

STANDARD OF THE BRACCO ITALIANO

History: The Bracco Italiano has been called the oldest European pointer, and its history reaches back to the fourth or fifth century BC. While the exact ancestral origins are unknown, it is generally accepted that the Bracco Italiano was first a cross between the Segugio Italiano and the Asiatic Mastiff, which has since become extinct. The breed was developed in northern Italy, with two distinct varieties known to Piedmont and Lombardy, respectively.

By the medieval period, the breed was well established and the Italian aristocracy exported the Bracco across the Old World. This dissemination of dogs throughout the fifteenth century gave rise to new sporting breeds as the Italian Pointers cross-bred with local dogs. The breed's popularity peaked during the Renaissance, when they were bred by the Medici family of Florence and the Gonzaga family in Mantua. During this time, they were known as "bracchi of the net," for the practice of hunters throwing a large net over a covey of birds. The Bracco remained at healthy numbers until the turn of the twentieth century, when they faced a sharp decline.

By the end of the 1800s, the Bracco Italiano faced extinction. Over the years, crossing with hounds and poor breeding resulted in dogs that were too heavily built to perform their work, and the breed suffered from various health problems. Through diligent breeding selection and care, the breed survived. In the 1920s, it was decided to unify the two variations of the breed in order to preserve genetic diversity. In order to fully understand the history of the breed, and to be able to appreciate the Bracco Italiano's conformation and hunting ability, one has to have a strong understanding of the two types of dogs that contributed to its ultimate composition.

First, the Piedmontese Pointer was a dog of lighter construction and color, and it originated in the Piedmont region of Italy, as its name suggests. This dog was used for work in the mountains. The Piedmontese dog was smaller than its counterpart in Lombardy, and its hunting style was reminiscent of some western European pointers in that it traveled with a jaunty gallop. This dog was primarily white, with or without orange markings.

On the other hand, the Lombard Pointer was a rich brown roan and had a heavier body type. This dog was used for hunting in the marshy lowlands, and it was a trotting breed. These big dogs were bred both for their eye appeal and natural hunting ability.

Shortly after the breed was officially unified, the working standard was written and released, and in 1949 the Societa Amatori Bracco Italiano was founded. When the Italian conformation standard was published that year, it incorporated aspects of both breed types, resulting in noted variability within the standard.

The Bracco Italiano was brought to the United Kingdom in the late 1980s, however United States did not experience the Italian Pointer until approximately 1994. In 2001 the Bracco was accepted into the AKC Foundation Stock Service. In 2005 the first national "Gathering" was held, and two years later the Bracco Italiano Club of America was founded.

General Appearance: Of strong and harmonious construction, powerful appearance. The preferred subjects are smooth coated, with lean limbs, well-developed muscles, well defined lines, and a markedly sculpted head with very obvious chiseling under the eyes. These elements all contribute to give distinction to this breed. The Bracco is tough and adapted to all types of hunting, reliable, docile, and easy to train.

Size Proportion, Substance: Height at the withers between 21 to 27 inches. Preferred size for males: 23 to 27 inches; preferred size for females: 21 to 25 inches. Weight between 55 to 90 pounds, depending on height. The Bracco is a solidly built dog with powerful bone, but without lumber, and without sacrificing balance and harmonious appearance. A dog in hard and lean field condition is not to be penalized. Important Proportions: The body is square or slightly longer than tall. Length of head is equal to two-fifths (40 percent) of the height at the withers; its width, measured at the level of the zygomatic arches, is less than half its length. Skull and muzzle are of equal length.

Head: *Head* - Angular and narrow at the level of the zygomatic arches, its length corresponds to two-fifths (40 percent) of the height at the withers; the middle of its length is at the level of a line that unites the inner angles of both eyes. The upper planes of the skull and muzzle are divergent, i.e.: if extended, the top line of the muzzle emerges in front of the occiput, ideally at mid-length of the skull (down-faced). Dish face (convergence of the planes of the skull and muzzle) is a disqualification. The head and neck are moderate in skin. The head should have a soft fold of skin from the outer corner of the eye, falling down the cheek. When the head is down and relaxed, there is a skin fold across the skull from ear to ear. *Eyes* - Semi-lateral position, neither deep set nor prominent. Eyes fairly large, eyelids oval-shaped and close-fitting (no entropion or ectropion). The iris is a dark amber to orange or brown color depending on the color of the coat. Wall eye is a disqualification. Expression is soft, gentle and intelligent. *Ears* - Well developed. In length they should, without being stretched, reach the tip of the nose. Their width is at least equal to half their length; raised only very slightly; base rather narrow, set at level of zygomatic arches. A supple ear with a front rim well-turned inwards to frame the face; the lower extremity of the ear ends in a slightly rounded tip. *Skull Region:* Seen in profile, the skull shape is a very open arch. Seen from the top, it forms lengthwise an elongated oval. The width of the skull measured at the level of the zygomatic arches should not exceed half the length of the head. Cheeks are lean, the bulge of the forehead and the supra-orbital ridges are perceptible. The stop is not pronounced. The frontal groove is visible and ends at mid-length of the skull. The interparietal crest is short and not very prominent. The occiput is pronounced. *Muzzle* - Fore-face is either straight or slightly arched. Its length is equal to half of the length of the head and its depth measures four-fifths (80 percent) of its length. Seen from the front, the lateral sides of the muzzle converge slightly, still presenting a fore-face of good width. The chin is not very apparent. *Nose* - Voluminous, with large well-opened nostrils, protrudes slightly over the lips with which it forms an angle. Color brown or from pale pink to more or less deep fleshy red depending on the color of the coat. A split nose is a disqualification. *Lips* - Upper lips well developed, thin and floppy without being flaccid, covering the jaw; seen in profile, they overlap the lower jaw slightly, seen from the front, they form an inverted "V" below the nose; the corner of the lips must be marked without being droopy. *Teeth* - Dental arches well adapted, with the teeth square to the jaw. *Bite* - scissor or level. Any deviation (overbite or underbite) should be faulted in accordance to its severity.

Neck, Topline, Body: *Neck* - Powerful, in truncated cone shape. Length of the neck is at least two-thirds but not greater than the length of the head. Well detached from the nape. The throat shows a soft double dewlap. Excessive skin with exaggerated wrinkling or single dewlap is faulted. *Topline* - The upper profile of the back is made up of two lines: one, almost straight, slopes from the withers to the 11th dorsal vertebrae (mid-back); the other is slightly arched,

joining with the line of the croup. *Body* - Chest is broad, deep and well down to level of the elbows, without forming a keel. Ribs well sprung, particularly in their lower part, and sloping. Wide lumbar region. Loin is well muscled, short and slightly convex. Croup is long (about one-third of the height at the withers), wide and well-muscled; the pelvic angulation (angle formed by the pelvic girdle with a horizontal line) is 30 degrees. *Underline* - Lower profile almost horizontal in its rib cage part, rising slightly in its abdominal part. *Tail* - Thick at the base, straight, with a slight tendency to taper, hair short. When the dog is in action and especially when questing, is carried horizontally or nearly. *Docked* - Should be docked 6 to 10 inches from the root. *Undocked* - Carried horizontally; length of the undocked tail is to the hock. May be slightly curved but never held high or carried bent over the back.

Forequarters: Withers are well defined, with the points of the shoulder blades well separated. Shoulder strong, well-muscled, long, sloping, and well laid back, very free in its movement. The upper arm sloping, fitting to the rib cage. Forearm strong, straight, with well-marked sinews; the point of the elbows should be on a perpendicular line from the rear point of the shoulder blade to the ground. Metacarpus (pastern) well proportioned, lean, of good length and slightly sloping. Feet strong, slightly oval shaped, well arched and closed toes with strong nails well curved towards the ground. Color of nails is white, yellow or brown, of a more or less dark shade depending on the color of the coat. Foot pads elastic and lean.

Hindquarters: In balance with the forequarters. Thigh long, parallel, muscular, with the rear edge almost straight when viewed from the side. Strong limbs; hocks wide, metatarsals (rear pasterns) relatively short and lean. The feet, with all the characteristics of the front feet, have dewclaws, the absence of which is not a fault. Double dewclaws are tolerated.

Coat: Skin - Ample skin, tough but elastic, well separated from the tissues underneath; fine on the head, the throat, inside the elbows, and on lower part of the body. The visible mucous membranes must be a corresponding color with the coat, but never show black spots. The mucous membranes of the mouth are pink; sometimes with light brown spotting. *Coat* - Short, dense and glossy, fine and shorter on the head, the ears, front part of the legs and feet.

Color: The base color is white. The colors acceptable in this breed are: solid white, white with orange markings, or white with brown markings. The markings are of varied sizes (patches, ticking, or roan). A symmetrical face mask is preferred, but the absence of a mask is tolerated. The orange color can range from a dark amber to rich orange. It is not lemon or yellow. The brown color is a warm shade that recalls the color of a monk's frock (Crayola Brown); it is not liver. A metallic sheen is appreciated in brown and white dogs. Disqualifying colors - Tricolor, or with tan markings, fawn, hazel. Any trace of black on coat or mucous membranes. Any solid color other than white. Albinism.

Gait: Extended and fast trot, with powerful reach and drive. Head raised, nose held high in such a way that, when hunting, the nose is higher than the topline as if the dog is being "pulled along by the nose." The fluid, powerful, and extended trot is hallmark of this breed.



Temperament: The Bracco is tough and adapted to all types of hunting, reliable, docile, and intelligent. Friendly, not shy, never aggressive, and readily makes eye contact. Extreme shyness is a fault. Aggressiveness is a disqualification.

Fault: Any departure from the foregoing constitutes a fault which when judging must be penalized according to its seriousness and its extension.

Disqualifications

- Above or below the height in the standard
- Dish face (convergence of the planes of the skull and muzzle)
- Wall eye
- Split nose
- Tricolor, tan markings, fawn or hazel color
- Any trace of black on coat or mucous membranes
- Any solid color other than white
- Albinism
- Aggressiveness

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