

## **Judge Denise Flaim's Critique East Coast Silken Windhound Specialty November 2019**

I would like to thank the club for inviting me to judge your International Silken Windhound Association show on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, as well as the members and exhibitors who brought me such a quality entry.

I was asked to provide some comments on the day's judging, which I am pleased to do.

When judging any breed, the standard is the first and most important source of guidance. But the standard alone is not sufficient. Just as importantly, a judge needs to understand how to prioritize the various elements laid out in that document.

After studying your standard and researching the various styles and types of dogs that exist in your nascent breed, I determined that what I was looking for was a small- to medium-sized, elegant, coated Sighthound with much the same make as a Whippet, but with a bit more scope and less density of form; and a head that was much more Borzoi in its relative narrowness and detailing, right down to the prominent veining on the face.

It was helpful that I judge both Whippets and Borzoi, as both breeds were involved in the development of the Silken Windhound, along with, it would seem, some herding-dog contribution. The challenge for breeders, then, is to prevent the "drag" from any of those founding breeds to overtake their breeding efforts. So what I set out to find were dogs that retained the basic format of the Whippet, in some cases with a bit more height, overlaid with the furnishings, long lean head and a dose of the exotic elegance of the Borzoi. All my final winners fit this description.

The Silken Windhounds who have too much Borzoi influence are perhaps the easiest to spot, as they are oversized, and at first glance could be mistaken for a Borzoi puppy. Though there are no disqualifications for size in the Silken Windhound standard as there are for Whippets, nonetheless we do not want exhibits to exceed the standard's clear description of "small to medium" and spill over into "medium-large" territory. Some of these dogs were lovely movers, but because their type wandered too far into Borzoi territory, they did not progress to the final ribbons.

More prevalent in the entry were dogs of what I would call Collie or Sheltie type. Often well coated (perhaps arguably even too much so), these dogs were often very easy movers but noticeably flat backed. Some subtly evoked Sheltie type with heads that tended to be a bit wedgier and lacking in chiseling, and ears that pricked even when not being baited.

While I am a stickler for soundness on the move, I sometimes had to pass up some very well-made and sound-moving Silken Windhounds that in my opinion veered a bit too much into Sheltie type in favor of dogs with the correct outline and elegance, even if their movement left a little bit to be desired.

Prevalent faults that I believe breeders need to pay attention to include ewe necks; empty, cathedral fronts; overly steep croups, weak rears that lack drive, and fronts displaying hackneyed and wasted motion.

Thank you again for the opportunity to judge your dogs. I will be watching the Silken Windhound's progression as breeders continue the challenging but rewarding work of stabilizing and standardizing your young breed. – **Denise Flaim**

## **Sweepstakes ECSW 11.1.19**

I was delighted to judge the ECSW Specialty sweepstakes on 11.1.19

Even though it was cold and windy the entrants were frisky and lively.

Each class had quality entries. I was most impressed with how friendly and sweet all were besides their beauty.

The 12 to 15 month bitch captivated me as soon as she entered the ring. Well muscled in great condition she moved effortlessly wasting no effort. She was clean down and back with an athletic outline. Her expression was soft, her ears very fine and were well-positioned. # 44 was Best In Sweeps.

BOS was the 12 and under 18 puppy male. Sporting a vibrant red brindle coat he was pleasing to the eye. He moved without effort on the side and was clean down and back. In many ways he matched the Best in Sweeps.

It was lovely to see the great veterans in Sweepstakes!

What a testament to the breeders to see such soundness, condition and type. Your eyes couldn't help but tear up at how beautiful each one was.

Best in "Vets" Sweeps came from the 7 and under 10 class. What a showman and picture he made. Sporting a wonderful male coat with great type, being sound in every way. He was light on his feet and clean down and back with beautiful expression.

Best of Op was 7 and under 10

This very youthful looking gal was very pretty in great condition. I found out she was the Grand-dam to the Best in Sweeps puppy.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to judge your lovely Silken Windhounds. I enjoyed having lunch afterwards with the exhibitors and club members!

Carol Kubiak-Zamora