

# THE ILLUSTRATED STANDARD of the OTTERHOUND



Produced by the  
Otterhound Club of America

## CREDITS

Photos courtesy of:  
Members & Friends of The Otterhound Club of America  
& The Otterhound Club of England

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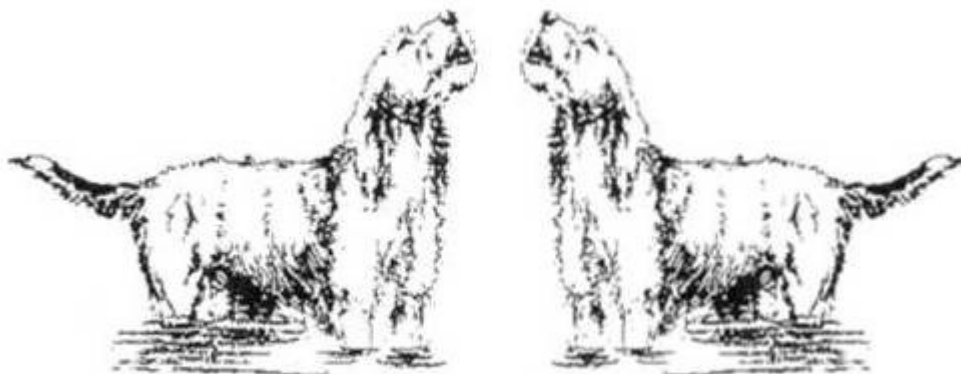
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**Script in Bold is wording from the American Kennel Club,  
Otterhound Breed Standard.**

*Script in Fine, Italics is editorial from The Otterhound Club of America*

## **Prologue - Thank you...for Caring**

*Education is vital to maintaining quality with the breed. Education is the basis for competency in judging and it is a vehicle which will support the continued existence of a discriminating fancy. Anyone seriously interested in "quality" in a breed must also be concerned about the role of education in obtaining that goal.*

*The Otterhound Standard is the authority in describing the ideal Otterhound. For a breeder or exhibitor to be given a worthy opinion the judge must understand the breed and be fluent with the standard. A proficient judge takes time to know the breed. Understanding, insight, instinct, and the ability to determine excellence are essential to the judging process.*

*The Otterhound Club of America is pleased to be able to present you with these tools to do your job. Thank you for caring.*







**THE HAWKSTONE OTTER HOUNDS**  
ROUGH COUNTRY ON THE RIVER TEIFY NEAR LAMPETER, CARDIGANSHIRE,  
OF THEIR TERRITORY. THEY HAVE NOT YET OPENED ON A DRAG.

Otterhounds were developed to do a specific job and the ability to do that job is the only valid criterion on which our standard is based. That most Otterhounds no longer work is immaterial. It is the aim of this standard to insure that the working qualities of this hound NOT be sacrificed in attempts to breed a "showier" hound. The Otterhound's soundness and suitability for its work are of utmost importance. At first glance, balance and symmetry of conformation should strike the observer implying power, endurance, and agility a hound easily able to cover many miles without tiring.



"Breaking Cover" by Walter Hunt, from the Pebble Hill Collection, Thomasville, GA

## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE PUREBRED OTTERHOUND

By: Karen Otto

The exact origin of the Otterhound is unknown. The earliest recorded mention of hounds hunting otter is around 1175 during the reign of King Henry II of Great Britain. "Otter doggies" were employed then and are mentioned through subsequent history as a means of keeping the then abundant otter from destroying the fishing industry in England.

Hunting the otter is probably the oldest organized form of sport to be found in Great Britain in which scent hounds hunt in packs. Almost all monarchs since Henry II maintained a royal Master of Otterhounds. Because this sport could be enjoyed from March through October, it eventually became very popular with the English gentry.

Many different breeds and combinations of breeds have been suggested as the foundation of the true Otterhound among them the now extinct Old Southern Hound, the Griffon Nivernais from France, the Bloodhound, the rough coated Welsh Harrier or Foxhound, Griffon de Bresse, Griffon Vendéen, Bulldog and even the wolf. The French origin appears to be the most likely though. Marples described the Otterhound as being almost the exact duplicate of the old Vendéen Hound of France.

The uniform "purebred" Otterhound, the hound we have today, was standardized sometime during the nineteenth Century. Between the 1800's and the early 1900's, otters were systematically hunted by sportsmen other than royalty. At this time regular otter hunting establishments existed, known as subscription packs because a fee was paid for the privilege of hunting with the pack and wearing its uniform. Subscription packs survived until the late 1900's.

Many generations of breeding for special purposes have undoubtedly strengthened and perpetuated the particular characteristics of the breed. Selected breeding has produced the ideal animal for the work intended. Frank Shuman Peer, author of Hunting Field with Horse

and Hound said," in grit, courage, endurance and fighting propensities he has no superior, perhaps no equal, in the canine family. He needs all these accomplishments and good stock of each to draw from, when it comes to the chase of a beast that takes so much arduous hunting to find and so much fighting courage to kill, when found, as the otter".

The Dumfrieshire Otter Hunt of Scotland and the Kendal and District Otter Hunt of England were the only two packs that hunted exclusively with purebred Otterhounds. Kendal and District pursued the sport until its legal demise in England; Dumfrieshire hunted vigorously a while longer until the anti-blood sports law became effective in Scotland around 1977.

To the early Kendal pack Croxton Smith attributed the survival of the true Otterhound to what could be called "a degenerative form", by which he meant a short stature (many of the hounds being only 20-22 inches tall). Through breeding efforts, the Masters of Dumfrieshire Hunt were credited with returning the average height to 26-27 inches, an important characteristic which enabled them while hunting, to wade into water in which shorter hounds would have had to swim.

British and American Otterhound fanciers are forever indebted to Captain John Bell-Irving, Master of the Dumfrieshire Otterhounds from 1955 until the end of otter hunting in Scotland, for the continued preservation through the 20<sup>th</sup> Century of the true Otterhound. Along with the addition of the British otter to the list of protected species came the very real danger that the disbanding of the hunting packs would lead to the eventual extinction of the purebred Otterhound. Through educational and public relations efforts of the Otterhound Club of Great Britain, concerned show and pet homes received many hounds and thereby insured the survival of valuable genetic lines upon which the future vitality of the breed would depend.

Around 1910 Otterhounds first came into the United States. Mr. H.S. Wardner of New York City was the first person to exhibit them here. At that time, they were used mostly in the field and reliable registrations were not maintained on these first hounds. It was not until 1937 when Dr. Hugh R. Mouat, a veterinarian living in upper New York state, started to breed and hunt the Otterhound, that the fine old breed

finally took firm hold in this country.

While attracting and keeping a loyal following, this wonderful breed has never gained widespread popularity and its members are still considered, if not rare, at least quite uncommon. A good number of Otterhounds in the United States are shown in conformation, obedience, tracking, and agility. Some have also been trained to serve as search and rescue dogs and certified service dogs.

With the basic inbred talents of these friendly hunters being adapted by dedicated breeders and imaginative owner/trainers for an ever-increasing range of endeavors, their future is bright. Our responsibility as breeders and judges is to keep them sound in mind and body and prepare for whatever work lies ahead of them.





## GENERAL APPEARANCE

THE OTTERHOUND IS A LARGE, ROUGH-COATED HOUND WITH AN IMPOSING HEAD SHOWING GREAT STRENGTH AND DIGNITY, AND THE STRONG BODY AND LONG STRIDING ACTION FIT FOR A LONG DAY'S WORK. IT HAS AN EXTREMELY SENSITIVE NOSE AND IS INQUISITIVE AND PERSEVERANT IN INVESTIGATING SCENTS. THE OTTERHOUND HUNTS ITS QUARRY ON LAND AND WATER AND REQUIRES A COMBINATION OF CHARACTERISTICS UNIQUE AMONG HOUNDS - - MOST NOTABLY A ROUGH, DOUBLE COAT; AND SUBSTANTIAL WEBBED FEET.

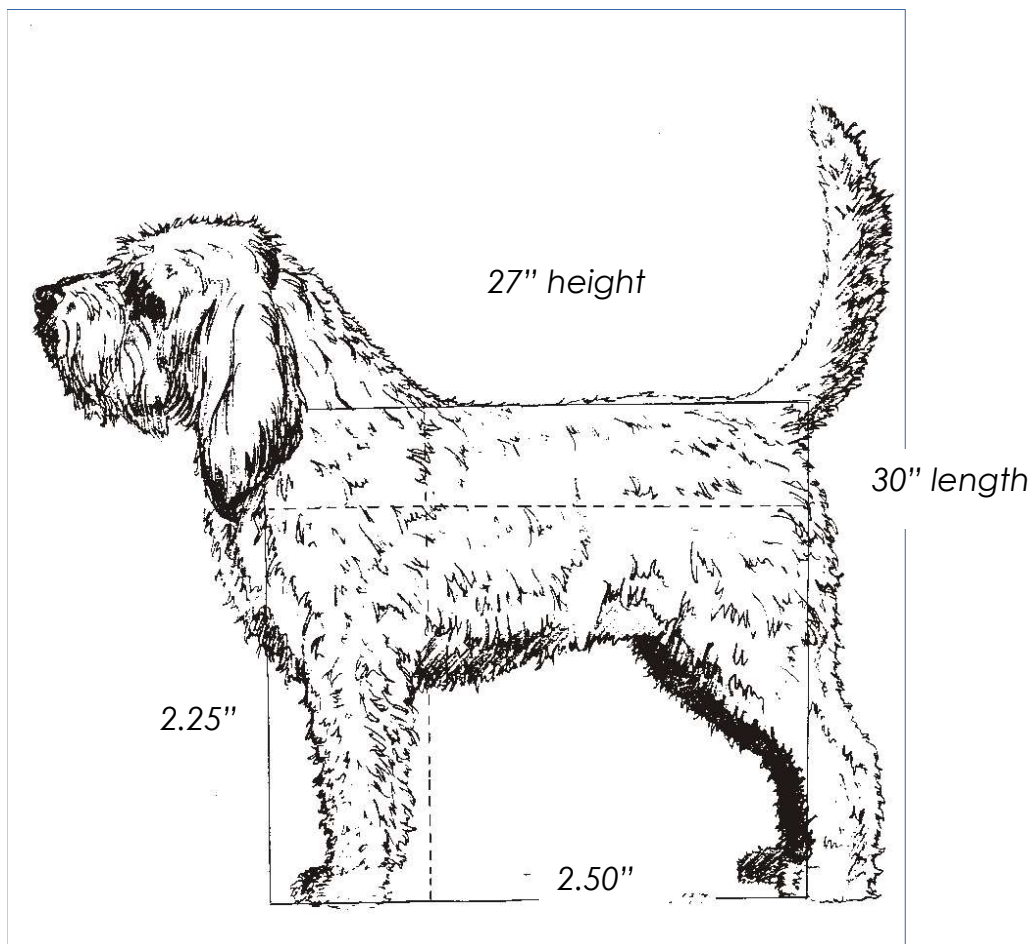
OTTERHOUNDS SHOULD NOT BE PENALIZED FOR BEING SHOWN IN WORKING CONDITION (LEAN, WELL MUSCLED, WITH A NATURALLY STRIPPED COAT). ANY DEPARTURE FROM THE FOLLOWING POINTS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A FAULT; ITS SERIOUSNESS SHOULD BE REGARDED IN EXACT PROPORTION TO ITS DEGREE.

*Dog  
tan/liver grizzle*



## SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

MALES ARE APPROXIMATELY 27 INCHES AT THE WITHERS, AND WEIGH APPROXIMATELY 115 POUNDS. BITCHES ARE APPROXIMATELY 24 INCHES AT THE WITHERS, AND WEIGH APPROXIMATELY 80 POUNDS. THIS IS NOT AN ABSOLUTE, BUT RATHER A GUIDELINE. THE OTTERHOUND IS SLIGHTLY RECTANGULAR IN BODY; THE LENGTH FROM POINT OF SHOULDER TO BUTTOCKS IS SLIGHTLY GREATER THAN THE HEIGHT AT THE WITHERS. THE OTTERHOUND HAS GOOD *SUBSTANCE* WITH STRONGLY BONED LEGS AND BROAD MUSCLES, WITHOUT BEING COARSE. BALANCE, SOUNDNESS, AND TYPE ARE OF GREATER IMPORTANCE THAN SIZE.



Scale: 1" = 12"

Sketch by Stephen J. Hubbell

Males are proportionately larger than bitches. Most male Otterhounds will fall in the 26-27-inch range, a mature hound of that size weighing 105-120 lbs. The average mature bitch will be 23-1/2-25 inches, weigh 75-90 lbs. A hound should be in hard, well-muscled, firm condition. Soft, over conditioned hounds are as incorrect as those who appear thin and unthrifty.

A strong, well-balanced large ACTIVE hound is ideal to hunt and swim rivers and lakes in pursuit of the elusive otter. A heavy, clumsy, coarse, or ponderous hound is less than ideal, as is a slight, frail, or short-legged one. A sound and sturdy Otterhound should appear to be standing over a lot of ground, the slightly rectangular body allowing for far reaching, ground covering gait.

Size range is given only as a guideline. Strong, sound, well-balanced hounds should not be penalized for being over or under the guideline, though breeders will strive to produce hounds that fall within the norm.



2 yr. old littermates-bitch/dog  
Tan/black grizzle



## HEAD



*Dogs (tan/black grizzle)*

**THE HEAD IS LARGE, FAIRLY NARROW, AND WELL COVERED WITH HAIR. THE HEAD SHOULD MEASURE 11-12 INCHES FROM TIP OF NOSE TO OCCIPUT IN A HOUND 26 INCHES AT THE WITHERS, WITH THE MUZZLE AND SKULL APPROXIMATELY EQUAL IN LENGTH. THIS PROPORTION SHOULD BE MAINTAINED IN LARGER AND SMALLER HOUNDS. THE EXPRESSION IS OPEN AND AMIABLE.**

**THE EYES ARE DEEPLY SET. THE HAW SHOWS ONLY SLIGHTLY. THE EYES ARE DARK, BUT EYE COLOR AND EYE RIM PIGMENT WILL COMPLEMENT THE COLOR OF THE HOUND. DOGS WITH BLACK PIGMENTED NOSES AND EYE RIMS SHOULD HAVE DARKER EYES, WHILE THOSE WITH LIVER OR SLATE PIGMENT MAY HAVE HAZEL EYES.**

**THE EARS, AN ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF THIS BREED, ARE LONG, PENDULOUS, AND FOLDED. (THE LEADING-EDGE FOLDS OR ROLLS TO GIVE A DRAPED APPEARANCE). THEY ARE SET LOW, AT OR BELOW EYE LEVEL, AND HANG CLOSE TO THE HEAD, WITH THE LEATHER REACHING AT LEAST TO THE TIP OF THE NOSE. THEY ARE WELL COVERED WITH HAIR.**

**THE SKULL (CRANIUM) IS LONG, FAIRLY NARROW UNDER THE HAIR, AND ONLY SLIGHTLY DOMED. THE STOP IS NOT PRONOUNCED. THE MUZZLE IS SQUARE, WITH NO HINT OF SNIPYNESS; THE JAWS ARE POWERFUL WITH DEEP FLEWS. FROM THE SIDE, THE PLANES OF THE MUZZLE AND SKULL SHOULD BE PARALLEL. THE NOSE IS LARGE, DARK, AND COMPLETELY PIGMENTED, WITH WIDE NOSTRILS. THE JAWS ARE POWERFUL AND CAPABLE OF A CRUSHING GRIP. A SCISSORS BITE IS PREFERRED.**

*Bitch (dark liver grizzle)  
Painting by Janet Wissmann  
(used with permission)*



**Head** - The Otterhound head is majestic and imposing, denoting strength and character. The deep-set eyes, pendulous, folded ears, extremely large nose, deep flews on square muzzle dressed with a beard, and the prominent brow give an air of nobility and sagacity. Both dog and bitch heads possess strength and sense of power.



Bitch Adult (tri-color)



Dog Puppy  
(tan/black grizzle)



Dog Senior (tan/black grizzle)



*MUZZLE - When viewed from the front, the muzzle is dominated by the extremely generous nose with large, open nostrils through which the scent travels to the scent glands located in the square nasal bone area. Were the muzzle to be cut cross-section from the frontal view, it would appear as the end of a brick.*



Bitch

**NOSE** – The larger, the better and fully pigmented.

*Although this bitch appears to have a large enough nose, the muzzle is snipey and narrow. The muzzle is too narrow in width compared with the back skull.*



**MUZZLE FAULTS** - There should be no hint of snipiness

**SKULL & MUZZLE** - The Otterhound has a large head; in length it is nearly half the height of the dog at the withers. In a 26-inch hound, the head would be 11-12 inches in length (from nose to occiput).

Since the Otterhound head is often well covered with hair, one must use his/her hands to evaluate structure. Placing the hands to both sides of the head, parallel and smoothing the coat down, one should see that the back skull is a little wider than the muzzle (not "Bloodhound narrow"). A slight dome can be detected, never flat nor too broad in relation to muzzle. Ear set can be determined at this time. Ear set can be determined at this time also.

Your hands should be used to evaluate the ratio of skull length to muzzle, from the tip of nose to stop, and then from the stop to occiput being nearly equal. The nose to stop may be slightly less, maintaining desirable overall length. The stop is not pronounced, the planes are level.



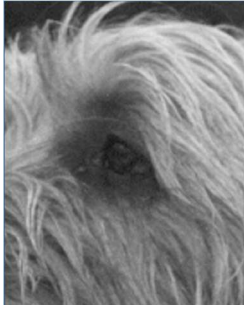
Sketch by Stephen J. Hubbell

The nasal bone is wide, allowing for plenty of air exchange when hunting, the underjaw ample and strong for gripping and crushing prey.

Large, powerful jaws and teeth enable the Otterhound to seize and paralyze an otter, even in the water. The muzzle itself is deep and long with a generous portion of lip or flew, protected further by the beard.

### **Head Faults –**

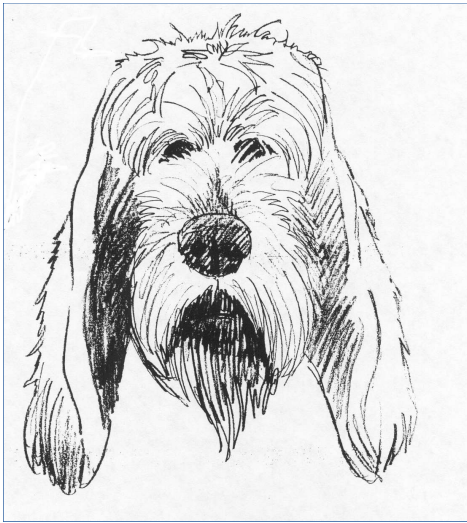
- Snipey muzzle or one that is too short
- Disproportionately broad back skull
- Unequal and/or uneven planes
- A "stop" that is too pronounced, or no stop
- Lack of sufficient underjaw
- A head that appears too small for the dog
- A nose that is not fully pigmented is undesirable as it would be susceptible to sunburn.



**EYES** - The Otterhound has dark eyes, not too round and deeply set into the skull on either side of the nasal bone. Eye rim will match nose pigment; therefore, the eye may be lighter (hazel) when pigment is other than black. The expression is kind and intelligent, dignified and solemn at times, then sparkling with a mischievous glint the next moment. A bit of haw is permissible.

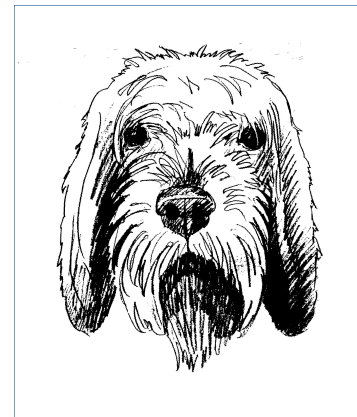
Correct Eye not round

Nice shaped eye.  
The flash from the camera  
makes eyes appear too light  
on this darker puppy.



Sketches by:  
Stephen J. Hubbell

Eyes set too close



Eyes round and  
protruding

**Eye Faults** - Eyes set too close or too wide. Too round, protruding with a staring expression, or small and beady. Too much haw, giving way to injury in the field. Light or yellow eye on a darkly pigmented hound.

**EARS** - A unique feature of the breed, ear leathers are heavy, thick but supple, set-on at eye level or below about two-thirds back on the skull. The characteristic fold, where the leading-edge rolls back, and the drape from the bell are essential characteristics that must not be lost. The fold provides protection from injuries in the field as well as providing air circulation and drying after swimming. The leather should reach at least to the tip of the nose. This length, coupled with the drape and fold, aids in funneling the scent to the nose as the hound works. When relaxed or warm the hound may carry ears folded back, or when excited is capable of pulling them quite high on the head. The ear is thickly covered with hair for further protection in the field but not so feathered as that of the Afghan or Cocker.

Nice draped and belled ear,  
set at or below eye level  
good length of ear.



Ears too flat to  
the head  
Set too high

**Ear faults** - Ears set too high on the skull, flat or pancake ears, and those that are too short. Leather that is thin and light weight, velvet ear, all of which could easily become torn or injured by briars and brambles while working in the field.

Sketches by Stephen J. Hubbell



## NECK. TOPLINE, BODY

Bitch (tri- color)



*The appearance of strength, agility and stamina should be present in a good hunting hound. The parts should blend smoothly, presenting a balanced image.*

**THE NECK IS POWERFUL AND BLENDS SMOOTHLY INTO WELL LAID BACK, CLEAN SHOULDERS, AND SHOULD BE OF SUFFICIENT LENGTH TO ALLOW THE DOG TO FOLLOW A TRAIL. IT HAS AN ABUNDANCE OF HAIR; A SLIGHT DEWLAP IS PERMISSIBLE.**

**THE TOP LINE IS LEVEL FROM THE WITHERS TO THE BASE OF THE TAIL. THE CHEST IS DEEP REACHING AT LEAST TO THE ELBOWS ON A MATURE HOUND. FORECHEST IS EVIDENT, THERE IS SUFFICIENT WIDTH TO IMPART STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE. THERE SHOULD BE NO INDICATION OF NARROWNESS OR WEAKNESS. THE WELL SPRUNG; OVAL RIB CAGE EXTENDS WELL TOWARDS THE REAR OF THE BODY. THE LOIN IS SHORT, BROAD AND STRONG.**

**THE TAIL IS SET HIGH AND IS LONG REACHING AT LEAST TO THE HOCK. THE TAIL IS THICKER AT THE BASE, TAPERS TO A POINT, AND IS FEATHERED (COVERED AND FRINGED WITH HAIR). IT IS CARRIED SABER FASHION (NOT FORWARD OVER THE BACK) WHEN THE DOG IS MOVING OR ALERT, BUT MAY DROOP WHEN THE DOG IS AT REST.**



**NECK** - The neck may appear shorter than it actually is because of the abundance of hair, especially in a male. The Otterhound should have good length to its neck, so it can easily reach the ground to scent as it works its prey.

**TOP LINE** - The top line is" tabletop level, broad and strong. The loin is short, full and muscular, the rump flat.

**BODY** - The chest is deep and wide enough to provide plenty of space for heart and lungs, which must work hard while the hound hunts over miles of rough terrain and swims tenaciously against strong river currents. From the deep chest the well sprung ribs carry well back toward the rear and the "tuck-up" is slight.



Dog (tan/black grizzle)

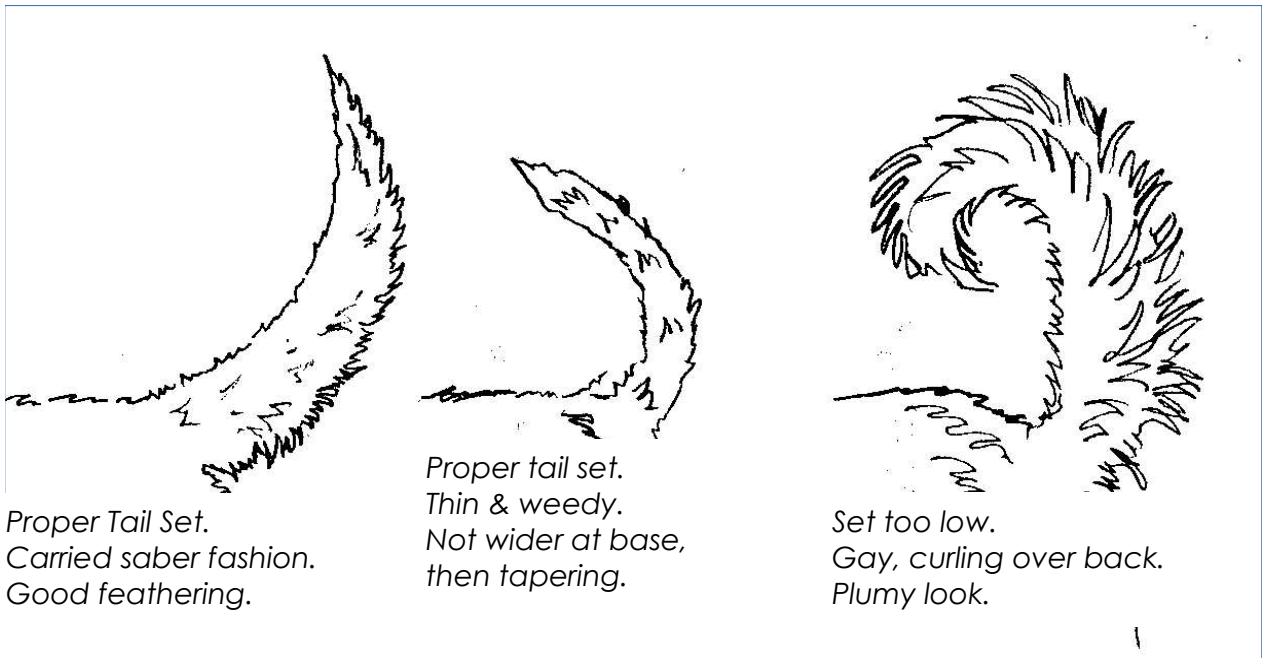


**BODY FAULTS** - Shallow chest, slab-sided, lacking rib spring, ribbing not sufficient which leads to long loin, sway back, or roached back; neck too short.

Slab-sided, lacking rib spring.  
Shallow chest.  
Roached back. Short neck.

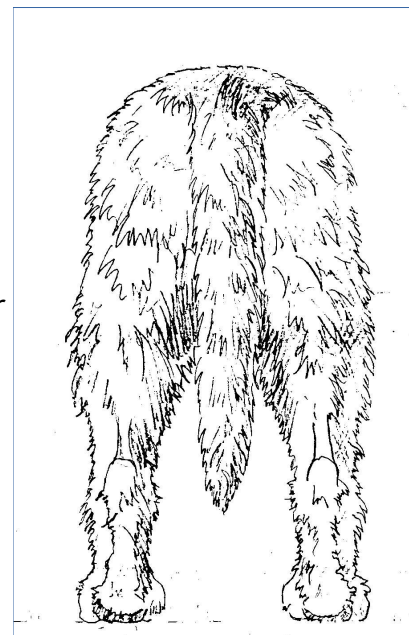
Dog (tan/black grizzle)

**TAIL** - The tail is set high, a continuation of the level top line. It should reach at least to the hock and is strong and sturdy at the base. The tail is carried saber fashion and is often the only part of the dog that can be seen when working in tall brush or heavy cover. While the tail is erect when working or aroused, it most generally will drop when the hound is resting.



**TAIL FAULTS** - Thin, weedy or overly long tail. Curly or plummy tail. Short tail. Gay tail curling over the back. Occasionally a dog that is agitated or extremely excited will carry his normally saber fashion tail too far up over his back.

Note: proper length of tail.  
Tip should reach the hocks.

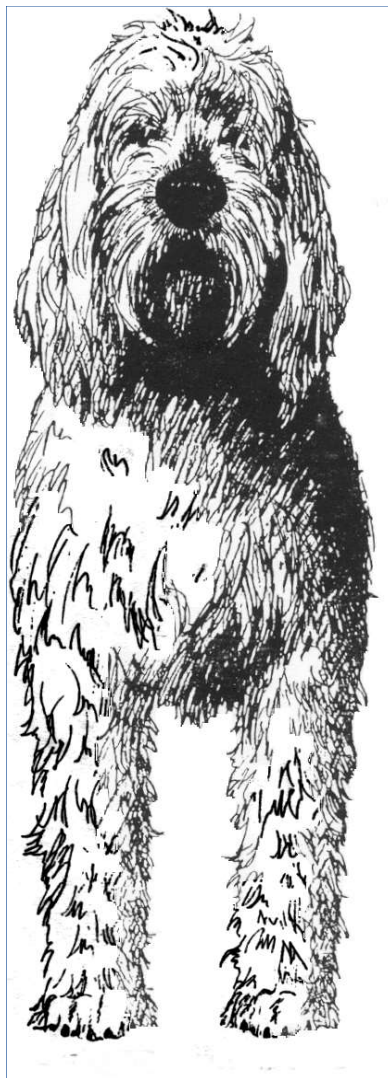


Sketches by Stephen J. Hubbell

## FOREQUARTERS

**SHOULDERS ARE CLEAN, POWERFUL, AND WELL SLOPED WITH MODERATE ANGULATION AT SHOULDERS AND ELBOWS. LEGS ARE STRONGLY BONED AND STRAIGHT WITH STRONG, SLIGHTLY SPRUNG PASTERNS. DEWCLAWS ON THE FORELEGS MAY BE REMOVED.**

**FEET - BOTH FRONT AND REAR FEET ARE LARGE, BROAD, COMPACT WHEN STANDING, BUT CAPABLE OF SPREADING. THEY HAVE THICK, DEEP PADS, WITH ARCHED TOES; THEY ARE WEB-FOOTED (MEMBRANES CONNECTING THE TOES ALLOW THE FOOT TO SPREAD).**



Sketch by Stephen J. Hubbell



**FEET** - The substantial legs are supported on VERY THICKLY padded, large feet, the toes of which are well arched with strong nails. Providing support on marshy ground and efficiency when swimming, these broad, webbed feet are a necessity. A splay, thin or hare foot is very undesirable because they would never tolerate a hard day's work and are susceptible to injury.

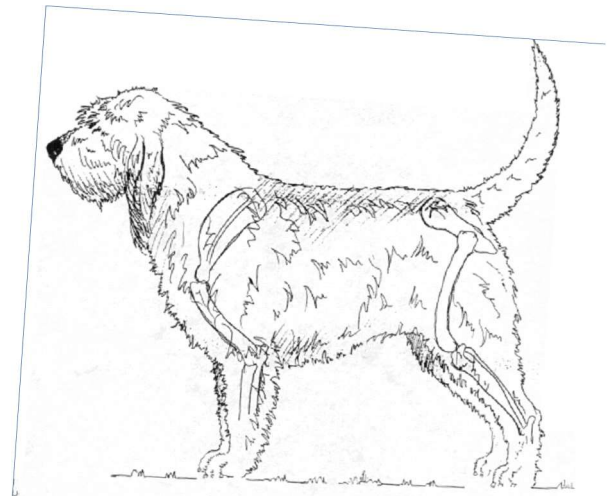


Thick pad, well arched toes, strong nails



Splayed, thin, hare foot

**SHOULDERS** should feel strong and well-muscled. The blades are broad, flat and blend smoothly. The moderate angulations allow for adequate length of neck and good reach. A shoulder that is too upright coupled with a short upper arm restricts movement. The legs are set well under the body. A line from withers drops plumb with elbow.



**ELBOWS** have freedom of movement, pinched, but never loose or flying.

**LEGS** - The timber of the legs should be very strong with no hint of frailty. When viewed from the front the legs are straight and true; from the side there is a slight spring to the pastern.

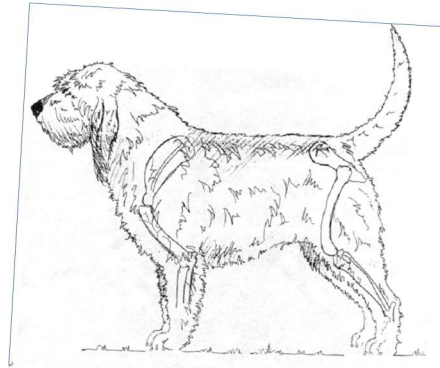
Shoulders muscled.  
Legs strong & straight.  
Bitch

Sketches by Stephen J. Hubbell

## HINDQUARTERS

**THIGHS AND SECOND THIGHS ARE LARGE, BROAD AND WELL-MUSCLED. LEGS HAVE MODERATELY BENT STIFLES WITH WELL-DEFINED HOCKS. HOCKS ARE WELL LET DOWN, TURNING NEITHER IN NOR OUT. LEGS ON A STANDING HOUND ARE PARALLEL WHEN VIEWED FROM THE REAR. ANGULATION FRONT AND REAR MUST BE BALANCED AND ADEQUATE TO GIVE FORWARD REACH AND REAR DRIVE. DEWCLAWS, IF ANY, ON THE HIND LEGS ARE GENERALLY REMOVED. FEET ARE AS PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED.**

Sketch by Stephen J. Hubbell



The rear assembly matches the front. Viewed from the side, the rear is less angulated than many other hound breeds, though not so straight as to allow for short, stilted movement or lack of spring to scale banks. Over angulated hounds would tire easily, huntsmen and masters observed they could not as easily hold up to the full day's work. The rear is not that of a dog built for running or speed, but for steady, long work over rough terrain, requiring power, stamina and action. The distance from hock to foot is relatively short. The rear feet are equally large, thick and well knuckled as those in front.



Bitch

Development of muscle, broad and flat, in the rear quarters is very important. This is the hound's propulsion system, driving him through the waters, up steep banks, over fences and across uneven fields.





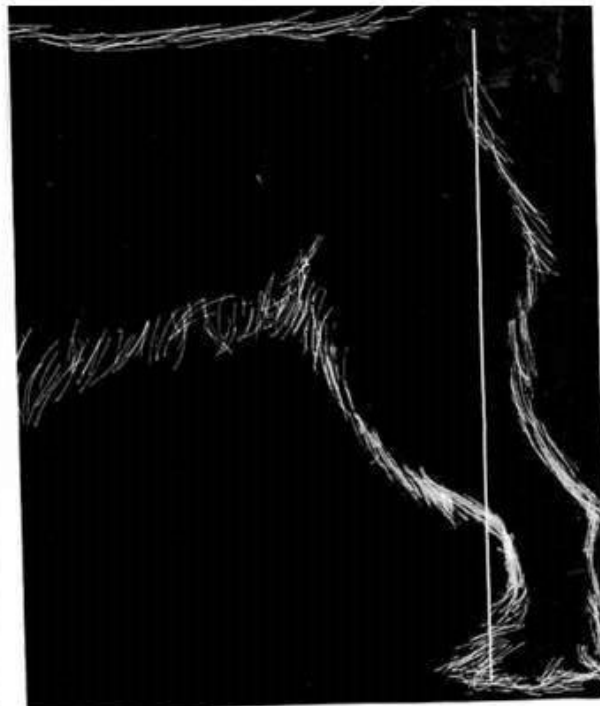
Due to many judges questions on angulation of the Otterhound and realizing that "angulation" of our breed is frequently questioned, we are offering sketches to help visualize angulation. It is our sincere hope that this will help.

Many breeds use moderate angulation to describe their own individual breed but we realize their perception is not accurate with our Otterhound breed.

The sketch to the left is of moderate angulation. The lower right sketch shows over angulation, and the lower left below moderate but with the added line of axis can easily be used as a visual guide. With the addition of these sketches it is our hope that clarification can now be made.



Photographers do often ask that the rear legs be extended back, but this posture does not reflect correct angulation of the Otterhound.



## COAT

THE COAT IS AN ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF THE OTTERHOUND. COAT TEXTURE AND QUALITY ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN LENGTH. THE OUTER COAT IS DENSE, ROUGH, COARSE AND CRISP, OF BROKEN APPEARANCE. SOFTER HAIR ON THE HEAD AND LOWER LEGS IS NATURAL. THE OUTER COAT IS TWO TO FOUR INCHES LONG ON THE BACK AND SHORTER ON THE EXTREMITIES. A WATER-RESISTANT UNDER COAT OF SHORT, WOOLY, SLIGHTLY OILY HAIR IS ESSENTIAL, BUT IN THE SUMMER MONTHS MAY BE HARD TO FIND EXCEPT ON THE THIGHS AND SHOULDERS. THE EARS ARE WELL COVERED WITH HAIR, AND THE TAIL IS FEATHERED (COVERED AND FRINGED WITH HAIR). A NATURALLY STRIPPED COAT LACKING LENGTH AND FRINGES IS CORRECT FOR AN OTTERHOUND THAT IS BEING WORKED. A PROPER HUNTING COAT WILL SHOW A HARD-OUTER COAT AND WOOLY UNDERCOAT. THE OTTERHOUND IS SHOWN IN A NATURAL COAT, WITH NO SCULPTURING OR SHAPING OF THE COAT.

**FAULTS** - A SOFT OUTER COAT IS A VERY SERIOUS FAULT AS IS A WOOLY TEXTURED OUTER COAT. LACK OF UNDERCOAT IS A SERIOUS FAULT. AN OUTER COAT MUCH LONGER THAN SIX INCHES BECOMES HEAVY WHEN WET AND IS A FAULT. ANY EVIDENCE OF STRIPPING OR SCISSORING OF COAT TO SHAPE OR STYLIZE SHOULD BE STRONGLY PENALIZED AS A FAULT.



*Dog, harsh coat all over*



*Dog, harsh body, softer head & legs*

The Otterhound's double coat has an unkempt broken appearance. Its harsh texture provides protection in rough cover and dries quickly. The dense, oily softer undercoat keeps hounds warm in the cold waters. Coats are varied length, depending upon the hound's age and the season of the year, but all must be rather harsh to the touch and have evidence of a water-resistant undercoat. Hair on the legs is often softer in texture than that on the trunk. Young dogs may not have great length to their coats, but they should be thick. Some adults carry little more coat than a puppy, but these are often found to be the harshest of coats. A naturally stripped coat lacking length and fringes is correct for a hound that is being worked, the head and leg furnishings being the first to go.

The Otterhound should never be stripped, scissored, shaped, plucked, fluffed or "poofed". These grooming styles should be severely penalized. The Otterhound should be presented clean and brushed out, after a few good shakes the coat will regain its broken appearance.

FAULTS - a soft and/or woolly outer coat, NO undercoat, open and blousy coats, and coats altered by undesirable grooming practices.



Bitch tan/black grizzle. Approx. 26"  
Harsh all over



Dog, tan/red grizzle  
Approx. 28"  
Harsh body and softer head and legs



**ANY COLOR OR COMBINATION IS ACCEPTABLE. THERE SHOULD BE NO DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF COLOR. THE NOSE SHOULD BE DARK AND FULLY PIGMENTED, BLACK, LIVER, OR SLATE, DEPENDING ON THE COLOR OF THE HOUND. EYE RIM PIGMENT SHOULD MATCH THE NOSE.**

*All Otterhounds have at least two colors in their coat. Most Otterhounds are varying degrees of black and tan. They are usually born dark coated and then continue to "grizzle out" through the years. Any hound color is acceptable, including grizzle, red, liver, blue, tan, tricolor (white with black and tan), and wheaten (light tan). Markings are badger pie, black, tan, grizzle, liver, white, lemon, silver, tan and white, and white and tan. Although eye rims and noses are usually black, they match the color of the hound. The color of an Otterhound at birth, or even as a young dog, is not necessarily predictable as to how it will appear as a mature adult.*



*Black and tan puppy and adult*



*tri-color adult*

**THE OTTERHOUND MOVES FREELY WITH FORWARD REACH AND REAR DRIVE. THE GAIT IS SMOOTH, EFFORTLESS, AND CAPABLE OF BEING MAINTAINED FOR MANY MILES. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OTTERHOUND GAIT IS A VERY LOOSE, SHAMBLING WALK, WHICH SPRINGS IMMEDIATELY INTO A LOOSE AND VERY LONG STRIDING, SOUND, ACTIVE TROT WITH NATURAL EXTENSION OF THE HEAD. THE GALLOP IS SMOOTH AND EXCEPTIONALLY LONG STRIDING. OTTERHOUNDS SINGLE TRACK AT SLOW SPEEDS. OTTERHOUNDS DO NOT LIFT THEIR FEET HIGH OFF THE GROUND AND MY SHUFFLE WHEN THEY WALK OR MOVE AT A SLOW TROT. THE OTTERHOUND SHOULD BE SHOWN ON A LOOSE LEAD.**

*The Otterhound must be considered a movement breed. It was developed for a specific job, and that job requires strength, stamina and agility. A hound that does not possess sound movement is incorrect, no matter what the other attributes. To lose the qualities that make the breed a tireless hunter, is to lose the true Otterhound. Because the Otterhound will cover many miles in a day's work, he should move freely and easily with some flexibility, giving the impression that he could move thus for a long period of time. A well-constructed Otterhound will move well, for, in the matter of gait, function follows form. Balance and symmetry equal effortless movement, capable of high performance. A smooth, lithe gait is essential, the stride should be exceptionally long with plenty of reach, the moderate angulation fore and aft allows for optimal balance and drive.*

*Evidence in lack of balance may be indicated by the hound that sidewinds, crabs, or moved with an exaggerated kick behind, all being faulty. Loose, long stride is not to be confused with wild, erratic movement. A prancing hound, though showy in the ring, is incorrect, as this is a wasted, inefficient, tiring motion. Even though the Otterhound should not be asked to move at excessive speed, question the hound who cannot increase to a moderate gait without galloping.*



The Otterhound should be shown on a loose lead so that he may extend his neck and thereby move in a natural manner. The so-called Otterhound "shuffle" is observed when the hound is moved in a walk or slow trot. Some Otterhounds will occasionally pace when starting to move, or when moving slow in a restricted area, this is a relaxing gait, and should not be penalized as long as they hit their stride when moving into a faster gait, resulting in the strong, active trot.

The Otterhound must stand with width both fore and aft to properly support the deep, strong body. It is advisable to have a hound walked out to stand naturally, then observe how he places his legs under his body, as well as the angulation of the stifle and hock. Walking slowly, he will move rather wide. As his speed increases, the legs will converge under the body. Going away the hocks are parallel, the rear driving. Cow hocks, hocks rubbing, or hocks crossing behind are serious faults. Approaching, the legs should be well extended with only minimal in-turning of the feet. There should be no looseness of pasterns causing paddling and/or winging. The elbows are free, neither tight and pinched, nor "flying". All action must be free flowing, powerful and driving.



*Level topline. Long striding, easy motion. Natural extension of the head.*

## TEMPERAMENT

### THE OTTERHOUND IS AMIABLE, BOISTEROUS AND EVEN-TEMPERED.

*Because Otterhounds throughout most of their history were bred exclusively for private hunting and maintained in packs, not having been considered for domestic pet status until rather recently, it is a breed that is still very close of its origins. It is a pack hound bred to be courageous, persistent in tracking and fighting the otter.*

*The Otterhound as a companion is lovable, endearing, intelligent, and occasionally boisterous with a sense of humor; however also persistent, which can be read as stubborn, and occasionally cautious with strangers. Though most always accepting of other dogs, if challenged and pushed they are ferocious and unforgiving in battle. The Otterhound has a beautiful, melodious, voice which he displays often to undoubtedly express his opinion.*



Barry voices his opinion!



Tyler is ready for Trick or Treaters!



Tony Loves Agility

Gilbert Excels As a Service Dog



## PRESENTATION

*The Otterhound should be presented in natural form, i.e. on a loose lead enabling him to display his free and far reaching gait. The coat, clean and brushed out, should be left in its natural state. Judges are URGED TO REMEMBER that the Otterhound is a hunting breed and soundness and working characteristics are far more important than cosmetic consideration. So much is made of presentation that too often attention is diverted from finding and rewarding true Otterhound type.*

*Thank you for your interest in the Otterhound...*







Sketch by: Stephen J. Hubbell