



# THE CANE CORSO

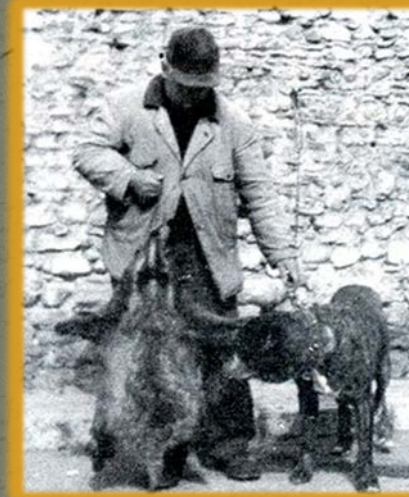
Breed Seminar Presented By:  
The Cane Corso Association Of America





# A BRIEF HISTORY

- The Cane Corso is an unparalleled working dog, which is versatile and adaptable.
- The breed has a rich history that mirrors that of the Italian people.
- Corso-type Molossers were present in the arena and circus; they were an auxiliary to the Roman legions and aided the feudal lords during the hunt.
- They were an indispensable tool in agricultural activities, such as the incapacitation of a bull destined for castration and guarding the flocks from both two- and four-footed predators.
- The Cane Corso was also an invaluable aid in hunting stag, boar or bear.
- He was the escort of the Italian cattle herders as they drove to market.
- He was fearless in the face of the ferocious badger, tireless and faithful as a vineyard guardian and even served dutifully as a beast of burden when the farmer needed a cart pulled.
- The Corso truly was “all things to all people” in rural areas of southern Italy.





# GENERAL APPEARANCE

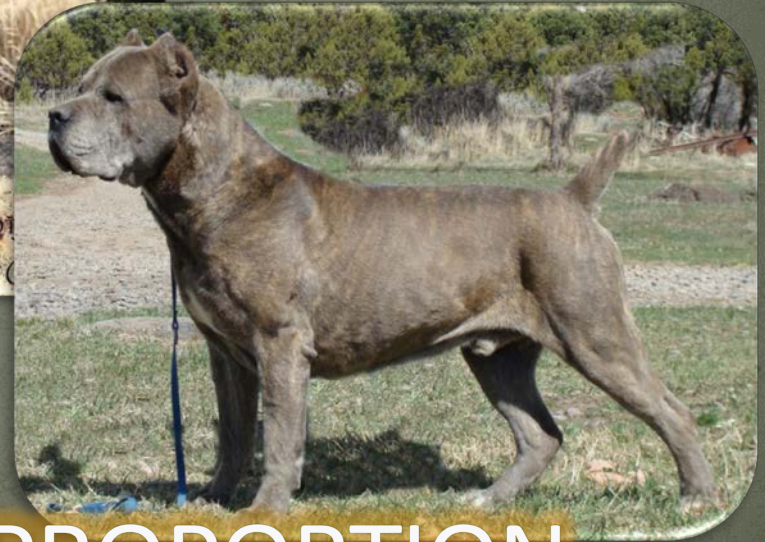
- The Corso is the ultimate utility Molosser, whose structure communicates versatility.
- His headpiece is large, impressive and distinctive.
- His expression is striking and intelligent.
- Power, mass and bone are the backdrop of his athletic ability and balance.
- Movement is surprisingly effortless and is efficient when compared to the Corso's size.
- Muscle is well defined.





# SIZE, PROPORTION & SUBSTANCE

- The Cane Corso is a large dog; power, muscle mass and bone are the back drop of his athletic ability and balanced, versatile conformation.



RECTANGULAR IN PROPORTION



# HEAD

- The head piece is the defining element of the Cane Corso.
- Although correct structure is crucial, the truth is that correct head type is the prevailing marker and distinguishes the Corso from other breeds.
- For this reason, extra care should be taken to learn the precise parameters of the Corso head.
- There is nothing “round” about the appearance of the head piece.
- Square, cube, block - these adjectives are what should jump to mind.



**WATCH OUT** for characteristics of others breeds.  
They are common and blatant in the head piece.





# SKULL

- **Front View:** Wide as it is long, forming the impression of a cube. Ears are wide set and back skull is horizontal. This characteristic is a fundamental element in the type of the Cane Corso.
- **Top View:** The skull should appear as a square and the muzzle as a broad cube. The back skull makes a horizontal line from ear to ear.
- **Side View:** From the well defined stop, the skull inclines slightly toward the ear set. This is critical to breed type. Too severe of an incline or rounded/dome above the stop is not correct and should be faulted.



# MUZZLE

- **Length:** 1/3 of the length of the entire head piece or slightly longer, never shorter.
- **Side View:** The top plane (the line from the stop to tip of the nose) is parallel to the muzzle's bottom plane (the line of the bottom jaw). The tip of the nose, down the face of the muzzle to the tip of the lower jaw forms a perpendicular line. The muzzle, when viewed from the side, has the appearance of deep cube. The jaw should NOT be rounded as in a bully breed.
- **Downward View:** The lateral sides of the muzzle are parallel and it must maintain the same width from where it attaches to the skull to its extremity. The nose and end of the muzzle is blocky and, overall, the downward view should be reminiscent of a wide cube. The nose must NOT be protruding or pointy – neither should it be recessive or 'pushed' back.
- **Front View:** The face of the muzzle forms a trapezoid and is FLAT. Neither the chin nor the nose should protrude. The nose is large with open nostrils. Side planes are parallel. It should be as wide at the extremity as where it joins the skull.



One of the most important aspects of the breed is its blocky, slightly elongated, square muzzle. The bite will vary widely, so the judge must put a lot emphasis on the structure of the muzzle, relying on the exterior appearance more so than what is in the mouth. Just because a Corso has a correct bite does not mean the structure of the muzzle is correct.





# HEAD

- **Expression:** Very alert, attentive and intelligent. A Corso should never look asleep or dull-witted although he may appear indifferent. The writings of antiquity talk about the “piercing eyes” of the Corso.
- **Eyes:** Medium-sized, almond-shaped, not round or bulging. A little haw is common.
- **Eye Color:** The Corso eye is self-coloring. Eyes range from dark brown to lighter amber and match the coat. Pigmentation of the eye rims is complete and pigmentation of eye rim matches pigment color of dog, either grey or black.
- **Placement:** The eyes are wide set. There is a pronounced depression between them. They sit slightly above the muzzle plane. A Corso should be able to look over his muzzle without turning his head.



# HEAD

- **Bite:** Slightly undershot, level and scissor acceptable.
- **WHY?** Because the correct muzzle is far more important than the bite!
- Judge the headpiece **FIRST**.
- Only give weight to what is in the mouth if there is a DQ.
- A functional, correct muzzle will nearly always have an acceptable bite.







THE CANE CORSO HEAD  
SHOULD CAPTURE  
YOUR ATTENTION





# NECK, TOPLINE & BODY

- **Neck:** Slightly arched, flowing smoothly into the shoulders with a small amount of dewlap. At a trot, the neck is extended and carried at the 10:00 position.
- **Body:** Depth of the ribcage is equal to half the total height of the dog. The elbow is positioned well under the body and sits at the floor of the chest. Ribs are long and well sprung. Moderate tuck up.
- **Chest:** Broad, well-muscled, strong forefront.





# NECK, TOPLINE & BODY

- **Back:** Wide, muscular and powerful. Backline is level, never sloped or curved. Withers are prominent and blend well into the slightly lower, level backline.
- **Loin:** Well-muscled, and harmoniously joined to the back.
- **Croup:** Wide, with a slight slope. Rump is powerful and has well-defined muscle mass.







## NECK, TOPLINE & BODY

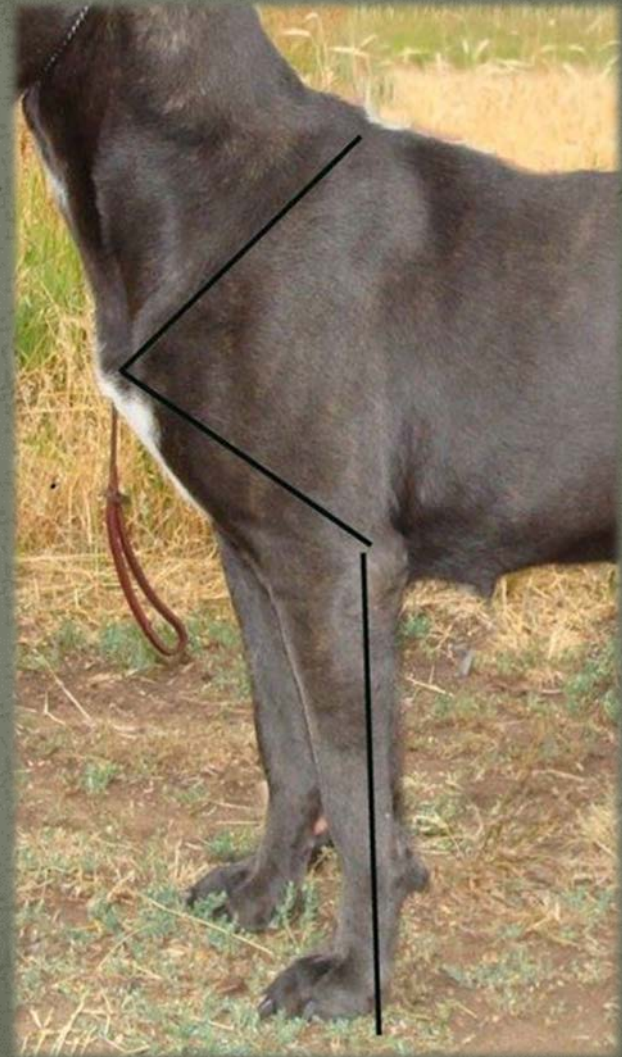
- Tail set is an extension of the backline.
- It is thick at the root with not much tapering at the tip.
- At a trot, it is carried at 2:00.
- A candlestick tail is not desirable.





# FOREQUARTERS

- **Forequarters:** Powerful and muscular. Distinct forechest. Balanced with hindquarters. Height of the limb at the elbow is equal to 50% of the height at the withers.
- **Shoulders:** Muscular and laid back. Scapula and upper arm are of equal length. The leg is set well under the dog in order to accommodate the heavy front end.
- **Elbows:** Held parallel to the ribcage, turning neither in nor out. Forms a perpendicular line with the top of the scapula.
- **Forelegs:** Straight and with good bone, well-muscled.
- **Pasterns:** Almost straight, strong but flexible.
- **Feet:** Round and tight with well-arched toes.







# FOREQUARTERS





# HINDQUARTERS

- **Hindquarters:** As a whole, they are powerful and strong and in harmony with the forequarters.
- **Stifle:** Should be moderately angulated.
- **Thighs:** Thick and powerful.
- **Legs:** Strong bone and muscle.
- **Hocks:** Taller for quick direction changes. Thick and clean, parallel when viewed from behind.
- **Rear Pasterns:** Straight and parallel.
- **Rear Dewclaws:** Any rear dewclaws are removed.
- **Hind Feet:** Slightly oval shaped and less arched toes than the front feet.







# HINDQUARTERS





# COAT & COLOR

- **Color:** Black, lighter and darker shades of gray, lighter and darker shades of fawn and red. Brindling is common and acceptable on all of these colors, including chestnut brindle.
- Solid fawn and red, including lighter and darker shades, have a black or gray mask; it does not go beyond the eyes, but traditionally blends up from the nose.
- White patches are common on the chest, throat, chin, backs of the pasterns, toes, belly and sometimes on the bridge of the muzzle.



**NO COLOR IS PREFERRED OVER THE OTHER!**



# MOVEMENT

- **Gait/Movement:** The movement is free flowing, powerful yet effortless, with extended reach and drive.
- As the dog accelerates, the feet converge towards a center line of gravity in a near single track.
- When viewed from the side, the topline remains level, with minimal roll or bounce.
- Head and tail are carried in a lower position while at a trot – 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock – balancing each other.





# JUDGING TECHNIQUES

- **Note the headpiece on the first go around.** If it is not within acceptable parameters, the subject should not be considered for award. Remember the head is the defining marker. After that, correct structure and movement is of the utmost importance.
- Approach from the front with confidence, greet the handler and avoid direct eye contact.
- A judge should not expect a mature Cane Corso to be a “wag and greet” kind of dog. An obedient, stoic participant is more than acceptable.
- Ask the handler to show the bite.
- Avoid heavy-handed exams.
- The idea is to see the dog at his full potential and the least amount of intrusion by a stranger accomplishes this best.
- Because the Cane Corso is very sensitive to his surroundings, anyone who is apprehensive about the breed should not judge them.



QUESTIONS?  
COMMENTS?  
FEEDBACK?