

Firstly, I would like to thank the Club for the opportunity to judge this wonderful entry. I have a great interest in the breed and certainly enjoyed the appointment. It was great to judge quality dogs, and work out my priorities when determining the placings in quality classes.

Thanks very much to the Club for their arrangements and Gwen Hovey for her job as Show Manager. My steward, Sue Jape, kept exhibitors organized and ready to go. I am sorry that I was on a 4pm flight, which made the end of the day a bit rushed, but I was determined to spend my time sorting and evaluating the dogs ... but missed the chance to speak with exhibitors at the conclusion of judging.

Congratulations to the Club on a wonderful day, with an outstanding array of trophies. It certainly was impressive!

I want to congratulate exhibitors on their sportsmanship and presentation of the exhibits. Exhibitors were polite, friendly and accommodating of my instructions in the ring. Generally the dogs were presented in spotless condition. It was a warm day, and exhibitors managed to give their dogs shade when necessary, but be back in the right place at the right time. Generally, the dogs were well trained and socialized, thus giving themselves the best chance of presenting to their very best.

Overall, I was fairly pleased with the quality, and the breed can certainly hold its own. For me, it was great to see evidence of mainly very happy, easy temperaments, which is very important in a breed such as this. There were many exhibits that had smiling expressions and tails that never stopped wagging, and I believe this is testament that breeders are focusing on the right priorities in their breeding programs. There were, however, a few shy ones, which is certainly uncharacteristic of this breed.

I did not find all classes easy, and there was continual weighing up of my priorities, the hallmarks of the breed, and consideration for the breed's function. In some classes there were clear winners, and in others it was very difficult to sort them out according to the criteria I was using. I tried to be absolute in my quest to find dogs with plenty of leg under them, partnered with good reach and drive. I was looking for dogs that then finished the picture off with a typical head and expression, correct tail set and carriage, and of course correct bites.

I will start by mentioning the wicketing. Obviously size is a controversial and topical subject in Amstaffs. Size is part of the standard for the breed, and must be considered along with other breed characteristics.

Personally, I found it very difficult to find what I wanted within size limits, and my approach on the day was to use the wicketed size for two purposes – to estimate the size reasonably accurately of all dogs in the lineup, and to evaluate exhibits accurately. I want to emphasize here that size was one of my criteria, but not the only criteria, but certainly an important point that needed careful consideration in the determination of the placing of the best examples of the breed in the class. As I found that most entries measured right at the top of the standard for their gender, or over, I tried to keep placings within an inch or so of the top of the standard where possible, and in most cases I achieved this goal.

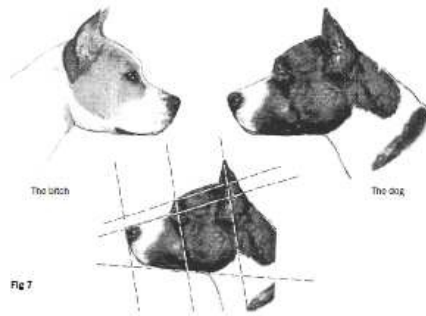
There were many positive points I found on the day:

- Temperaments, as mentioned above
- In general, movement was quite good, although of course the dogs with better angles demonstrated more fluent gait with more typical reach and drive.
- Heads did vary, but there were lots of reasonable ones, and quite a few very good ones.
- Overall, substance was usually good, and there were only a minority of exhibits lacking the necessary strength and bone.

I think, to explain some of my decisions, I should also add a little about the Amstaff head here. If some exhibitors/breeders have not yet read the Extended Breed Standard (found at http://www.ankc.org.au/_uploads/docs/234553American_Staffordshire_Terrier_BSE.pdf , or by accessing the ANKC website and clicking on breed standards) then I think this is a really good idea as it contains detailed explanation of many breed points and features.

The Amstaff head is not easy to grasp at first. Although the standard calls for very pronounced cheek muscles, I believe it is not asking for bulbous cheeks on the outside of the head, but rather great strength, depth and musculature in the cheek region and the difference can be hard to determine without experience.

I found some of the heads to be longer overall than my ideal. While maintaining strength, the extended standard is clear on the necessary head planes, as illustrated in the below diagrams.



ABOVE: Diagram of head shape, balance and planes from extended Breed Standard

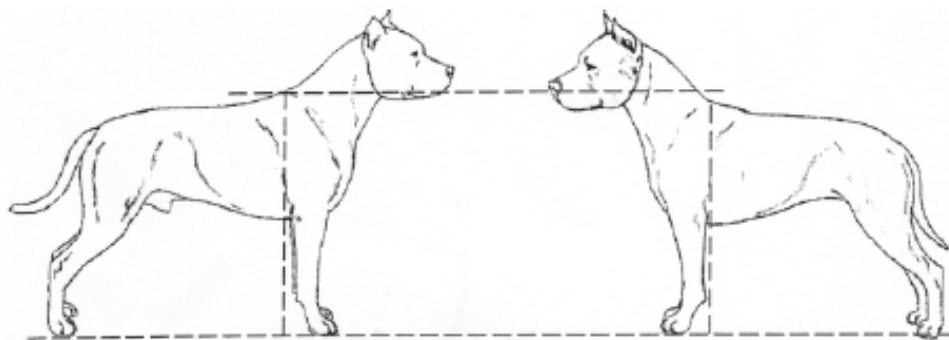
The planes are clearly illustrated here. Parallel skull and top of muzzle planes are important. From the side, the head and muzzle top planes should be near parallel and there should be a convergence of top and bottom head planes as one moves toward the front. You may have seen me looking at each head from the side to determine these.

I still believe that the Amstaff head needs to exhibit strength, but with refinement, to make it a beautiful typical picture. Clean, strong heads, with just some wrinkled alertness on the skull, set off with correct ears, will create the ideal picture. I found my BIS show bitch to have a beautiful head and expression, and you will see through my critique where I also found other very nice heads in my place getters.

There were also areas of concern generally for me:

- Balance is certainly an issue, and quite a number of exhibits were too long for what I was looking for. Similarly, I believe that the breed, considering its function, needs plenty of leg under the body, and I found quite a number of exhibits lacking in this area.

Generally, if you have a look at my class winners, you will see the balance I was looking for, and I think this is typified in the examples used in the ANKC extended breed standard (see below diagrams). I believe it is VERY important to adhere to the correct breed proportions (this had nothing to do with actual height, but rather height to length proportions) as in my opinion long and/or low Amstaffs are untypical.



ABOVE: Amstaff balance as illustrated in the Extended Breed Standard



ABOVE: The balance and top line of the BIS winner

- Bites were surprising to me. I had expected to find almost all dogs having a scissor bite, whereas in reality there were quite a number of undershot and pincer/level bites. A scissor bite is far healthier than a level bite in a dog such as this – otherwise teeth tend to rub against each other and incisors tend to eventually grind down a little.

Undershot bites are completely intolerable for me. As spectators, you will not have realized the Bites of the

exhibits, and may not have been aware why I might have left out an exhibit that may otherwise have been placed higher in the class. There was one class in particular where there were at least three poor bites. As breeders, I believe you should give this occurrence due consideration in your breeding programs.

· Ears – the standard calls for “*Set high. Ears should be short and held rose or half pricked. Full drop to be penalized*”. I found quite a number of dogs with full drop ears, or one full dropped ear, and this mars the beautiful, characteristic, Amstaff expression. The standard is not really specific on fully erect ears, but I did penalize these to an extent, as in my opinion they also affect the overall expression. However, you may have noticed on some occasions dogs with less than ideal ears did gain placings ... and this relates to my criteria. I would certainly prefer a correctly proportioned, sound Amstaff with a poor ear, rather than a long, low bodied one, or an unsound one, with good ears.

· Top lines and tail sets were also a concern. The diagram above demonstrates the correct Amstaff top line - “*slightly sloping from withers to rump with gentle short slope at rump to base of tail*”, and this helps us maintain the correct tail set and carriage – “*not curled or held over back*”.

Unfortunately I found many untypical top lines that marred the overall outline of the exhibit. Most exhibits possessed no slope from withers to rump, and often there was no slope to the croup, and in some cases the hindquarters were higher than the wither. It is a good idea for exhibitors and breeders to view their dogs on the move and look closely at the top line ... and evaluate how it adheres to the standard. In my opinion, the Best in Show winning bitch, among her other attributes, demonstrated a very typical top line, from withers to croup, and over the croup.

My awards, and subsequent comments, are based on my observations on one day in the development of these exhibits. Obviously interpretation of the standard is sometimes subjective, but each and every exhibit was given detailed consideration and evaluated according to my interpretation of the standard.

I do not believe in writing a “padded critique” full of niceties ... but would much rather present you with a constructive discussion of my placements, and the basic reasoning behind them. This is certainly meant to be a positive discussion, and not to offend anyone. I hope that you can all read the below comments with that idea in your minds!

It is also worth noting that these are just my observations on the day, and my interpretation of the standard. Other judges will have different observations and interpretations, and realistically that is what makes a dog show – as if the same dogs continually won, many others would not come along.

However, I believe we can all learn by listening to judges’ reasoning for their placements, and even if we disagree, and sometimes we will, but honest, well thought through reasoning’s may provide some interesting points for future thought and consideration.

Congratulations to all the winners, and best wishes for all future ring and breeding pursuits to all exhibitors and breeders.

Andrew Burt

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Class 1 Baby Puppy Dog

4 entered 2 absent

1 Attomoy Supercharged

3.5 month old baby of reasonable type. A little soft in top line at this stage. Pleasing head but expression marred a little with the third eyelid. Almost enough length of leg. Moved nicely

2 Blueskystafs Double Trouble

Quite a substantial pup with plenty of body and bone, and quite a large, solid head. Whereas the pup ahead of him might have been just slightly long in balance, this pup was a little too square for me at this stage of his development. Angulation fore and aft less than the winner. I was not keen on the kinks in his tail.

Class 2 Minor Puppy Dog

3 entered

1 Koroneos Joiles Bugga Boy

Typical, well balanced pup, moderate in all ways, with correct angulation fore and aft. Well boned with good substance right through. Pleasing head properties, dark eyes, but at this stage, but slightly marred by the drop ears – hopefully they will correct themselves in the future. Moved around very well, but just slightly high over the loins on the move. However, there was a lot to like about this pup and his overall construction.

2 Amseraphs The Real Deal

Nice style of dog, but taller and leggier than the winner. Excellent head and expression. Needs more angulation in front and top line raised over the rump. Tail was also longer than standard calls for. He moved around the ring well.

3 Rythmnblu Lil Hawaiian Kuma

Well balanced dog with good substance and boning. Reasonable head qualities, but more “cheeky” than my ideal. Unfortunately he had trouble getting into the correct stride, and paced some of the time. With more experience I am sure this can be overcome.

Class 3 Puppy Dog

2 entered 1 absent

1 Koroneos Joiles Hardtwotop

Brother to the Minor Puppy winner, and very, very similar in quality and type. Sound, well balanced, with similar head qualities, although maybe a shade more length in muzzle. Ears also need to improve. Top line probably slightly better than his brother. Not quite as well performed as the brother.

Class 4 Junior Dog

5 entered

1 Towilla Impressive Poker Face

Now this is an impressive dog, immature in some ways, but impressive. Very good head, with a lovely expression. Good width, nice eye, well defined, and just a tiny bit of wrinkle on top when alert. Correct proportions of height to length and good bone. Ideally I would prefer a little more development and strength in the body, and his top line did not have the required slope and was a little steep over the croup, and this affected his overall outline on the stack and the move. He did move very well both out and back and round the ring, and I felt he had many attributes. He pushed the Reserve CC winner very hard! **Junior in Show**

2 Towilla Outta This World

Good sized dog with reasonable angulation, but again could have more substance overall. His ears slightly marred his overall expression, but the head was well shaped. He moved around the ring very well.

3 Newbelle Doc Holiday

This was a longer cast dog, but his head and ears were good. Top line rose over the loin, affecting the overall outline of the dog. He was less angled behind, and the movement did not flow as well as the two placed ahead of him.

Class 5 Intermediate Dog

6 entered 1 absent

This was one of the classes I did not find easy! Most of the exhibits were taller than the ideal also.

1 Crazytown Arch Nemesis

Nicely balanced dog with a good top line, but needing more slope over the croup. The high set tail was carried far higher than my ideal. Reasonably good head, but one ear affected overall expression. Good substance and bone throughout and moved around the ring very soundly.

2 Ch Amseraphs Takn Uby Storm

Taller dog than the winner. Beautiful head, ears and overall expression. Very good substance and bone, but needed more front angulation. A shorter upper arm sets the front assembly right on the front of the dog and removes prosternum. This dog did not exhibit the sloping top line, and needed more slope to the croup, which would have enhanced his tail set and carriage. He moved around the ring very well with a true and purposeful gait.

3 Blueskystafs Little Mate

A well constructed dog with a slightly sharper head, needing more width through and a stronger muzzle. One ear not sitting right. The muzzle needs to be a blunt wedge. Outline quite good, but I would prefer a little more substance in body and bone. Less angled in front than the winner and a little east west in front feet.

Class 9 State Bred Dog

3 entered

1 Ch Blueskystafs Pigsdayout

Well balanced dog but lacking a lot in animation. Well constructed. Pleasing head properties. Sufficient bone and substance. Good honest mover both out and back and around the ring. Taller than I really wanted.

2 Ch Staffwild Rising Power

Longer cast dog needing a little more tuck up to improve his outline. Movement out and back not as sound as I would like. I would prefer less cheek in the head overall. Typical ears and placement. Tended to carry his tail higher than the ideal.

3 Blueskystafs Rock Solid

Quite a tall dog, lacking in angulation. Lacking in substance both in head and body. Moved around the ring satisfactorily.

Class 10 Aust Bred Dog

3 entered

1 MBISS Gr Ch Blueskystafs Rock Hard

This dog was interesting. I felt he was quite well proportioned, with reasonable angulation in front but I found his rear a bit straight. He possessed strong bone and good substance. I would ideally like slightly more tuck up. His topline was good. He moved soundly away from me, and back towards me. Around the ring he moved with reasonable reach and drive, and maintained a steady gait. He was taller than ideal. I had difficulty with his head. One ear was dropped. His head was strong, and I found the muzzle too square, lacking the blunt wedge shape both from above and the side. I also did not find the characteristic converging planes on the side view. His eyes were also a bit too round for me. However, this dog was well built, moved well, and possessed many other breed characteristics, and this earned him his **Reserve**

Challenge Dog

2 Ch Staffwild High Voltage

A smaller, well angled dog with reasonably good bone and substance for his size. Quite a pleasing head, well formed, lovely under jaw. Slightly longer cast in the body. A sound dog, but tended to "slink" around the ring a bit on the move, and this affected his overall impression.

3 Ch Attomoy Rockfella

Athletic dog, slightly finer in bone, and taller than the two ahead of him. Tended to be high over the rear in top line, with a higher tail set. Would have preferred a cleaner movement going away from me. Head was reasonably, but from the front a bit too "cheeky" for me.

Class 11 Open Dog

6 entered

1 Ch Anican Weapon X

This was the height to length balance I was looking for. An upstanding dog with quite a nice head, although I would probably ideally give it a tad more shape (convergence of planes) from the side view. I would not want any more cheek development. This dog had good substance, and bone, and his top line was pretty good on the move, but he tended to lose it on the stack – suggesting to me that maybe he was not as fit as he could be. I would also like a little more slope over the croup. Over the size limit, but within what I considered reasonably acceptable. He moved around the ring very well, and lovely going away. Slightly wide coming towards me. Ideally I would give this dog a longer upper arm to improve his front angulation.

Dog Challenge and RUBIS awarded on overall type, balance and soundness.

2 Ch Amseraphs Rite On Target

This dog gained his place in the end on his balance, which I preferred to the third place dog. He is too tall, and there was weighing up of my priorities here. This dog has a lovely head and expression, with a clean, well formed muzzle and skull. Top line on the move did not present the outline I was looking for and a bit high over the rump. Excellent, free movement coming and going, and around the ring.

3 Gr Ch Proamstafs Thunder Struk

Very well presented dog. He was in excellent bloom and condition. For me, I would have preferred less length and slightly more leg in his overall balance. He possessed good bone and substance. Head properties were good, but I would have preferred a slightly shorter type of head. He moved reasonably well out and back, and around the ring. Good sized dog. As you would have seen near the end of the class, I was weighing up between this dog and the one ahead of him.

Class 12 Veteran Dog

2 entered

1 Ch Winyahart Medicine Man

Slightly longer than my ideal, but a pleasing type, with good construction. Pleasing head and expression. Good boning and substance. Excellent temperament. Moved very well around the ring and exhibited a typical top line. Not bad on size.

2 Ch Havfun Bad Habit

Taller dog than the winner, but a pleasing head type, although the ears tended to fly. Didn't move as well as the winner, and the top line was not as typical as the winner.

Class 18 Neuter Dog

1 entered

1 Towilla Thunda in Kokada

Correctly sized dog with a reasonably typical head. Proportions overall were a little long and low for me, and the outline lacked the typical top line I was seeking. I would prefer a little more substance right through. He moved out and back quite soundly, and moved freely around the ring with a typical tail carriage.

Class 1A Baby Puppy Bitch

6 entered 1 absent

1 Towilla Delta Star

Five month old baby. Young, but I think she will have the balance and proportions I am looking for. Quite good head and expression, although immature at this stage. Moved out and back truly, and possessed a free and easy side gait.

Baby Puppy in Show

2 Staffwild Get in the Ring

Five months old. Typical head at this stage, probably beat the one behind it with a slightly more pleasing expression, and less mature than the winner. Moved around quite freely.

3 Staffwild Welcome To The Jungle

Similar to the second place getter, and litter sisters. Preferred expression on the second place getter. Again, a typical pup that (at times) moved around freely.

Class 2A Minor Puppy Bitch

1 entered

1 Tredanky Watch Me B Hot

She was by herself in this class, but I liked her a lot. Very sound bitch with lovely angulation and with typical bone and substance. The height to length balance I was looking for. Only just over size limit. A good outline from the side, with typical top line and good tail set and carriage. Head was good, but I would like a bit more strength to it, and hopefully this will develop in time. She will be interesting to watch in the future. She beat the minor dog for **Minor Puppy in Show** with her better ears, and excellent structure.

Class 3A Puppy Bitch

6 entered

1 Amseraphs Divine Temptation

Good quality bitch, but I would not like her any bigger. Well proportioned and correct bone and substance. Pleasing head, but would not want any more strength of muzzle, remembering we are aiming for a blunt wedge shape. Prefer a little more length of upper arm. Top line good, although maybe a slight dip behind the wither, but not high in rear, and just enough slope to the croup. She moved around truly, with good reach and drive. Beat the dog for **Puppy in Show** with a better top line, better ears and more settled on the move.

2 Brizegar Forever Mine

Not as pleasant in the head as the winner, with less stop and plainer in muzzle. A little straight in front, and slightly longer in balance than the winner. Moved around the ring with a free easy gait.

3 Towilla Tennessee Gold

This bitch had plenty of leg under her, and quite a typical head and expression. However, I was looking for more substance, and more angulation in front. I would have preferred a more free front movement. Nice topline. Overall proportions were reasonable, but I would not have wanted any shorter length of back.

Class 4A Junior Bitch

1 entered

1 Mythikal Tequila Sunrise

Pleasing expression with typical eyes and ears. Front needed more angulation, with more length to the upper arm to move the front back under the wither. Quite good balance and shape, but I would prefer a little more substance right through. Topline tended to arch over the loin.

Class 5A Intermediate Bitch

6 entered

Three nice bitches placed in this class.

1 Tacsumreah Lady Keisha

Pleasant style of bitch with good flow, topline and angles. Head and expression was reasonable, but slightly rounder eye. Could ideally be a little deeper in front. Typical top line and correct tail set. Moved reasonably true out and back, and flowed well around the ring.

2 Ch Amerotic Miss Indiana

Well balanced bitch with a very nice head and expression. Substance and bone were typical. Correct height to length proportions. She needed more angulation fore and aft, and more strength in thigh in the hindquarters. I was looking for a much more free front movement.

3 Staffwild Sweet Revenge

This bitch was a good size and flowed well around the ring, but the top line needed to be better on the move as she tended to roach slightly over the loin. Good bone and substance. Head and expression were quite pleasing.

Class 9A State Bred Bitch

1 entered

1 Blueskystafs Lady N Red

Honest bitch with good proportions and substance. I would have preferred more angulation fore and aft. A little taller than ideal. Head was nice shape, but ears were fully dropped, thus marring the overall expression.

Class 10A Aust Bred Bitch

4 entered 1 absent

1 Ch Proamstafs Bound For Glory

Wow! In she came and straight away I was taken with her. Stunning bitch of correct proportions, and correct substance and bone. The outline was excellent, with enough daylight underneath her, and a perfect illustration of the slight slope in top line and rounding over the croup and tail set. The head was also lovely, having good bone structure, lovely expression and excellent ears. All the head planes were correct. She possessed a great attitude, moved with purpose, and was alert every time she was in the ring. No dog is perfect, and this bitch was slightly east west in a free stance, but she moved perfectly true coming towards me. She was slightly oversized, but only slightly, and within the inch, and I was happy to accept that. I was very happy to be able to award her qualities with **Bitch Challenge and Best in Show**

2 Staffwild Sacrifice

First time in the showing and it showed! Didn't move well on the day, maybe she wasn't used to the lead. Good bone and substance and a pleasant head.

3 Blueskystafs Love Potion

This bitch was sound, moved around well, but I found her fairly generic. She lacked the Amstaff outline and I would have preferred more substance and slightly less leg. Her head lacked the typical expression.

Class 11A Open Bitch

9 entered 2 absent

I found this the hardest class to sort out all day, and even now, this was the class I still ponder on.

1 Ch Bushinoino Suki

Another honest bitch with typical bone and substance and correct proportions. A little taller than the ideal. Typical head qualities and moved around the ring well, with true movement coming and going. She didn't have the style of the bitch challenge winner, but there was not much wrong with her and this gained her **Reserve Challenge Bitch**

2 Ch Koreneos Buggaslittlegirl

Nice style of bitch, but out of condition. She was too heavy, lacked a waistline and this affected her overall appeal. Head and expression were fairly typical, and ears reasonable but not perfect. Her outline was marred by being a bit high over the rump. Moved quite well around the ring.

3 Ch Staffwild Damage Inc

This bitch was a good size, but a little lower to the ground and a shade longer and top line did not slope. Different style of head than what I had been looking for, being slightly shorter in length overall and generally more width. A sound bitch with a very pleasant movement and carriage around the ring.

Class 12A Veteran Bitch

2 entered

1 MBISS Gr Ch Attomoy Blueskymine

Typically balanced bitch with reasonable bone and substance, maybe bigger than the second place getter. Quite a pleasing head and expression. She moved around the ring quite well.

2 Ch Blueskystafs Fire Spirit

Well angulated in rear, but probably less angulated in front. Well boned with good substance. Unfortunately she was not so good on the move, but of course one would excuse her at this age. Well done!

Class 18A Neuter Bitch

2 entered

1 Koroneos Buggas Girl

Larger bitch with reasonably pleasing expression, but not a great mouth. She was well proportioned, with good bone and substance (even if now in a very good paddock). She moved reasonably, but not with great flow. Nice type of bitch though.

2 Staffwild Sin City

Quite a lean bitch, who moved quite well around the ring. However, I found her lacking in substance, and very narrow waisted, and penalized her on this. She was also higher over the rear end. However, I must comment upon her amazing bloom, she was happy, healthy and had a beautiful shine to her coat – I am sure she enjoyed her day out, and she is a credit to her owners!