

ITALIAN SPINONE

A Breed Standard is the guideline that describes the ideal characteristics, temperament, and appearance of a breed, and ensures that the breed is fit for function, with soundness essential. Breeders and Judges should, at all times, be mindful of features that could be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare, or soundness of this breed.

Most recent changes to this Standard has an effective date of 01/02/2021

ORIGIN

Italy.

UTILISATION

Pointing dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Bibliographical descriptions mention a rough-haired dog of Italian origin that passes as being the ancestor of the present Spinone. Sélincourt, in his book *Le parfait chasseur* (The Perfect Hunter) from 1683, speaks of a “Griffon” coming from Italy and the Piedmont. In the Middle Ages, this dog has often been represented by famous painters; the best known painting is a fresco by Andrea Mantegna in the ducal palace of Mantua, from the 15th century.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Dog of solid construction, robust, and vigorous with powerful bone, well-developed muscles, and with a rough coat.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- The build tends to fit into a square. The length of the body is equal to the height at the withers, with a tolerance of 1cm – 2cm longer.
- The length of the head is equal to four-tenths of the height at the withers, its width, measured at the level of the zygomatic arches, is inferior to half its length.
- The loin measures in length a little less than one-fifth of the height at the withers.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Naturally sociable, docile, and patient, the Spinone is an experienced hunter in all terrains; very resistant to tiredness, goes easily into thorny underwood, or throws himself into cold water. He has remarkable disposition for an extended and fast trot; by nature he is an excellent retriever.

HEAD

The direction of the upper longitudinal axes of the skull and muzzle is divergent.

Cranial Region:

Skull: Of oval shape, the lateral walls gently sloping like a roof with the occipital protuberance very well developed and the parietal crest well-marked. The bulge of the forehead is not much developed, neither towards the front nor in height. The superciliary arches are not too prominent.

Stop: Barely marked, whereas the medio-frontal furrow is well-pronounced.

Facial Region:

Nose: Set in the prolongation [*ed. extension*] of the nasal bridge, voluminous, spongy in appearance with a very thick and distinctly rounded upper edge. Pink flesh-coloured in white subjects, a bit darker in the white and orange subjects, and brown in the liver roan subjects. In profile, the nose protrudes over the forward vertical line of the lips. Nostrils are large and protruding.

Muzzle: The length is equal to the length of the skull; the depth, measured at mid-length reaches one-third of the muzzle's length. The profile is straight or slightly convex (roman nose). The lateral faces [*ed. side surfaces*] are parallel, so that, seen from the front, the muzzle appears square-shaped. The lower profile is defined by the upper lip; the lowest point is the labial commissure [*ed. where the upper lip meets the lower lip*].

Lips: The upper lips are rather fine and form an open angle below the nose; in the forepart they are rounded, then, covering the lower lips, they reach the labial commissure where they form a visible fold.

Jaws and teeth: Powerful and normally developed; at mid-length the branches of the lower jaw are very lightly curved. Dental arches well-adapted and complete; scissor or pincer bite.

Cheeks: Lean.

Eyes:

Large and set well apart. The eye is almost round; the lids closely fitting the eye that is neither protruding nor deep-set; eyes are on an almost frontal plane. The iris is of an ochre colour, more or less dark according to the colour of the coat.

Ears:

Practically triangular in shape; in length, they are not more than 5cm longer than the lower line of the throat; in width, they reach forward from the point of inset of the head, to the neck, to the middle of the zygomatic arch. The forward edge is close to the cheek, not folded, but turned inwards; the tip of the ear is slightly rounded. Nearly always carried low, the ear should have little erection power. Cartilage is fine. The skin is covered with dense hair mixed with longer sparse hairs, which become thicker at the edge.

NECK

Powerful and muscled, clearly set off from the nape, merging harmoniously into the shoulders. The length must not be inferior to two-thirds of the length of the head; its circumference reaches a third of the height at the withers. The lower edge shows a lightly developed double dewlap.

BODY

Fits almost into a square

Topline: The typical upper profile begins with the slightly marked withers and continues with an almost straight fore part of the back, then merges rising towards the loin with a slight convex line until joined with the solid and well-arched lumbar region.

Withers: Not too high, top of the shoulders wide apart.

Back: The fore part is nearly straight, then gradually rises towards the loin before sloping towards the hindquarters.

Loin: Slightly convex, has well-developed muscles and width. The width is almost equal to the length.

Croup: Broad, long, well-muscled and oblique; forms, below the horizontal, an angle of 30° to 35°, which measures the obliqueness of the hip bone.

Chest: Descends to at least the level of the elbows; broad, deep, and well-rounded at mid-height, where its transversal [ed. crosswise] diameter reaches its maximum and decreases perceptibly in the direction of the sternum; but the chest should not form a keel at the junction with the sternum. The ribs are well-sprung and slanting, with wide space between them. The back ribs (false ribs) are long, oblique, and well-opened.

Underline and belly: Almost horizontal in the sternal region, then ascends slightly towards the belly.

TAIL

Natural and thick, particularly at the base; without fringes; carried either horizontally or down; not wagging much during the trot.

If docked for hunting purposes, in compliance with health and animal welfare to avoid injuries, the tail must have a length of 15cm – 25cm from the base.

[*refer note below]

LIMBS

Forequarters:

General appearance: Seen from the front, they are perfectly parallel and perpendicular to the ground. Seen in profile, the forearm is vertical and the metacarpus is slightly oblique.

Shoulders: Shoulder blade powerful and long, measures a quarter of the height at the withers, and has an obliqueness below the horizontal of about 50°; in relation to the median plane of the body, the points of the shoulder blades are not very close. Perfectly free in its movements, the shoulder has well-developed muscles; the opening of the scapulo-humeral angle is of about 105°.

Upper arm: Oblique below the horizontal with a slant of about 60°, directed almost parallel to the median axis of the body. It is well-muscled.

Elbows: Parallel to the median plane of the body. The point of the elbow must be a little forward of the vertical line, which drops from the posterior point of the shoulder blade to the ground. The distance from the elbow to the ground is equal to 50% of the height at the withers.

Forearm: Slightly longer than one-third of the height at the withers, vertical seen from the front as well as in profile. Strong bone. The hind tendon is strongly accentuated in such a way that the groove between tendon and bone is clearly visible.

Carpus (wrist): Follows the vertical line of the forearm; pisiform bone well-protruding.

Metacarpus (pastern): Flat, and, seen from the front, follows the vertical line of the forearm; seen in profile, it is slightly oblique. Its length is about one-sixth of the leg height from ground to elbow.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: Seen in profile, back edge of the buttock is slightly convex; good angulation of the bone segments; the hocks must be perpendicular to the ground; seen from behind, the hindquarters are parallel.

Upper thigh: The length must not be inferior to one-third of the height at the withers; broad, slightly oblique. The back edge slightly convex.

Lower thigh: The length exceeds only slightly that of the upper thigh; the obliqueness is of 55° – 60° below the horizontal; lean muscles in the upper part; the furrow between the hock tendon and the bone is marked and clearly visible.

Hock joint: The lateral sides are very broad. The distance between the point of the hock and the ground is about one-third of the height at the withers. The opening of the angle of the tibio-tarsal articulation [*ed. hock joint*] is about 150°.

Metatarsus (rear pastern): Strong and lean, the length is equal to the distance from the hock to the ground. Observed from whichever side, the metatarsal is vertical. On the inner side there may be a simple articulated dewclaw.

FEET

Forefeet: Compact, round; toes well-knit and arched, covered with short, thick hair, including the spaces between the toes. The pads, lean and hard, are more or less pigmented according to the colour of the coat. Nails strong, curved towards the ground and well-pigmented, but never black.

Hind feet: Compact, round, but more oval than the forefeet; toes well-knit and arched, covered with short thick hair, including the spaces between the toes. The pads, lean and hard, are more or less pigmented according to the colour of the coat. Nails strong, curved towards the ground and well-pigmented, but never black.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Easy, loose step; when hunting, an extended fast trot with intermittent paces of gallop.

SKIN

Close-fitting to the body, it must be thick and lean. It is thinner on the head, the throat, and the groin, under the arms, and on the back parts of the body; at the elbows it is soft to the touch. The skin just forms two folds that begin at the branches of the lower jaw and disappear at the first half of the neck (dewlap). When the head is carried low, one just notices one fold, which descends from the outer corner of the eye over the cheek; in its hind edge this fold ends in a tuft of hair. The pigmentation of the skin varies according to the colour of the coat.

COAT

Of a length of 4cm – 6cm on the body, shorter on the muzzle, the head, the ears, the front sides of the legs and the feet. On the back sides of the legs, the hair is like a rough brush, but never with fringes. Long, stiff hair-garnish [*ed. guard hairs*] form thick eyebrows, and on the lips, form a thick moustache and a tufted beard. The hair is stiff, harsh, dense, and rather flat, with lack of undercoat.

COLOUR

- Pure white
- White with orange markings; white speckled with orange; white with brown (chestnut) markings
- Orange roan or brown roan (chestnut).

* The preferred shade of brown is the colour of a “friar’s frock”.

* Non-permitted colours are: tricolour, tan markings, black in any combinations.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: 60cm – 70cm (approx. 23½” – 27½”)

Females: 58cm – 65cm (approx. 22½” – 25½”)

Weight:

Males: 32kg – 37kg

Females: 28kg – 30kg

N.B. Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.

*Regardless of the provisions of the current KUSA-adopted standard, docked or formerly docked breeds may be shown at all FCI- and KUSA-licensed shows in South Africa, whether their tails are docked or natural. Under no circumstances are Judges permitted to discriminate against exhibits on the grounds of docked or natural tails, and equal consideration for awards must be given to either.

FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

- Tail that is thin or curled over the back.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Upper cranio-facial axes [*ed. head planes*] convergent.
- Total depigmentation of the nose.
- Concave nasal bridge.
- Overshot or accentuated undershot mouth.
- Wall eye.
- Black pigmentation of the skin.
- Coat tricoloured, tan markings or black in any combination.

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FCI Standard No 165: SPINONE ITALIANO (ITALIAN SPINONE)

FCI Classification: Group 7 - Pointing Dogs

Section 1.3. Continental Pointing Dogs – Griffon type
With Working Trial