

## **LEONBERGER CLUB SHOW 2011 – KONUVERE**

I was most pleased when I received the invitation to judge your Club Show. When I judged previously in Estonia – at the Tallinn Winner a couple of years ago – I had some very pleasing Estonian owned Leos in my ring. Also when I judged at the Helsinki Winner in 2009 I had some top class Estonian dogs in my ring. All the more reason to look forward to this appointment!

The setting for the show was very beautiful – the Konuveri mansion surrounded by old oak trees giving shade to the dogs and the heart-shaped lawn in front of the house was just perfect. I had two very able stewards and my writer was brilliant in writing down my lengthy critiques.

I was however a little taken aback when I was informed that I had roughly two hours to judge the Leonbergers as Newfoundlands were to be judged in the same ring. The space available would have easily accommodated two rings. The whole purpose of a Club Show is different from an ordinary all breed show and I hope you will cultivate this annual event further.

Ideally I would have liked to have had more time for judging, explaining my decisions verbally to the ringside and not generally having to rush through my entry. The Club Show at its best is the annual highlight for the breed and not one to be just swept through.

As for the quality of the dogs I was very impressed with the general standard. Breed type on the whole was outstanding. As always with giant breeds there were some anatomical faults such as straight shoulders and lack of hind angulation, but nothing dramatic. Dentition was very good – I think I found one dog with one missing P1 and bites too were in order. Early summer had already taken its toll of coats in a number of cases, but I view this philosophically – coats come and go, but the basic dog remains unchanged.

Do remember that the Leo is a giant breed and some of the younger dogs will still do a lot of maturing, so owners will need some patience with their dogs. Some otherwise good dogs were shown far too plump and had to pay the penalty. One needs to understand the difference between a Leonberger being a massive dog rather than just an overweight lump!

I expect you will publish my critiques on the individual dogs, but I was most impressed with my BOB and BOS, mother and son. The breeder's class was a sight for sore eyes – such a typy and even group.

The breed is in good hands and you have done some sterling work in the early stages. Do remember that it takes skill to breed on from the very good foundation stock. Best of luck with your Leos!

Elina Haapaniemi  
Judge, Finland