

ShowSight

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SARGE

MARTINE PHOTO

HISTORY OF THE CANE CORSO

By Michael S. Ertaskiran

The Cane Corso is one of two native Italian Mastiff-type dogs that descended from the Roman *Canis Pugnaces* – both the Cane Corso and Neapolitan Mastiff are the rightful heirs to this legendary war dog. As the lighter version, the Cane Corso is adept at hunting game and is a versatile farmhand, but is still sturdy, strong, athletic, equipped with a vigorous temper and ready to meet any challenge. The Neapolitan Mastiff, the heavier version, is a stout, imposing and fearsome guard dog. The very sight of him would be enough to frighten away any with ill intent.

The Name's Origins

The name “Cane Corso” is historically as much an adjective as it is a noun. It describes a type of dog you need to perform certain tasks that were historically associated with this type of dog. There is documentation to support that as early as 1137 A.D., this term was synonymous with the lighter variety of the Molossian dog. While the etymology of this term is open to debate, there are many valid hypotheses to its employment.

Cane is Italian for “dog”, a derivative of the Latin *canis*. Also Latin, *Cohors* translates to “bodyguard”. *Corsus* is an ancient Italian provincial adjective that translates to “sturdy” or “robust” (and while it may sound like the island Corsica, it does not mean that the dog originated from this region).

In the past this breed had been known by names with provincial connotations, such as Dogo di Puglia. Cane Corso, however, is a broader term that encompasses the breed's diffusion throughout all of Italy and Sicily. The Cane Corso was so prized and held in such high regard that there are several metaphors and anecdotes associated with its name. For instance, “He bites worse than a Cane Corso” (*can Corso* meaning “a man of proud aspect and attitude”). Similarly, “Je’nu cors” is a phrase that an elderly peasant might use to

describe a young man who was the essence of moral and physical virtue.

Ancient Beginnings

The Cane Corso is morpo-functionally representative of hunting dogs throughout history. Dogs employed helping man in the hunt can be seen in Assyrian bas-reliefs circa 700 BC. These dogs differ from the heavy dogs seen in Nivinah and Mesopotamia 100 or so years earlier. They have much tighter skin around the neck and present a much leggier construction with a retracted abdomen. In one hunting scene, their masters are restraining the dogs. In another scene, the dogs are in full pursuit after a wild stag, spears filling the air.

In Antiquity, dogs were not classified by rigid breed names, but instead by the geographical location in which they were found or by their particular utilizations. The Molossian breed traces its roots to the Epirus, the ancient Greek state that is now modern day Albania. Of the Molossian, Oppiano writes, “not speedy but impetuous, a fighter of great courage and incredible strength, to be employed against bulls and wild boar, undaunted even when confronted with a lion”. The reigning Dynasty in the 4th Century B.C. were called Molossians, of which Alexander the Great's mother was a princess. The Molossians and Macedonians shared an alliance and undoubtedly that is where the Macedonian army procured their fearsome war dogs.

The Romans

The Romans first encountered these Molossians of Epirus during the Macedonian Wars and renamed them *Pugnaces* (Latin for “combative”), due to their willingness to fight. As was the Roman ideation of improvement, those whom they conquered, they also assimilated to Roman culture. Thus the Roman *Cinogiae*, or procurators, gathered dogs from throughout the vast Empire, then separated them into three categories: *celeris* (those that ran down wild animals), *pugnaces* (those that attacked wild animals) and *villatici* (those that guarded farms).

These “groups” of dogs can be roughly translated into what would be modern day hounds (the Cane Corso and Neapolitan Mastiff respectively). This Roman war dog was used as an auxiliary to the legions, as a hunting dog and as entertainment in the arenas against all manner of animal and or human. To augment the *Canis Pugnaces'* abilities, dogs from England were brought back to the Empire. The Romans met the *Pugnaces Britanniae* in battle during their European campaigns and came to value their indomitable fighting spirit. These “imports” would be added to the Roman *Pugnaces*. It was said of the *Pugnaces Britanniae*, “they were inflamed with the spirit of Mars, the god of war.” Interestingly enough, many believe that the infusion of the dogs from England is responsible for the undershot bite in the Cane Corso. It is also hypothesized that the *Britanniae* was originally a Molossian that had been brought to England by the sea-fairing Phoenicians.

The Fall of Pax Romana

The fall of the Roman Empire predicated the fall of the Roman war dog. However, this was not the end for this type of dog; he seemingly melted into the Italic landscape. While no longer used as a *piriferi*¹, he did find a home with the Italian country folk. This Roman dog was transformed from warrior to a somewhat more peaceful existence as a farmer, hunter and guardian. His mettle forged on the battlefield and so versatile, would now serve him well in these daunting tasks in the invaluable aid of man. This age is where we find the most interesting evidence of the Cane Corso-type dog.

A Roman mosaic depicting the wild boar hunt (Villa del Casale, 3rd-4th Centuries, Piazza Armerina), shows a very Cane Corso-like fawn dog. He is agile, tight-skinned and sinewy, signature

1. It was common practice for the Romans to strap buckets of flaming oil to the backs of their war dogs and send them into the enemy's front lines to disrupt the opposing cavalry. These dogs were called *piriferi* or fire bearers.



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characteristics of the Cane Corso. Couple that with the fact that he is on a boar hunt, a traditional utilization of the Cane Corso. A miniature by Giovannino de Grassi (1390) shows a light, athletic Cane Corso-type dog. The Reggia di Caserta, fountain of Diana (1790) shows the two dogs with cropped ears, retracted abdomen and long, lean musculature. Neapolitan Crèche (18th Century) created a figurine of a fawn Corso-like dog with a black mask, again the black mask is an essential characteristic of the Cane Corso.

Around the 1100s the term "Cane Corso" began to be associated the lighter Molossian. Giulio Cesare Scaligero (1484-1558) in his translation and commentary of Aristotle's *Storia degli animali*, speaks of large dogs employed in the hunt of bulls and boar (once again historical Cane Corso utilizations) called Alani Corsi dogas. In *Histroia Animalium, De Quadrupedibus*, Konrad von Gessner (1516-1564) said, "Know that when a Corso has his teeth in a boar or bull he can't be separated without strong interference from the hunter on his jaws."

Life on the Farm

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Cane Corso proved its versatility by being employed in numerous and varying tasks, mostly in Southern Italian provinces like Foggia, Puglia, Bari and Campobasso. The primary tasks were that of guardian, hunter and farm dog. The Cane Corso's versatility made it an ideal farmhand. The masseria, or farm/manor, was an almost self-sufficient socio-economic culture, with its series of structures positioned around in most cases a main building, generally a chapel. The Cane Corso was an essential tool in this environment. By day the Cane Corso was chained to guard the permanently stabled livestock, farm buildings and barns. This was necessary to protect the various merchants, butchers, day workers or occasional pedestrian who might pass by. In cases where there was more than one Cane Corso present, the chain was necessary to keep the confrontational dogs apart. The manner in which the dog was chained enabled him to have a free range of motion to be able to reach the areas he was entrusted to guard. This was accomplished by tying the chain to an aerial line and a pulley system. Particular attention was paid to

the collar, which was often decorated with the family's coat of arms.

He was well-suited as a flock guardian and often deployed in the war with the wolves. In these times the Cane Corso often wore steel vraccale, or collars, that were equipped with spikes. These collars would ensure that the dog would have an advantage when he encountered the now extinct Italian wolf.

The Cane Corso was also utilized in the breeding of swine. The Cane Corso would become invaluable after sows gave birth and would go to thicket to hide with her brood. The Corso's job was to seek out and find the sow and incapacitate her either by grabbing her by the ear or snout so the farmer could safely gather up the litter. Once this was accomplished the dog was given a command to release her and the sow would anxiously follow her brood back to the farm where she was reunited with her piglets. The Cane Corso also was indispensable in keeping the boars under control. The semi-wild boar endemic to the Italian south was a large and dangerous animal equipped with sharp tusks and a nasty disposition. It was the agile and vigilant Cane Corsos' job to intervene should the boar present a danger and many a farmer was saved by the leap of the Cane Corso. The dog was sure to grab the swine by the ear or flank to incapacitate him, should the dog try and grab him at the snout the boar would be strong enough to run him to ground.

The Cane Corso was also used as a "cattle dog" or "butcher's dog." Cattle were raised in wild pastures until the time came for them to be slaughtered by the butteri, Italian cowboys. More often than not, the herds would have to be driven great distances to be slaughtered. These were essentially "wild" animals and had to be treated with great caution. In order to keep the herd manageable, the bulls had to be separated and the Cane Corso accomplished this by using its vise-like grip on the bull's nose or ear; the pain was so great that it completely incapacitated the bull. This practice became a popular attraction called "bull baiting." The Cane Corso of the butteri was charged with protecting the herd from predators both man and animal alike.

The Cane Corso also has a history as a hunter of large game. In southern Italy the wild boar was a valued food source, but

hunting him was a dangerous proposition. Wild boars are equipped with sharp teeth and are capable of inflicting great harm to both man and dog when cornered. To hunt the boar, a pack comprised of Cane Corso and industrial crossbreeds developed for their sense of smell and pursuit abilities. The pack was released to chase and corner the boar until the hunter and with his Cane Corsos arrived. Once unleashed, the Cane Corsos would set upon the swine, incapacitating boars and leaving them to the hunter to dispatch using a long spear. The badger was also considered prized game in Southern Italy's Meridone – every part of the animal was used, from his bristles to his melted fat. Similarly to the boar, a pack was needed to hunt this nocturnal animal. Again, cross breeds were employed (generally the mother was a scent hound and the father a Cane Corso), and the pack would flush out the quarry. Once cornered, the Cane Corso was set upon the badger, knocking him to the ground and killing him with a bite to the neck. In Sicily, the breed was used to hunt porcupine. The Cane Corso was sent to the rodent's den to root him out, no easy task considering the quills of this animal are quite sharp and could easily blind the dog. The porcupine was hunted by day, being a nocturnal animal he lazily slept during daylight hours. The dogs used for this type of hunting were docked at the eight vertebrae instead of the fourth; this was to ensure that the hunter would be able pull him out once he went to ground.

Decline

There are many variables that lead to the decline of the Cane Corso; however, his fortunes were invariably tied to the fortunes of the peoples of the Meridone. The social center, the Masseria, was in decline. Livestock populations that the Cane Corso was entrusted to control were shrinking, as was the game that he hunted. Remaining farms turned to modern, more economical machines to do much of the beloved Cane Corso's work. War impacted him as well; during WWI much of the populous of Southern Italy was called to arms, further weakening the agro-pastoral activities of the region. Afterwards, there was a slight renaissance for the breed as things seemed to return to normal, but it was short lived. The onset of WWII again brought disarray to the region's rural activities. All able-bodied men were in the

armed forces, leaving pastoral activities to the woman and children. After the “war to end all wars,” natural disasters such as flooding and landslides, as well as poverty and food rations, left the Cane Corso as an afterthought. Much of the returning workforce chose to pursue work opportunities elsewhere, thus the golden age of the Cane Corso had come to a close.

Recovery of the Cane Corso

By the 1970s, the Cane Corso was near extinction, and still survived in only the most remote backwoods regions of southern Italian hinterland. These peasants who still employed and trained him in the traditional ways kept the remnants of the breed alive – but only sparsely. Few old-time dog men still remembered the proud, sturdy dog of their youth... their recollections more like faded memories of childhood dreams. One such man was Giovanni Bonnetti.

In 1973, Bonnetti contacted Dr. Paolo Breber when he learned that Breber would be working for a time in Foggia. Bonnetti wrote Dr. Breber that “he has noticed in those places a molossoid dog with different hair from the Neapolitan Mastiff, similar to the bullmastiff, likeness of *the Presa Majorca*”. The letter went on to say, “Professor Ballotta, eminent dog lover, inhabitant of Romagna, had seen several examples of this ancient *Pugliese* breed”.

With Breber’s interest peeked, he began the search for this Ancient “molossoid” by seeking out a Foggiani who’s memories would go back some 50 years. These conversations led Breber to various works of art, illustrations, poems and other historical documentation depicting the utilization of the breed. By 1974, Breber had acquired a few specimens of the elusive breed and began to resuscitate the Cane Corso. Shortly thereafter Dr. Breber had the occasion to write an article in the ENCI’s “I Nostri Cane” magazine on his work with the Maremmano-Abruzzese. In this article, two Cane Corsos were pictured in the background. This picture drew the attention of 16-year-old student Stefano Gandolfi, who then sought out Dr. Breber in order to learn more about this ancient Pugliese breed of dog. Gandolfi soon enlisted the services of the Malavasi Brothers from Mantova, who at the time bred German Sheppard dogs. Dr. Breber, realizing that he was not a professional breeder, agreed that the

center of the recovery of the Cane Corso should be in Mantova.

Breber sent a number of subjects up north to Mantova, most notably “Dauno”, a very typical large black dog. In Mantova, Dauno was bred to a bitch named “Tipisi”, producing perhaps the most significant litter of Cane Corso’s in modern history – in this litter were “Basir” (the model for the standard of the Cane Corso) and his sister “Babak” (chosen as the model of the feminine characteristics). In 1983, the chief proponents of the breed’s recovery formed a breed club for the Cane Corso, the Society Amatori Cane Corso. By 1994, the Cane Corso received official ENCI recognition and in 1996 the breed received FCI recognition.

In America

Michael Sottile, Sr. introduced the Cane Corso, like the Neapolitan Mastiff, to American shores. While spending years searching for the *Mastino Neapolitano* in Italy, Sottile heard stories of a lighter, more athletic Molossian. Then, while in Sicily for a friend’s wedding, he happened upon a farmer on the side of the road working with cows alongside a Cane Corso (prior to that encounter he had only ever seen pictures of the breed). In 1988, Sottile imported the first litter of Cane Corsos to the U.S. The following year he brought a second litter, this second litter was a repeat breeding of the litter from the previous year.

Sottile made many trips to Italy over these years to make contacts with the Cane Corso Club in Italy. The first edition of their *Il Cane Corso* even lists Sottile as the U.S. delegate to the SACC. Sottile was also with all of the prominent Cane Corso breeders of the day. While on one of his trips, he videotaped the Empoli LIR open book certifications (subjects of unverifiable lineage enrolled into the Italian stud book based on their phenotypical characteristics). Sottile eventually registered this new breed of dog with the Federation of International Canines.

In 1993, Ed and Kris Hodas, along with Mark and Tracy Wilson, formed the International Cane Corso Federation. It would serve as the parent breed club and registry for the Cane Corso. Just like Sottile, the Hodas and Wilsons also made a number of trips to Italy to cement relations with the SACC and procure additional breeding stock.

In the second edition of *Il Cane Corso*, Mark Wilson is listed as U.S. delegate to the SACC. The Wilsons eventually faded from the Cane Corso landscape, leaving the club and registry to the Hodas. In late 1994, it was decided to split the club and registry - the Hodas would maintain control of the registry, while the club would be reformatted to be more in line with a typical AKC club (complete with elections, a constitution, Board of Directors and regional Vice Presidents).

Then the ICCF decided the reinstate the original Sottile standard for the Cane Corso; but a year or so earlier, Mark Wilson decided to implement the ENCI standard. Soon thereafter the ICCF and the SACC parted ways, thus cutting the U.S. off from ties to the Cane Corso’s country of origin. The strained relations with Italy lasted until 1999 when a new club in Italy, the Association of Italian Cane Corso, made its debut and extended an olive branch to the ICCF. The collaboration was beneficial to both clubs as they shared a common vision of what the Cane Corso was and should be – functionally, historically and practically. Also, an important source of knowledge became available to the American Cane Corso lover.

Delegations from the AICC came to America to participate, gave judges’ seminars and acted as judges in the ICCF National Specialty in 2000 and 2001, while ICCF delegates went to Italy in 2000, 2001 and 2003 to participate in the AICC’s International Raduno. Eventually, due in no small part to the relationship between the AICC and the ICCF, the standard was changed to be more in line with its European counterparts.

In 2003, the ICCF general membership voted to seek AKC recognition. To achieve that goal, various delegates worked diligently toward the goal of recognition. The name of the breed club was changed to Cane Corso Association of America, and its constitution and standards respectively had to undergo changes in order to meet AKC criteria. In July 2007, the breed was approved for the miscellaneous class and received full recognition as of July of 2010. ■

JUDGING THE CANE CORSO

By Shauna DeMoss

Since the Cane Corso came into the AKC ring in July 2010, it's fairly safe to say that the breed has caused quite a stir. Not only because it is a majestic eye-catching breed, but it seems that breed type is all over the place. I find myself explaining this wide variance in type quite often. Some of these variances are perfectly normal and historical and some are just plain incorrect. While many breeders may have their own "style", that style still must fall within the standard.

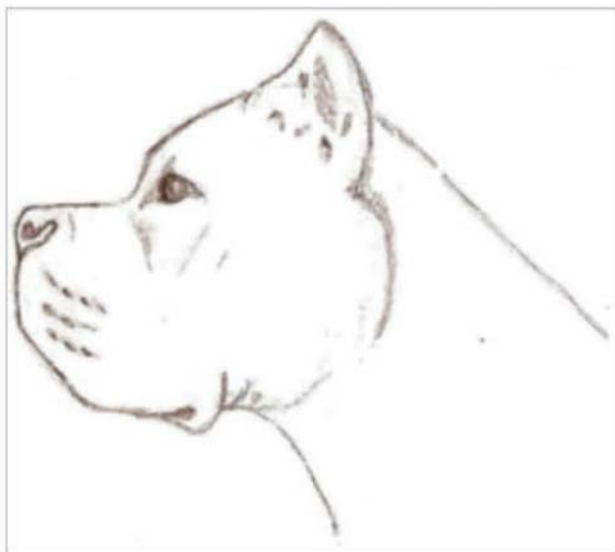
When judging the breed, it may be helpful to understand where all these variances come from. Corso-type dogs were used all over Italy for centuries to do a wide variety of utilitarian tasks. Some were flock guardians, while some were hunters of bear, boar and badger. Some pulled carts, some baited bulls; all were guardians of home and farm. Because these tasks vary, so did the need for different colors, sizes and styles. It wasn't that long ago that the core group of Corso enthusiasts traveled farm-to-farm, gathering up these Corso-type dogs – all in order to blend them together and recover the breed. This only started occurring about 40 years ago, which means the breed is still very much in its infancy. One of the major tasks in front of us is blending these types in order to come up with consistency.

Another underlining factor for the variance is the fact that in the initial recovery process, the

occasional breeder used specimens from other established breeds to shore up the gene pool. A judge must be fully aware of these influences, learn how to see these traits in the ring and avoid rewarding them. Bullmastiff, Boxer and Rottweiler influence can still be seen (yet another reason that those judging must be able to recognize true Corso traits and reward them). Judges must also realize that a wrong choice sets the breed back.

Correct Head Type

The head piece is the defining characteristic of the breed. As the Corso enters the ring and moves around to be stacked, the judge should take note of side head type and determine whether that specimen should be further considered. The head is large, blocky and prominent; it should immediately catch your eye.



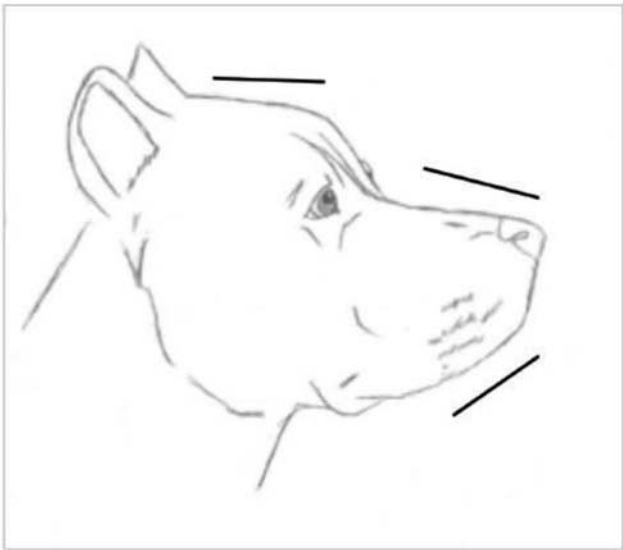
From the side, the bridge of the muzzle is horizontal. The top plane of the muzzle and the lower one are parallel. The muzzle is deep and gives the oppression of a square. It is very critical that the tip of the nose, down the face of the muzzle to the lower jaw, form a perpendicular line. The nose should not extend beyond the anterior face, nor should it tip up and be pushed back. The stop is prominent. The plane of the skull is convergent with the horizontal plane of the muzzle. This convergence manifests as a distinct rise, or lift of head, from the stop to the occiput.

Incorrect Head Type

It is critical that the head piece possesses the above characteristics when viewed from the side, because parallel planes are a common fault in this breed. These head pieces lack the distinct lift of head and the prominent stop. Parallel planes are also usually accompanied by a longer, more pointed muzzle with a protruding nose, and each of these features is incorrect.

Another common, incorrect headpiece that will present itself in the show ring has the characteristics of an extremely short muzzle (tipped back with a recessive nose). The chin is too prominent and juts out past the recessive nose. Usually the eyes are very round and bulging. We call this "overdone" or "hyper type." Often times, one can see influence of Boxers or Bullmastiffs in this head type – once again, very incorrect. While these aforementioned breeds are

rounded in style, the Corso is always square and rectangular. The desirable muzzle is a third of the length of the head. A muzzle that is too short and tipped up is just as unacceptable as a long and pointy one.



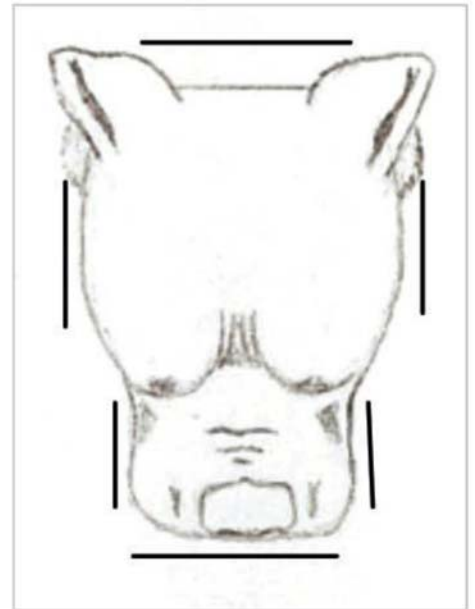
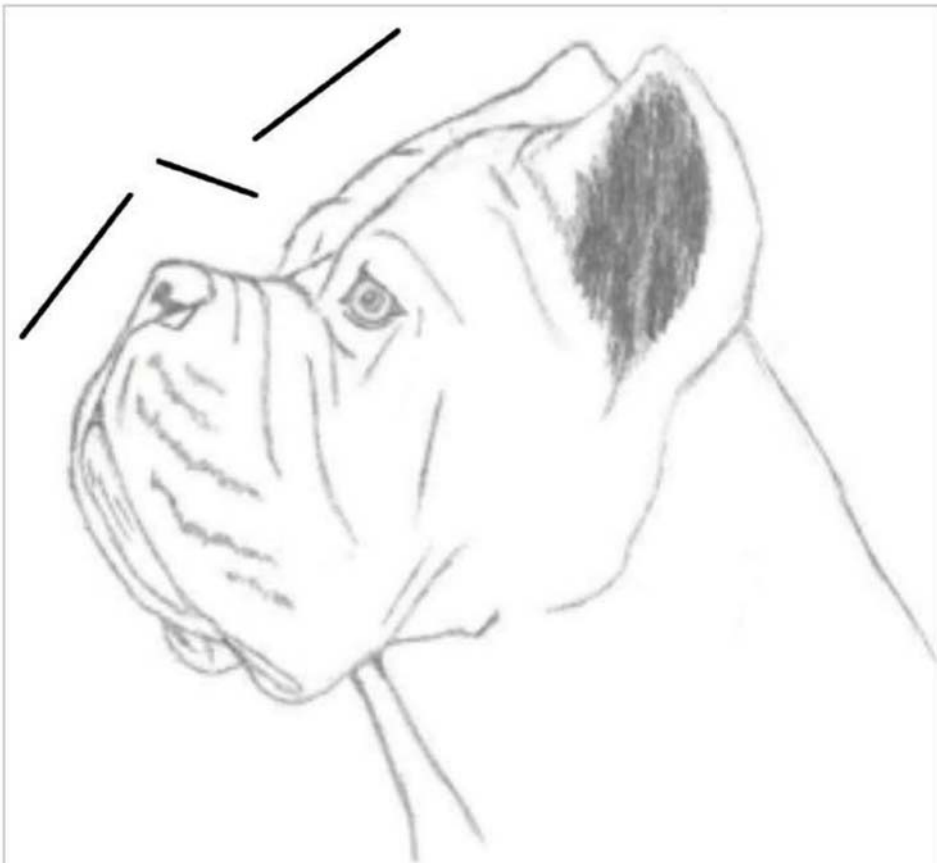
Judging the Head Type

Once the dogs move around the ring and the judge has an opportunity to view the head from the side, the dogs are set up and the judge may view the frontal and downward aspects of the head. Again, it is

critical that the judge be able to distinguish correct Corso attributes in this position.

Looking down on top of the head, one gets the distinct impression of a large cube with a smaller one attached to it. The head is always blocky. The back skull forms a horizontal line from ear to ear. The side planes of the head are parallel, and the side planes of the muzzle are parallel – it should be reminiscent of a square. If the head or muzzle resembles a paper cup (cone-shaped), then it is incorrect. The anterior face is flat, forming the bottom part of the square-shaped muzzle.

When viewing the head from the front, one immediately notices that the eyes are wide set in a sub frontal position. They are set on a plane slightly above (15 degrees) the bridge of the muzzle. The Corso should have an alert expression. An eye set that is too low changes this alertness and often causes the dog to appear to be “asleep at the wheel.”



There is a deep cavity or hollow between the eyes caused by well-developed sinuses. One should be able to place their thumb in that depression. This is another important aspect of the defined stop. Dogs that do not have a well-marked stop or do not exhibit the deep frontal hollow are to be severely faulted.

When viewing the muzzle from the front, it appears as a trapezoid. The lips are big and thick, forming an upside down “U”.

Eye Color and Bite

Amber eyes are historical and correct in the Corso. A judge must be very cautious to not confuse Amber with “bird of prey,” which in this case means almost clear. Grey or Formentino (fawn with grey pigment) subjects will always have a lighter eye. While there may be an obsession with



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The best way to determine correct (moderate) angulation is to stack the dog, placing the foot in a position where the hock and ground form a 90 degree angle.”

dark eyes in other working breeds, it is critical that judges do not try to impose those characteristics on the Corso. An eye that is lighter than the coat around it preserves the alert expression. The rule of thumb is that the eye is self-coloring, often matching the lightest part of the coat color and/or brindling.

The bite is a topic of much discussion (and often times much confusion) in the Corso, because whoever has heard of a breed allowing three different bites? The answer is it's not about the bite. One of the most important aspects of the breed is its square muzzle. A correct muzzle may house any of the three bites. The judge must put more emphasis on the structure of the muzzle and rely 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. One more note about the bite, up to a ¼" is very correct and means there can be enough space between the upper and lower incisors to fit a #2 pencil. Don't be fooled – sometimes it looks like more space than there really is.

After all this, we have thoroughly examined the head piece and determined whether the subject is worthy to be considered further. Remember, if the head is not correct, it's not a Corso, and therefore cannot be rewarded in the Corso ring.

Body Type

With all this talk of head type, I do not wish to minimize the importance of

solid structure. After all, what good is a beautiful head if it is carried around by an incorrect, faulty body? From the ears back, the Corso is a carefully designed, utility Molosser. He is powerfully built with heavy bone and massive muscle and yet he is incredibly athletic and agile. His body is perfectly designed to blend endurance, power and speed. Combine that versatility with intense loyalty and heightened intelligence, the Corso literally was all things to the rural farms and villages of southern Italy.

The Corso's body is rectangular in proportion (longer than he is tall). This, in combination with ample reach and drive, allows the breed to effortlessly move his powerful body. He has fairly good shoulder laid-back and open pelvis. A subject that is too square with steep shoulder and pelvic tilt is not capable of that smooth, effortless trot. He will have a tendency to prance more like a pony, with a lot of up-and-down motion with limited reach and drive. This is not the energy efficient gait that the Corso needs to sustain his mass for long periods of time.

The chest of the Corso is the perfect balance between strength and efficiency. When viewed from the front, it is amply wide. The forechest is well defined. The bottom of the brisket should align very close to the elbow. The Corso is to be 50% body and 50% leg – the floor of the chest aligning closely with the elbow guarantees this. Too much leg makes the dog top-heavy; too deep with legs too short, sacrifices agility.

The withers are slightly higher than the level back line. The tail is an extension of that back line and carried at a 2 to 3 o'clock position. As the Corso moves, one should be able to envision a full wine glass sitting on that level back line. Because the Corso is able to move its massive body effortlessly, the glass should remain so constant, not one drop would be spilled.

The breed has moderate angulation; however, moderate angulation can be confusing to some. The best way to determine correct (moderate) angulation is to stack the dog, placing the foot in a position where the hock and ground form a 90 degree angle. There should be a plumb line that goes from point of buttock, down through the hock to the toes. If the feet have to be stacked farther back or forward to create the 90 degree angle, the angulation is incorrect.

For further Cane Corso Breed education materials, please feel free to visit the parent breed club's educational site at www.corsoed.org. ■

BIO

Shauna DeMoss is the CCAA Breed education Director. CCAA 2011 Breeder of the Year CastleGuard Cane Corso (since 1995) AKC Judge # 92470.



Living Large with **THE CANE CORSO**

By Yvonne Aleman Quevedo



coconuts to lap up the milk inside! This same dog's favorite Jedi mind trick is to stare at the ice dispenser, then stare at me, believing that he will telepathically will me into giving him ice!

Orso is coming 2 years of age this June and at an impressive 154 pounds, he is the kindest creature I have ever loved. He is constantly begging for a job or a simple task to perform and thrives off the accomplishment of delivering what I ask of him. He is a gentle giant and a true testament to the versatility of the Cane Corso breed. He knows when it's time to be serious in either the

Living large takes on a whole new meaning when there is a Cane Corso in the family. Everything is bigger in my house! Way bigger! Perhaps I am biased but the rewards that come with pet ownership are also amplified with this amazing breed. Someone very special in my life introduced me to the Cane Corso breed in 2009 and for this introduction, I am eternally grateful. Now I am formally a follower of the Corso Craze – you just can't stop at one!

An ideal family dog, the Cane Corso is loving and intelligent, easy to train, eager to please and always maintains a confident, watchful eye on its surroundings. They are protective, but not aggressive. My dogs don't have a mean bone in their bodies. Bred and raised properly, this breed is

intuitive enough to distinguish between a new friend and a true threat.

Particularly captivating about the Cane Corso is that it always wants to be with you, right next to you, at all times. This is not out of neediness or insecurity, but rather a desire to be an integral part of the family unit. Wherever I go, I can guarantee that one of my dogs is right there with me. They silently tailgate me around wanting to be involved in everything! They are human-like with their expressions. Their souls shine through their eyes; every single bit of emotion is clear in their faces! There is no mistaking its state of mind when you look at a Cane Corso's expression. Mine are resourcefully manipulative with the looks they give me, a function of their intelligence no doubt! The Cane Corso is highly clever! One of mine, Orso, opens

conformation or obedience show ring and when it's expected to be a complete goofball in the pool. He's also very sensitive and perceptive to the emotional needs of those around him. Every Wednesday, Orso and I visit South Miami Hospital to bring peace and comfort to patients, their families and hospital staff. Strangers pull on Orso's cheeks and kiss him on the head, as though they've known him for years, and every ounce of him accepts the contact graciously!

The Cane Corso flourishes in a home with a strong leader, where the hierarchy is clearly and consistently defined. Socialization with children, adults and other animals needs to be started as puppies. Obedience training is crucial. These dogs are strong, confident and assertive, making responsible ownership imperative! Most



Such human interaction extends into exercise and activity for this athletic breed. My dogs don't want to be outside unless I am there with them, tug in hand. They will go on for hours running around or swimming but want me involved in the activity. Fortunately, they are also content to lounge for hours with you and make great arm rests. Grooming is minimal with just one catch – the Cane Corso tends to drool, affectionately called Corso Art. It appears on clothing, walls, paintings, windows, small appliances; nothing is too out of reach for a Cane Corso's drool. I have an impressive collection of slobber rags yet confidently assure you that some Corso Art here and there is an easy trade for the fulfillment the Cane Corso breed brings to my life. ■



BIO

Yvonne Alemán Quevedo lives in South Florida and is the owner and co-founder of Costa Bel Cane Corso, loving home to International Multi-Champion Mar e Sol Orso di Costa Bel, CGC, TDI, RN; Champion

Impero Russo Cleo di Costa Bel; Champion Lionheart Buona Karma di Costa Bel; and Luna & Mouse, the Resident Rescues.

Yvonne is a Certified Public Accountant and CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ with her own accounting and financial planning practice. She also owns Doral Wellness Studio, a boutique fitness and personal training studio.

notable is that the Cane Corso yearns to be a true member of the family, living among its loved ones. This isn't a breed you can bring home and forget about. A Cane Corso demands of its family a hands-on environment for the entirety of its life.