

YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

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THE KUVASZ

Country of Origin

The Kuvasz is an ancient shepherd dog. It is thought that the breed was brought through China and India and finally into Hungary, which is considered its country of origin since it was established and developed into a recognized breed in that country.

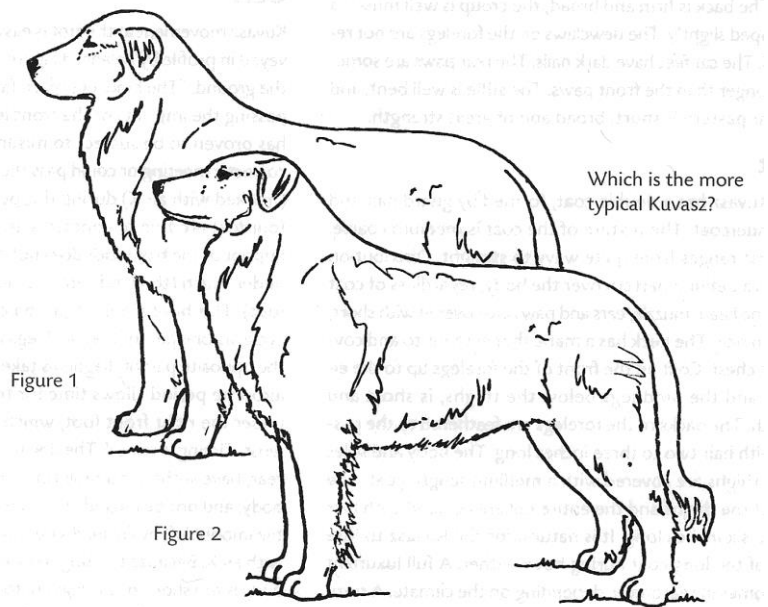
Which One?

Aside from heaviness of bone, the main difference between these two dogs is their heads. The following four differences will indicate which one is more correct. The Kuvasz's skull is only moderately arched. The ears are set well back. The stop is defined and the upper lip tightly covers the upper jaw only. In addition, but not visible, the almond-shaped eyes are medium in size, slightly oblique and dark brown (the darker the better). The straight muzzle is not too deep, of medium length, strong and well muscled. The black nostrils are well open. A scissors bite is preferred, but a pincer bite is acceptable.

The medium length, muscular neck is without dewlap. The forechest is well developed, The withers are higher than the back. The back is firm and broad, the croup is well muscled and sloped slightly. The dewclaws on the front are not removed. The cat feet have dark nails. The rear paws are somewhat longer than the front paws. The stifle is well bent, and the rear pastern is short broad and of great strength.

Coat

"The Kuvasz has a double coat, formed by guard hair and fine undercoat. The texture of the coat is medium coarse. The coat ranges from quite wavy to straight. Distribution follows a definite pattern over the body, regardless of coat type. The head, muzzle, ears and paws are covered with short, smooth hair. The neck has a mane that extends to and covers the chest. Coat on the front of the forelegs up to the elbows, and the hind legs below the thighs, is short and smooth. The backs of the forelegs are feathered to the pastern with hair two to three inches long. The body and sides of the thighs are covered with a medium length coat. The back of the thighs and the entire tail are covered with hair four to six inches long. It is natural for the Kuvasz to lose most of the long coat during hot weather. A full luxuriant coat comes in seasonally, depending on the climate. A summer coat should not be penalized."



Colour

“White. The skin is heavily pigmented. The more slate grey or black the skin is the better.” The old standard made any colour other than white a disqualification. The revised 1999 standard simply asks for white. It does so because white comes in many shades. A white Kuvasz on a bright sunny day may become an “other than white” Kuvasz on an overcast day. Overhead florescent lights can change white to ivory (ivory is tolerated in the FCI standard.)

Breeders inform that the Kuvasz is experiencing soundness problems due to not always proper use of the small gene pool, lack of discretion on the part of breed judges and a preoccupation with white.

Gait

Kuvasz movement at the trot is easy, free and elastic, as conveyed in profile by balanced Figure 3. The feet travel close to the ground. “The hind legs reach far under, meeting or even passing the imprints of the front legs.” This last statement has proven to be subject to misunderstanding. Figure 3 is correctly meeting or could pass the imprint of the front foot (marked with an X) during this period at the trot when all four feet are free of contact with the ground. Passing the imprint of the front foot does not mean overreach; it means under-reach, (the hind foot reaches under the flexed front foot). This brief airborne period occurs twice during each cycle, as one pair of diagonal legs relinquishes support and the opposite pair of diagonals takes over support. This brief airborne period allows time for the right hind foot to slip under the right front foot, which to assist has bent at the wrist. Timing is critical. The dog must be balanced front with rear; have sufficient angulation, length of leg and length of body; and not be moved at too fast a speed. The position of the imprint left by Figure 4’s right front foot has been marked with an X. Because this dog has too much angulation, or the body is too short, or the legs are too long, or the dog is being moved too quickly, this dog is forced to overreach to avoid leg interference. Most breeds, the German Shepherd Dog being an exception, crab when their hind leg passes on the inside or the outside of the foreleg.

