hubert had an asterisk indicating that they were “of too lowly an origin to find a place in the Stud Books”. (L. Huygebaert, 1943.) Although the development of working dogs in the northern European region of Flanders spans centuries, only in recent times has there been an interest in classifying regional working dogs as breeds.

Before the late nineteenth century, working dogs were known for their work. The farmers and herdsman who employed them prized their moral and physical capabilities. The “Chien de Bouvier” (meaning dog of the herdsman) is no exception.

In the region between the river Lys and the North Sea there were dogs being used as guards, drovers, draft animals and as activators for churning mills. These dogs were referred to by the work performed. There was a need for strong, capable dogs. Nineteenth century farmers were not, nor could they afford to be, sentimental about their animals. Dogs were expected to earn their keep. Those who did not were expendable. The selection process was brutal and efficient. Those of superior character and ability were cared for and bred. Those of lesser worth were discarded.

It's almost pointless to speculate about the Bouvier prior to 1894. All that can be



Ch. Argus de la Thudinie, owned by Fred and Dorothy Walsh.



A Bouvier des Flandres with a soldier.

known for certain is that the area produced rustic working dogs that began to attract the attention of enthusiasts from about the middle of the nineteenth century. In *Les Races de Chiens* by Professor Ad. Reul, a veterinary surgeon, the Bouvier is mentioned in a short article. “The cattle dog is for the most part a sheep dog, or a dog that resembles him in general make up, but who is bigger, fiercer, more aggressive and has a bolder look.”

In 1905, the 4th International Dog Show was held in France, in the city of Roubaix. It included working dogs that were listed in the control books of customs officers. While it's possible that some of these dogs are in the pedigree of the modern Bouvier, it's impossible to be certain. At this early date, pedigrees of working dogs were a matter of recollection rather than record. Also in 1905, Count Henri De Bylandt noted in his *Dogs of all*

Nations that there were French and Belgian versions of the Bouvier.

At the International in Brussels in 1910, M. Paret, a Bouvier fancier from Ghent, Belgium, exhibit Rex and Nelly. At the time, there were perhaps three basic types of Bouvier: Paret, Roulers and Bouvier d'Ardennes. The first two types finding more favor than the smaller Bouvier d'Ardennes. By this time the demand for farm and droving-type dogs was rapidly coming to an end. There was more demand for larger, more aggressive dogs for police work, as well as by the general public.

In 1912, the Roeselaershe Hondenclub, upon prodding from the veterinarian Dr. Louis Schaerlaeken, adopted a standard for the large type Roulers. Considered to be more calm and steady than the smaller sheep dog varieties, Roulers fit the type that was in demand by the public – and the breeders responded to this public demand. In France, the vice president of the Club St. Hubert of the North, M. F. Fontaine, was advocating for another Bouvier (under the name Bouvier des Flandre).

The years 1914 to 1919 saw WWI ravage Belgium and northern France. The Netherlands remained neutral and was spared the destruction that ravaged France and Belgium. Following the destruction of WWI, the Paret type was best represented by Ch. Nic de Sottegem, Dragon de la



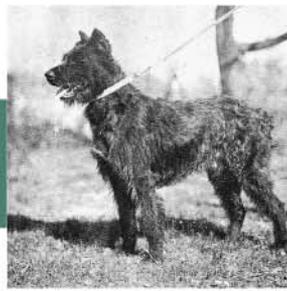
1st American bred BIS Bouvier and 1969 National Specialty BOB Ch. Madrone Ledge Socrate.



Ch. Ciscoldo appearing in a Calo Dog Food advertisement in early 50s.



Ch Marius du Clos des Cerberes
E. Bowles 1st American litter.



Ch. "Nic", c.1921.



Odelette du Posty Arlequin
BOB at the 1969 National
Specialty.

Lys, Milton and Goliath de la Lys. Nic and Milton's pedigrees are unknown. The Club de Courtrai established a standard for the Paret Bouvier and called it the Standard Domicent after Dr. Domicent who headed the investigation of specific regional working dogs. Another type of Bouvier, previously known as the Moerman, Bouvier Belge or Bouvier de Roulers, was established and referred to as the Roberfroid. At a meeting in Courtrai, Belgium, it was decided that two standards would be accepted.

In January of 1921, the Club National Belge du Bouvier des Flandres was organized. Then in Ghent in July of 1923, a comprehensive standard of the breed was written. It was called the *Standard Gevaert*; however, unlike the *Standard Roberfroid*, it admitted all colors. During this period, a type was becoming fixed...the squarely built, massive chested, powerful dog had begun to emerge.

In 1925, the first Bouvier specialty was held in Saint-Denis Westrem in Belgium. L. Van Damme judged twenty-two entries. At best, the dogs shown at the first specialty for Bouviers had pedigrees consisting of no more than three generations.

In 1926, there was an unsuccessful attempt to reconcile the two standards into one. With this failure of unification, the Bouvier des Flandre and the Bouvier de Roulers were shown in different classes according to color. Only size and color divided these two. The unfortunate result was that a Societe Royal Saint-Hubert Belgian champion could be eliminated from the show ring of Societe Central for being too big. (Working dogs of similar function exist in a variety of regions. The clubs of those regions have dogs with specific characteristics, and the clubs tend to champion their own type. This may be a color, a one-inch difference in height or anything deemed important to that club. These differences often have nothing to do with the function of the dog.)

The American Kennel Club recognized the Bouvier des Flandres as a breed in 1929, and the first two were registered in 1931. There are records showing the Bouvier was eligible for registration in 1926. The official 1929 AKC publication, *The Complete Dog Book*, contained a chapter on the Bouvier with a picture and standard. Though it wasn't until 1959 that the unified "Ghent" standard was adopted by the AKC, later to be accepted the American Bouvier des Flandre Club in 1975.

From 1936 to 1945, disaster again struck the home countries of the Bouvier when WWII seriously diminished the breed. There was a substantial loss of dogs, but the incredible destruction of the Bouvier homeland caused the breed to nearly go extinct. The dedication of Bouvier breeders (such as Justin Chastel and Felix Verbanck) saved the Bouvier from oblivion. Justin Chastel is duly revered as the father of the modern Bouvier.

George MacCullough Miller imported the first Bouviers registered in America, Hardix and Diane de Montreuil. They were registered in May of 1931 and there were no more registrations until one in 1935. It seems likely that European immigrants brought Bouvier-type dogs with them, but little is to be known of them. The first breeders in America included Mrs. C. Jaecques of Detroit. She produced at least two litters and the dogs were registered with St. Hubert in Belgium. In 1936, George W. Young, Jr. imported Bojar van Westergoo and he became the first Bouvier AKC Champion.

While some litters were whelped in America prior to 1942, the history of the Bouvier in America truly begins with the arrival of Miss Edmee Bowles in May of that year. Miss Bowles established her line of "du Clos des Cerberus" Bouviers in 1932. Driven out of Belgium by the German invasion, she had to leave most of her dogs behind. She, her mother, and a seven-year-old Bouvier named Belco arrived in America and she spent the remaining war years working in the "Dogs

for Defense" program. The first American born "du Clos des Cerberus" litter was born on September 13, 1943.

Things were not going well for the Bouvier in America during the 1940s and early 1950s. Virtually unknown in the US, almost no one would buy one and entire litters were put down. For at least the first twenty-five years of the Bouvier being recognized by the AKC, there were not enough Bouviers in this country to sustain a viable, independent breeding program. Constant European imports were required.

In 1963, a year with only 85 Bouviers registered with the AKC, the American Bouvier des Flandre club was formed. In November of 1962, Carl May Jr. and John Elliot decided that the time had come for a national club. (There had been another flirtation with starting an American national club, but it was restricted to the San Francisco area and after holding one match it faded away.) May and Elliot compiled a list of Bouvier fanciers and sent invitations to attend an organizational meeting held in conjunction with a Philadelphia show in December. Seventeen people attended. Edmee Bowles, John Elliot, Carl May Jr., Mrs. Edith Sturges O'Connor and Fred Walsh were selected to write the constitution and by-laws and get the organization on track. On February 11, 1963, after the Bouvier judging at the Westminster show was complete, a meeting was held at the Picadilly Hotel. The American Bouvier des Flandre Club was formed with 54 charter members.

The history of the Bouvier des Flandres has given it a unique soul. Courage, audacity, strength, gentleness, power and grace are attributes bred into this breed by its founders. This is a legacy to be admired whether of "lowly origin" or not. ■

BIO

Kevin Taylor is the former historian for the American Bouvier des Flandres Club and has been an owner, breeder and handler of Bouviers for over twenty years.



JUDGING THE BOUVIER DES FLANDRES

By Debra Long Gschwender

With the amount of coat the Bouvier is carrying in the ring today, and savvy grooming by the exhibitors, the judge needs to put hands on and through the coat to get a true picture of the structure of the dog.

The Bouvier from the Side

From the *Standard*, “The Bouvier des Flandres is a powerfully built, compact, short-coupled, rough-coated dog of notably rugged appearance. He gives the impression of great strength without any sign of heaviness or clumsiness in his overall makeup.”

“Compact and short-coupled” emphasizes the requirement for a square dog, with a short loin. Measurements are taken from the point of shoulder to the tip of the buttocks and the highest point of the withers to the ground. A long-bodied dog should be seriously faulted.

“Powerfully built, giving the impression of great strength, without any sign of heaviness or clumsiness” means we are looking for a dog 24½” to 27½” and a bitch 23½” to 26½”. But, the *Standard*

clearly states an ideal height for dogs is 26” and for bitches it is 25”. Dogs and bitches must be severely penalized if outside the minimum or maximum height range as required by the *Standard*, with the ideal height being rewarded. The *Standard* also calls for a dog to be “strong boned”. Strong bone refers to the density of the bone, not the amount. The *Standard* also says, “well-muscled, without any signs of heaviness or clumsiness.” The Bouvier must be light on its feet, and agile; or it runs the risk of being kicked by the cow!

While the correct coat on a Bouvier should have the proper double coat and sufficient texture and “ripples” to give the required “tousled” appearance, the style of today’s grooming for the show ring is clearly not what is described in the *Standard*.

The Bouvier from the Front

Approaching from the front or a slight angle, place your left hand under the chin of the dog. Take a few seconds to examine the nose, which should be large and black with well-flared nostrils. A brown, pink or spotted nose is a serious fault. Placing your right palm on the muzzle allows you to feel the circumference of the muzzle. A narrow,



snipey muzzle is faulty. The *Standard* calls for a “powerful jaw”.

Check the bite to make sure it is a scissors bite. Overshot or undershot bites are to be severely penalized. Two notes on the mouth: the Bouvier is not a breed accustomed to having its mouth checked for full dentition and the Bouvier, like many herding breeds, suffers from dropped front incisors.

Taking your open hand, palm down, over the stop while pushing the fall out of the eyes allows you to feel both the stop (which is “more apparent than real”) and examine the eyes (dark brown and oval with a barely visible haw) and the color of the eye rims (black). Yellow or light eyes are to be strongly penalized along with a walleyed or staring expression. Continue sliding your open palm to the back skull. At this point, you are able to not only see the ratio of muzzle to back skull (2 to 3), but feel the width and length of the back skull (flat, slightly longer than wide, wide between the eyes). Take the time to check the ear placement, which should be high. Too low or too closely set are faults. Ears can be cropped or natural. The crop of the ear will affect the appearance of the head; the grooming style of the head will affect the appearance of the head.

Bottom line: Use your hands! On natural ears, the fold of the ear should be even with the top of the skull and ears should set close to the side of the head. Please remember, there are two different

“From the Standard, “The Bouvier des Flandres is a powerfully built, compact, short-coupled, rough-coated dog of notably rugged appearance.

HE GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF GREAT STRENGTH WITHOUT ANY SIGN OF HEAVINESS OR CLUMSINESS IN HIS OVERALL MAKEUP.”

styles of heads and possibly a combination of the two styles out there, but as long as the proportions are correct and the head fits the dog, it is correct!

Step to the Side of the Dog

Laying your right hand on the withers gives you the opportunity to check the length of the neck. A short, squatty neck is faulty. Then, run your left hand down the shoulder blade to check the relatively long, muscular, but not loaded shoulder. It should have good layback. "The shoulder blade and humerus are approximately the same length, forming an angle slightly greater than 90 degrees when standing. Steep shoulders are faulty." Continue on to the elbows, which should be close to the body. Elbows that are too far out or in are faults.

Check the depth of chest (brisket to the elbow) and run your hands over the sides of the dog, checking for well sprung ribs. Flat ribs or slab sidedness is to be strongly penalized. Stepping even further back along the dog allows you to check the loin (Flanks and loins are short, wide and well muscled, without weakness.).

The loin is short; that is what the *Standard* says. Please, do not reward a dog that moves better (in your mind) because it has a long loin. A long loin is functionally not sound in any dog. It shouldn't even have a long ribcage. Remember, a long-bodied dog should be seriously faulted.

Step to the Hindquarters

Laying your palm in front of the tail and on the pelvic bone gives you the ability to feel the croup. A sunken or slanted croup is a serious fault. "The horizontal line of the back should mold unnoticeably into the curve of the rump, which is characteristically wide." At the same time you can feel and see the required high tail set of the dog. The *Standard* is specific on the tail, "Tail is to be docked, leaving 2

or 3 vertebrae; preferably carried upright in motion. Dogs born tailless should not be penalized." A note on tail carriage: tail carriage has to do with the confidence of the dog and as long as the dog is not tucking the tail, don't get hung up on the position of the tail.

Now run your hand or hands down to check the hams, which should be "firm, well muscled, large and powerful. The thighs are to be wide and muscular. There is moderate angulation at the stifle. Hocks strong, rather close to the ground. When standing and seen from the rear, they will be straight and perfectly parallel to each other. There is a slight angulation at the hock joint."

This is especially important: the Bouvier is a dog with "moderate angulation" at both the stifle and the hock joint. The entire time you are running your hands over the dog, you should be feeling the coat texture. The *Standard* says, "the outer hairs are rough and harsh (this is not a terrier coat) with the undercoat being fine, soft and dense. Together with the topcoat, it will form a water-resistant covering. A coat too long or too short is a fault, as is a silky or woolly coat. It is tousled without being curly. A flat coat, denoting lack of undercoat is a serious fault. Topcoat must be harsh to the touch, dry, trimmed, if necessary, to a length of 2½."

No, the Bouvier in the show ring today does not look like, nor have the same amount or even the same kind of coat of the Bouvier of the 1960s, when the American *Standard* was written, but it is not groomed like it was back then either.

Key Points to Remember

1. The Bouvier does NOT shed. The hair (hair, not fur) grows continuously. If it is not combed to the skin, it mats. If it is not cut, it will continue to grow.

2. While the *Standard* calls for rough-coated ears, you almost never see that today. The eyes are almost always veiled with the fall, even though the *Standard* says otherwise.

3. The Bouvier is mostly owner-handled and owner-groomed. Some people do it better than others. East coast grooming is different than West coast grooming.

4. There are two (or more) kinds of coat out there. The old-fashioned coat is truly tousled and less harsh. If you scissor this kind of coat, it is very noticeable for a long time. Then there is the really harsh (almost wiry) coat that may or may not have enough undercoat to make it correct. This is what most people think of as the correct coat, it's not – because while you want a harsh coat, you don't want a wiry coat. This coat is very easy to scissor, which is why it is so popular with the people who like to scissor the coat. What makes the coat waterproof is the correct balance of undercoat and the harsh guard hairs.

5. Most people do not bathe the jacket of the dog before a show, because it becomes open and softer. We do bathe the beard, belly and legs of the dog. However, at some point, the jacket must be bathed, and then you have approximately six weeks before the coat feels correct again.

6. The *Standard* does not tell the exhibitor how to cut off the hair. It doesn't say it has to be hand stripped. It doesn't say you can't use scissors or even a blade on a clipper. It just says the jacket is to be a length of 2½". However, it does say, "Overtrimming which alters the natural rugged appearance is to be avoided." If a judge feels the dog is overly groomed, tell the handler. But remember, if the dog has the proper coat texture, and the proper structure and movement, that is truly more important than how the exhibitor chose to groom the dog.

"If a judge feels the dog is overly groomed, tell the handler. But remember,
IF THE DOG HAS THE PROPER COAT TEXTURE, AND
THE PROPER STRUCTURE AND MOVEMENT,
that is truly more important than how the exhibitor chose to groom the dog."

“The whole of the Bouvier des Flandres must be
HARMONIOUSLY PROPORTIONED TO ALLOW FOR A
FREE, BOLD AND PROUD GAIT.”

Coat

The coat texture is influenced by the amount of crisp guard hairs in proportion to the soft undercoat. If the exhibitor does not keep the proper amount of undercoat, it will choke out the guard hairs and the coat is softer. This is a continuous process. Very few people now in the Bouvier community hand strip a coat or know how to roll a coat. This is probably the only way to maintain a show coat over a long period of time. Exhibitors also groom to hide faults. Leaving more hair in front of the tail hides a low tail set.

Leaving more hair on the neck and bringing it further into the body of the dog hides a long-backed dog and gives the dog the appearance of a better layback of shoulder. By bringing the hair from the rear legs further forward on the body, you can hide a long loin/long backed dog. I can go on and on. This is a breed that you MUST put your hands on and through the coat or you will be judging appearances and not structure.

Color

“From fawn to black, passing through salt and pepper, gray and brindle. A small white star on the chest is allowed. Other than chocolate brown, white or parti-color, which are to be severely penalized, no one color is to be favored.”

A parti-color dog is a black or gray dog marked with the tan markings on the same places that a Doberman or Rottweiler has their tan markings. The AKC defines fawn as “brown, red-yellow with a hue of medium brilliance.” Regardless of the coat color of the dog, the eye color is dark brown and the pigmentation is black. Obviously, white splashes and white stripes on the chest are not “a small white star”, but it is not listed as a fault in the *Standard* either.

Movement

“The whole of the Bouvier des Flandres must be harmoniously proportioned to allow for a free, bold and proud gait. The reach of the forequarters must compensate for and be in balance with the driving power of the hindquarters. The back, while moving at a trot, will remain firm and flat. In general, the gait is the logical demonstration of the structure and build of the dog. It is to be noted that while moving at a fast trot, the properly built Bouvier will tend to single track.”

When moving, the head and neck of the Bouvier want to be an extension of the level top line, so it truly should be carried forward, not upright. The Bouvier is a square breed with a flat croup. It should move with the moderate reach and drive of a square breed. This is a breed that was designed to work. Any movement fault, whether it is seen in the down and back

or the side gait, detracts from the working ability of the dog.

Temperament

“The Bouvier is an equable dog, steady, resolute and fearless. Viciousness or shyness is undesirable.” This is a breed that really doesn’t like to stand still, or should I say, be made to stand still. They will grind their teeth. It’s also not a breed that is always thrilled to have strangers touching them. Do not touch a Bouvier from behind, without first going back to the head. That being said, there is absolutely no reason for a dog not to allow a judge to go over it and still be allowed in the ring. Bouvier owners know, or should know, that the breed needs a lot of socialization from an early age. ■

The American Bouvier des Flandres National Specialty and the Bouvier des Flandres Club of SE Michigan Regional Specialty is being held at Sawmill Creek Resort in Huron, Ohio on October 16-20, 2012. More information on the Specialty, judges education or the Illustrated Standard can be found at www.bouvier.org.

BIO

Debra Gschwender has owned Bouviers since the early 1980s and judges the entire Herding Group. She is past chair of the judges education committee and is the show chair for the 2012 National Specialty.

“The Bouvier des Flandres is an equable dog,
STEADY, RESOLUTE AND FEARLESS.”

Living with a Bouvier Des Flandres

By Lisa Rodier

American Bouvier des Flandres Club

Photos courtesy of L. Rodier and L. Murrer.

Step into a house where an appropriately tempered Bouvier lives and chances are you'll be greeted right away by a large, hairy, possibly unkempt, beast. He'll size you up, maybe take a stand between you and his guardian, then excuse himself to a corner of the room once he's made your acquaintance. Lest you think that you're safe, think again. While the Bouvier might appear to be snoozing, he has one eye on you the entire time you're in his presence. Don't pose a threat, and you'll be fine... he's not seeking a confrontation. But step out of line, and you could be surprised by his seemingly sudden intensity.

The Bouvier des Flandres was bred to be a protector and he takes his job seriously. The Bouvier's intensity and intention are characteristics that can catch first time Bouvier owners off guard, particularly those who have been lulled into a false sense of comfort by his teddy bear good looks and apparent easy going nature.

The Bouvier's temperament, grooming and exercise requirements make the breed often unsuitable for unprepared first time Bouvier or novice dog owners. The American Bouvier Rescue League (ABRL), the rescue arm of the American Bouvier des Flandres Club (ABdFC), takes in close to

100 Bouviers every year, many of whom come from individuals ill-equipped to deal with what the breed offers and requires.

Grooming

Some individuals come to the breed because of the Bouvier's striking appearance, coupled with the fact that the breed has been billed erroneously as "hypo-allergenic." Alas, wherever the Bouvier goes outdoors, he will bring a little bit back with him, indoors. Pine straw, bark, weeds, grass – you name it – the Bouvier beard, leg furnishings and body do a fabulous job of picking up outdoor debris, and an equally fabulous job of depositing it inside the house. Because dust, dirt, pollen and vegetation so easily cling to the Bouvier, this can create a problem for individuals having allergies. So buyer beware: the Bouvier is not a hypo-allergenic dog! While it is true that the Bouvier does not have a coat that sheds copiously, many a Bouvier owner will attest to finding Bouvier dust bunnies around the house. This happens, in particular, when one becomes lax on the weekly grooming sessions needed to keep the Bouvier's coat in manageable shape. Bouviers repeatedly arrive in rescue in sore need of grooming, and require a close-to-skin shave because of the severe,



painful matting and even dreadlock-type growth that can occur with neglect. Without regular attention to brushing and combing, mats form fiercely and quickly. And while most Bouvier owners invest in a set of grooming tools for home use, regular trims by a professional groomer should be figured into the budget, too – or the willingness to invest in a good pair of clippers and the knowledge to clip the Bouvier at home.

Temperament

Those who love the breed have come to appreciate the Bouvier for his temperament and physical ability: highly intelligent, fiercely loyal, protective, aloof and stubborn with a dry sense of humor. He is certain that he is at least as smart as, but most times smarter than, any of the two-legged beings that share his world – and all packaged in a large, yet surprisingly fast and agile body. One must remember that the Bouvier's origins are traced back to cattle and farm dogs of the Flandres region of Belgium; the breed was developed as a working dog to serve as protector and herder. As a result, the Bouvier is a prime example of a dog that, if not given a job of his own, will soon create one of his own – and more likely than not, it's not quite the job description that his human had in mind – for example, herding boisterous small children by nipping at pant legs and behinds. The Bouvier, too, is a capable hunter with a strong chase instinct.



Wildlife and cats are at the unsupervised Bouvier's mercy.

Those characteristics of the Bouvier that draw us in can quickly become serious liabilities without proper and intensive socialization and training. The Bouvier unexposed at a young age to the sights, sounds and people in the world around him can become fear aggressive, overprotective, uncertain, and unhealthily suspicious. Coupled with the breed's size and quickness, the results can be disastrous. An untrained, unsocialized Bouvier with a strong protective background can become a danger to those around him; sadly, this is an all-too-familiar scenario seen by Bouvier rescue. In rescue, Boviervs are relinquished for any number of reasons including mis-directed herding behavior, killing small animals, inappropriate



guarding, and fear aggression. Relegating a dog like this – or any Bouvier – to the backyard to live a life of solitude is a cruel solution to dealing with the Bouvier's often-challenging temperament.

Exercise & Training

The Bouvier is a house dog; the typical Bouvier is most at ease when he is around his human flock, rather than sequestered in a backyard or elsewhere alone. The Bouvier is also happiest – and most easily managed – when his body and his brain are engaged. Because of the Bouvier's intelligence and obstinacy, most in the breed have found success using positive, rather than physically punitive, methods of training. While some trainers still instruct clients to “dominate” their dogs, trying to do so with a Bouvier might lead to an impasse or worse. Trying to force a Bouvier to do anything often nets nothing; instead, convincing the Bouvier that what you want him to do was his idea all along usually leads to success. Nonetheless, the Bouvier is not a dog for a pushover: the Bouvier owner needs to be firm and clear in his or her requests, confident, and most of all, consistent, to get results.

The Bouvier requires regular physical and mental exercise to live successfully as a member of a household. The breed is not self-exercising; those with ample fenced yards who turn a Bouvier loose to exercise himself will, more often than not, peek outside to see a Bouvier standing at the doorstep or taking a snooze on the porch.

Instead, regular exercise – leash walks, hikes, interactive play, swimming – with



their people burns energy and calories. And exercising the Bouvier's brain is just as important. Engaging in training in dog sports such as herding, carting, agility, scent work, tracking, rally obedience, therapy dog, Schutzhund, flyball, weight pull and obedience (just to name a few) are recommended. The Bouvier likes variety; repetitive activities such as drilling “sits” and “downs” ad nauseum should be avoided unless the trainer wishes to see the poster child for passive-aggressive behavior come to life. Instead, engage the Bouvier with the fun and challenge of clicker training, puzzle games, hide and seek, find it games or any activity that requires him to use his brain.

Along with socialization as a puppy, basic training of manners is not optional and should be on-going for the Bouvier's life. Early skills should include proper greeting behavior, impulse control and recalls, along with the basics.

Living in harmony with a Bouvier requires patience, dedication and a significant time investment. For those who love the breed and are willing to persevere, living with our Bouvier is an experience that we'd not trade for any other. ■

BIO

Lisa Rodier is a volunteer with the American Bouvier Rescue League and a member of the American Bouvier des Flandres Club. She is an ABdFC carting judge, a Certified Nose Work Instructor and an AKC CGC evaluator. Lisa has participated in a variety of activities and dog sports with her Boviervs.



BOUVIER DES FLANDRES

COURTESY THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

General Appearance: The Bouvier des Flandres is a powerfully built, compact, short-coupled, rough-coated dog of notably rugged appearance. He gives the impression of great strength without any sign of heaviness or clumsiness in his overall makeup. He is agile, spirited and bold, yet his serene, well behaved disposition denotes his steady, resolute and fearless character. His gaze is alert and brilliant, depicting his intelligence, vigor and daring. By nature he is an equable dog. His origin is that of a cattle herder and general farmer's helper, including cart pulling. He is an ideal farm dog. His harsh double coat protects him in all weather, enabling him to perform the most arduous tasks. He has been used as an ambulance and messenger dog. Modern times find him as a watch and guard dog as well as a family friend, guardian and protector. His physical and mental characteristics and deportment, coupled with his olfactory abilities, his intelligence and initiative enable him to also perform as a tracking dog and a guide dog for the blind. The following description is that of the ideal Bouvier des Flandres. Any deviation from this is to be penalized to the extent of the deviation.

Size, Proportion, Substance: Size - The height as measured at the withers: Dogs, from 24½ to 27½ inches; bitches, from 23½ to 26½ inches. In each sex, the ideal height is the median of the two limits, i.e., 26 inches for a dog and 25 inches for a bitch. Any dog or bitch deviating from the minimum or maximum limits mentioned shall be severely penalized. Proportion - The length from the point of the shoulder to the tip of the buttocks is equal to the height from the ground to the highest point of the withers. A long-bodied dog should be seriously faulted. Substance - Powerfully built, strong boned, well muscled, without any sign of heaviness or clumsiness.

Head: The head is impressive in scale, accentuated by beard and mustache. It is in proportion to body and build. The expression is bold and alert. Eyes neither protrude nor are sunken in the sockets. Their shape is oval with the axis on the horizontal plane, when viewed from the front. Their color is a dark brown. The eye rims are black without lack of pigment and the haw is barely visible. Yellow or light eyes are to be strongly penalized, along with a walleied or staring expression. Ears placed high and alert. If cropped, they are to be a triangular contour and in proportion to the size of the head. The inner corner of the ear should be in line with the outer corner of the eye. Ears that are too low

or too closely set are serious faults. Skull well developed and flat, slightly less wide than long. When viewed from the side, the top lines of the skull and the muzzle are parallel. It is wide between the ears, with the frontal groove barely marked. The stop is more apparent than real, due to upstanding eyebrows. The proportions of length of skull to length of muzzle are 3 to 2. Muzzle broad, strong, well filled out, tapering gradually toward the nose without ever becoming snipy or pointed. A narrow, snipy muzzle is faulty. Nose large, black, well developed, round at the edges, with flared nostrils. A brown, pink or spotted nose is a serious fault. The cheeks are flat and lean, with the lips being dry and tight fitting. The jaws are powerful and of equal length. The teeth are strong, white and healthy, with the incisors meeting in a scissors bite. Overshot or undershot bites are to be severely penalized.



Neck, Topline, and Body: The neck is strong and muscular, widening gradually into the shoulders. When viewed from the side, it is gracefully arched with proud carriage. A short, squatty neck is faulty. No dewlap. Back short, broad, well muscled with firm level topline. It is supple and flexible with no sign of weakness. Body or trunk powerful, broad and short. The chest

is broad, with the brisket extending to the elbow in depth. The ribs are deep and well sprung. The first ribs are slightly curved, the others well sprung and very well sloped nearing the rear, giving proper depth to the chest. Flat ribs or slabsidedness is to be strongly penalized. Flanks and loins short, wide and well muscled, without weakness. The abdomen is only slightly tucked up. The horizontal line of the back should mold unnoticeably into the curve of the rump, which is characteristically wide. A sunken or slanted croup is a serious fault. Tail is to be docked, leaving 2 or 3 vertebrae. It must be set high and align normally with the spinal column. Preferably carried upright in motion. Dogs born tailless should not be penalized.

Forequarters: Strong boned, well muscled and straight. The shoulders are relatively long, muscular but not loaded, with good layback. The shoulder blade and humerus are approximately the same length, forming an angle slightly greater than 90 degrees when standing. Steep shoulders are faulty. Elbows close to the body and parallel. Elbows which are too far out or in are faults. Forearms viewed either in profile or from the front are perfectly straight, parallel to each other and perpendicular to the ground. They

Official Standard for the

BOUVIER DES FLANDRES

CONTINUED

are well muscled and strong boned. Carpus exactly in line with the forearms. Strong boned. Pasterns quite short, slightly sloped. Dewclaws may be removed. Both forefeet and hind feet are rounded and compact turning neither in nor out; the toes close and well arched; strong black nails; thick tough pads.

Hindquarters: Firm, well muscled with large, powerful hams. They should be parallel with the front legs when viewed from either front or rear. Legs moderately long, well muscled, neither too straight nor too inclined. Thighs wide and muscular. The upper thigh must be neither too straight nor too sloping. There is moderate angulation at the stifle. Hocks strong, rather close to the ground. When standing and seen from the rear, they will be straight and perfectly parallel to each other. In motion, they must turn neither in nor out. There is a slight angulation at the hock joint. Sickle or cow-hocks are serious faults. Metatarsi hardy and lean, rather cylindrical and perpendicular to the ground when standing. If born with dewclaws, they are to be removed. Feet as in front.

Coat: A tousled, double coat capable of withstanding the hardest work in the most inclement weather. The outer hairs are rough and harsh, with the undercoat being fine, soft and dense. The coat may be trimmed slightly only to accent the body line. Overtrimming which alters the natural rugged appearance is to be avoided. Topcoat must be harsh to the touch, dry, trimmed, if necessary, to a length of approximately 2½ inches. A coat too long or too short is a fault, as is a silky or woolly coat. It is tousled without being curly. On the skull, it is short, and on the upper part of the back, it is particularly close and harsh always, however, remaining rough. Ears are rough-coated. Undercoat a dense mass of fine, close hair, thicker in winter. Together with the topcoat, it will form a water-resistant covering. A flat coat, denoting lack of undercoat is a serious fault. Mustache and beard very thick, with the hair being shorter and rougher on the upper side of the muzzle. The upper lip with its heavy mustache and the chin with its heavy and rough beard give that gruff expression so characteristic of the breed. Eyebrows, erect hairs accentuating the shape of the eyes without ever veiling them.

Color: From fawn to black, passing through salt and pepper, gray and brindle. A small white star on the chest is

allowed. Other than chocolate brown, white, or parti-color, which are to be severely penalized, no one color is to be favored.

Gait: The whole of the Bouvier des Flandres must be harmoniously proportioned to allow for a free, bold and proud gait. The reach of the forequarters must compensate for and be in balance with the driving power of the hindquarters. The back, while moving in a trot, will remain firm and flat. In general, the gait is the logical demonstration of the structure and build of the dog. It is to be noted that while moving at a fast trot, the properly built Bouvier will tend to single-track.

Temperament: The Bouvier is an equable dog, steady, resolute and fearless. Viciousness or shyness is undesirable.



**Approved January 10, 2000
Effective February 23, 2000**

