

first Glen—but it took me a while to accept it, understand it, and truly appreciate it. Boy, I do now. The metamorphosis that a Glen is likely to undergo over time, and we're talking three to six years, can be astonishing. Toplines can rise and fall like the stock market. Ribs spring and chests drop so dramatically that you can almost hear it happen. Backskulls broaden and muzzles realign, which also means mouths can change. Some bites do the cha-cha through the fourth year. And then there's the matter of substance. I have yet to find a way to properly prepare new owners for how remarkable that development can be in years three, four, and five—and sometimes six.

There's no downside to any of this for the pet owner since all one needs to do is sit back and enjoy the show. But this does challenge the patience of the breeder and exhibitor. For them, puppies are promise. The temptation is to get that pup into the ring sooner rather than later. There's certainly no problem with getting some ring experience for a promising pup. Nor is there an issue when it comes to supporting a puppy sweepstakes at a specialty. To the contrary, breeders and exhibitors should make every effort to do that. A puppy sweepstakes is, after all, promise on parade. But when puppy champions are being made up regularly, or specials are being campaigned that are under 2 years old, promise is being denied. These dogs could be retired before their promise can be realized and judges are denied the opportunity to adjudicate Glens in full bloom.

When Glens were recognized by the AKC in October 2004, several of us had patience forced upon us. Since we had no opportunity to gain championship points prior to that date, many of the entries at those first AKC shows at which Glens could compete were well past the growing-pains stage. In fact, the average age of the first five AKC champions was 5½ years old. What with the first weekend of recognition being Montgomery weekend, and the subsequent weekends including several of the big Northeast shows that drew substantial Glen entries, these first

champions competed against large numbers of Glens of all ages. Maturity prevailed and was rewarded. The very first champion, a bitch, was two months shy of her 5th birthday when she made Glen history on that inaugural weekend. She went on to set every major breed record—a title she still owns—in a campaign that lasted three years. She was retired at 8 years old. Similarly, the top-winning, record-setting Glen in the United Kingdom was retired a year ago at age 10½ after dominating the competition for four consecutive years. When we say "slow-maturing," we ain't kidding!

It's not easy to be patient with a promising pup in any breed. In our slow-maturing breed, patience is a particular virtue that can yield many rewards, especially that one most treasured by the breeder and exhibitor—promise realized. —Bruce Susman, New York, N.Y.; bluekafka@aol.com ♦



### Racy vs. Rangy

Frequently our club conducts ringside interviews with judges at the conclusion of the competition. Lately, we've heard judges exclaim over the *raciness* of their picks. Their elaboration included explanations such as "Raciness is a function of length," or "The longer the dog the racier he is." But what if a long Irish is out of proportion? Then he's more *rangy* than *racy*.

Harold R. Spira's *Canine Terminology* (Dogwise, 2001) provides some clarity. He defines *racy* as "streamlined and elegant," and *rangy* as "tall, long in body, often lightly framed and high on leg."

The Irish Terrier should be built with a graceful outline and to accommodate speed. The standard is clear about how this is to be accomplished. It specifies a *moderately long body*: *A short back is extremely objectionable. The loin (the section behind the last rib to the pelvic bone) should be strong, muscular, and slightly arched. The ribs should be deep and*

*well sprung (meaning they curve outward from the spine in an oval—not a round—shape.)* The Irish should have sturdy and strong bone structure and substance. The standard also emphasizes balance and proportion: No one element should dominate overall form.

The Irish is athletic, and full of stamina and strength of purpose. Speed, power, and endurance are essential.

Interestingly, dogs that tend toward ranginess (rather than raciness) frequently have shallow, slab-sided chests that are neither deep nor well-sprung, with length achieved more through an exaggerated length of loin than a moderately long back.

When loins are too long, we tend to see either no—or a poorly defined—tuck-up. When moving, the long-loined rangy Irish Terrier exhibits lateral sway and horizontal bounce—not the efficient, powerful, and smooth propulsion generated by the proportionally shorter loin that anchors the spine and unifies the whole dog as it moves.

A shallow, slab-sided chest also crowds the heart and lungs, thereby impeding the efficient operation of these critical organs. This diminishes the dog's endurance.

Here's a rule of thumb: Look for a rib cage that takes up about two-thirds of the space from the back of the shoulder muscle to the head of the pelvic bone. The loin (the space from the floating rib to the head of the pelvis) should be short—about a third of the space from the back of the shoulder muscle to the head of the pelvis. More than this reduces tuck-up, which not only detracts from the racy outline so desirable in our breed, but generates disturbed and inefficient movement. Combine this with a slab-sided Irish Terrier and you have one who not only moves awkwardly but also will tire quickly. No amount of conditioning or grooming can cure the problem—only careful breeding can.

So when considering what you're looking for in an Irish Terrier, remember that *raciness is not a function of length*: *We don't want a long Irish Terrier, we want a balanced Irish Terrier.*

—Robert Clyde and Marianne Kehoe, Plainfield, N.J.; m\_dkehoe@verizon.net ♦