

and black and tans will appear longer in body because of the solid, unbroken color. Moreover, black and tans and Rubies historically have had a tendency to be a bit longer in body, but knowing this a judge may make allowances for a bit longer body length if the dog has everything else going for him.

Judges should give equal consideration to all four colors and reward a good whole color whenever possible. In my view, a beautiful black and tan or Ruby gaiting around the ring, tail flowing straight behind, with outreaching stride and level topline, is a beautiful sight sometimes too often overlooked.

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## Chihuahuas

### The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: The Internet and Our Dogs

Doesn't anyone read books anymore? With the abundance of information available on the Internet, great books with great information never get opened. All the answers are just a click away. Really?

What each of us should consider is that the Internet groups we belong to and the information gleaned from them usually reflect the opinions of people with limited information. Topics of discussion are expounded on by many, and the reader must decipher which response is correct and may possibly be left believing that a statement is right when in fact it is wrong. Do we believe the person who is always winning in the show ring, the judge who has given us a great win, or the person we bought our favorite dog from? Be careful of the information you take from Internet conversations, as some of it may be bad information that could ultimately slow your progression to a successful breeding program.

Through the Internet, we hear the

dog world "lingo" and know the right words to use. We are all instant experts, or so it seems. Breeding our first litter and getting a dog who is "good enough" to show is great—but is "good enough" good enough? Do we even know and understand our breed standard?

This is a process that can take years of understanding. As time passes and we learn more, we will understand the standards more clearly and be able to breed better dogs.

Breeding dogs is truly a science. There are so many books on the subject. The information from these books cannot be learned from a few conversations on the Internet or captured in photos of the latest show win.

The ugly truth is that photos posted on the Internet can be deceiving. The dogs are manipulated by a handler and posed for a particular look. They are groomed to perfection to hide any flaws. And let's not forget being "Internet politically correct" by telling our friends how gorgeous their show dog is when they post his photograph. Not wanting to hurt feelings, we've all contributed to this behavior that is ultimately detrimental to our breed. Indeed, some of these dogs posted are mediocre examples of the breed and should not be used for breeding stock.

Judges award wins to undeserving dogs. Instant "stars" can be born depending on how much the breeders or owners use the Internet.

Those who have been around and done their homework know differently. These are the folks who have a plan. They are not breeding for the next best show dog, nor are they breeding for the accolades they expect to receive from their friends on the Internet. They breed for the love and betterment of their breed.

The good news is that there are fabulous books written by those who have the talent and experience to excel and breed top dogs time after time. They understand the structure of the dog and the significance of breed type. They put science to work, along with a natural

ability to have an eye for balance and beauty. Trust those who have put the years into these wonderful creatures and were generous enough to write it down on paper for all to read!

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## Chinese Cresteds

### Back to the Standard

Breed standards are written to be subject to interpretation. They are not written to describe any particular dog, but rather to describe characteristics of that mythical perfect dog who we know will never walk on this earth. As judges, then, we have a huge responsibility to interpret those standards as best we can, to choose those dogs who best represent what has been written by the parent clubs.

Where to start? Many standards, that of the Chinese Crested included, leave the judge a lot of room for creativity when evaluating dogs. This is not always a bad thing, but there are limits.

Let's start with something easy. The Chinese Crested is a dog who moves. A judge who is familiar with sound movement can apply what he already knows about movement to our breed. Anything "funny" coming and going would be a red flag. Lack of reach and drive probably means that the dog is faulty structurally. Stilted or hackneyed gait is not correct here. Sound, fluid movement is essential in a Chinese Crested.

Here is the function. This dog is an athlete. Obedience, rally, agility, and therapy are right up his alley.

The other side of the coin, of course, is form. The dog must look like a Chinese Crested. All would-be judges should spend time with a variety of people who are knowledgeable about the breed before they take on the task of judging. A lot of time with one person is not as good as a little less time with many people. We are all biased in some ways, and we can't help passing on those biases when we teach people.