

My thanks to the BCNSW for asking me to judge the property and special classes at its 49th championship show. It was a pleasure to revisit this friendly club, having done the breed classes at the 2004 show. Incidentally, it was fun to discover from Sally Wallis' invaluable database that Glen's BOB this time was a great-granddaughter of my BOB then, Ch Bayenzi Melody Maker.

Although numbers are not quite what they were, I was delighted to find that, judging by the dogs today, the Australian Basenjis still justify their international reputation for quality in depth, not just one or two top dogs but in the majority of the entry. Temperaments were excellent, with the baby pups showing characteristic good natured mischief in the ring.

Thanks to all the club members and officials for making us so welcome, especially to Kay and Ross Eldred for their generous hospitality and for their chauffeur duties and Ted Pickering who is such an efficient steward.

My job in most of the classes was to judge specifically for one point so of course the results may well have been quite different had I been assessing the dogs as a whole.

We started with the coat classes and here I was literally splitting hairs as the vast majority of the entry had typical high quality coat and skin of acceptable colour and were presented in super condition.

Although the dogs were generally within the Standard where white markings were concerned, I hope that breeders will bear this in mind as a high percentage were marked somewhat extravagantly and it would be sad if the percentage of white crept up and up each generation.

Class winners were: Baby puppy: red and white coat, Briggs' Nonaym Blu Arrows Othe Congo. Black and white, Braithwaite and Clift's Nayembe Yaamas Midnight Kito. Tri, Lummevaara and Hughes' Remwin Nevergonnabreakmystride. Brindle, Fox's Zandeena Whos Your Daddy.

Red and white coat, Fox and DeAngelis' Zandeena Getn Jiggy With It. Black and white, Hughes' Remwin Itsallaboutme. Tri, Braithwaite and Clift's Nayembe Safiyas Tukio. Brindle and white, Curnick's Ch Karamo Eoli.

Best coat went to Getn Jiggy With It. Although not relevant to his placing, I must mention his handler who projected her charges beautifully.

Best head: Dog, Braithwaite and Clift's Nayembe Safiyas Araalinkuba. Bitch, Braithwaite and Clift's Nayembe Safiyas Sarabi, no surprise to find these two were littermates as they both had the inscrutable eye shape, dark eyes (less common than one might think), very small beautifully carried ears, characteristic wrinkle and correct muzzle to skull proportions that make up a super head and expression, the one undoubtedly male and the other exquisitely feminine.

Best tail, Darr's Ch Xalmes Shake It Up Sister, this lovely feminine bitch was outstanding in this department, both in the tightly curled tail itself and in its set-on, aided by a super topline and shelf, so that the tail is almost invisible from the opposite side.

Best gait – there is nothing I enjoy seeing more than a Basenji in full flight, covering the ground with a light apparently effortless gait, free and unexaggerated. Here I was blessed with two who were exceptional here, Lanser's dog Sup Ch Lomar Hat Trick and Delacourt's bitch Ch Ngozi Shes Too Cool, both also brilliantly handled to show off their 'flight' to perfection. Both too were pretty good coming and going which isn't always the breed's strong point. In the event the bitch won by the narrowest margin.

Best topline: Tromp's Lomar Dressed To Impress, although this tri is a heavier type of dog he excels in topline with a smooth line through the neck and shoulder, level back and good tail set. He also has a good side gait maintaining his topline and was competitive in the previous class.

Best Interstate bred: Curnick's Ch Karamo Dancing Leopard, an attractive brindle of excellent colour and markings and plenty of quality.

Sire and progeny: Braithwaite's Nayebe Safiyas Araalinkuba, with several appealing baby puppies from the same litter.

Dam and progeny: Hughes' Sup Ch Remwin Kissmycheek. How time flies! This gorgeous bitch was my BOB from the puppy class in strong competition the last time I judged Basenjis in Australia. Now she is a veteran and I was pleased to see that, as well as going on to a super show career, she has produced quality progeny by three different dogs.

SIMON PARSONS