

Shetland Club d'Italia

25th April 2017.

The second time I have had the honour and indeed the pleasure of judging this show set in what must be the ideal surroundings. I have judged in very many countries and this is the most lovely setting I have ever judged in. Your hospitality and friendliness have certainly never been bettered anywhere I have judged – and I thank you all for making my time with you so special.

My Best in Show dog was an easy decision to make. A lovely dog of correct balance and with a sweeping outline. Moved easily with a long stride and minimum lift of the feet and his lovely coloured coat fitted his outline perfectly. I surprised myself by awarding BOS to a 10 month old puppy bitch and this is only the second time in a judging career which started in 1970 that I have done so. I loved her grace and elegance – her crested neck of good length to carry her refined and well balanced head proudly and her lovely topline with pretty sweep over the croup. She too moved with the ease all shelties should and with excellent length of stride in profile. Again with a quality coat which fitted her outline and a clear pale gold sable which IS completely acceptable to our standard but is not seen too frequently these days.

I must mention the baby puppy bitch class. Three lovely sable pups teeming with quality and full of promise. I am sure their owners will have many successes with them.

The entry was in general of high quality and some decisions were very close. And my dog and bitch CC winners pleased me enormously. Front construction was I think better than I remember from the last time I judged in Italy and presentation was excellent. One or two bitches who were very well constructed – enjoyed their food a little too much - and this unfortunately affected their front movement showing wide movement and loose elbows. Size was very good and there were fewer short tails than in my previous visit. My only real concern that there were a few dogs with level bites instead of the correct scissor bite and while this cannot be seen from the ringside it does cause excessive and early wear of the incisors. I was mostly pleased with eye size shape and placement but I did see an otherwise nice bitch whose eyes were small – not almond shaped and not set as obliquely as they should have been. The set shape and positioning of the eyes are a vital factor in achieving the true sheltie expression.

I thank you all for bringing your lovely dogs for me to see and creating many happy memories for me.

Malcolm Hart
judge