

CANINE TERMINOLOGY - TYPE

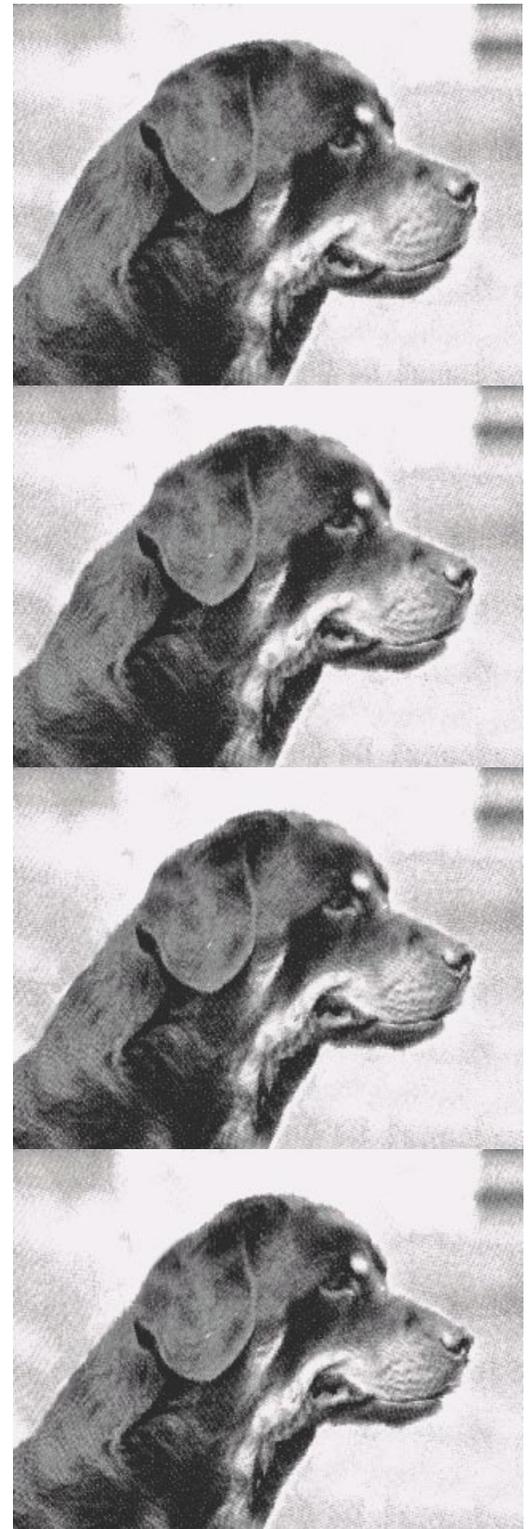
6th in a series - compiled by J. Seltzer

A Rottweiler is not a Whippet; a Whippet is not a Rottweiler! This seemingly inane statement actually defines the essence of type, for type when used to discuss purebred dogs is synonymous with breed character. It has been defined by the American Kennel Club as: the characteristic qualities distinguishing a breed; the embodiment of the Standard's essentials¹. However, perhaps the best discussion of type comes from Anna Katherine Nicholas in her excellent book, *The Nicholas Guide to Dog Judging*:



It refers to the combination of distinguishing features which add up to make each breed's stamp of individuality. A dog to be "typey", or of correct type, must be strong in these points, or features, considered by the Standard as characteristic of his breed. The word "type" is constantly abused by fanciers who misuse it as an expression of personal preference, and incorrectly in other ways. This is extremely confusing to those who wish to learn. We often hear a person say that a dog is, or is not, the type Pointer, or Poodle, or Boxer he does or does not prefer. Actually, there can be only one correct type within a breed. There are breeds in which the males are stronger in breed characteristics than are the females, but not of a different type. In all breeds, type is never a matter of personal preference, but rather an adherence to desired breed characteristics. A dog of good type is as just described. One of poor type is incorrect in those special features peculiar to his own breed. And one lacking in type is weak in distinguishing breed characteristics.

Variations within a breed do not make dogs of different type. The fact that a dog is small, or large, or heavily boned, or light in bone,



References:

¹*The Complete Dog Book*, 16th edition, Howell Book House, New York, 1980, p 763.

²Nicholas, Anna Katherine, *The Nicholas Guide to Dog Judging*, 3rd Edition, Howell Book House, New York, 1989, p 21.

extremely muscular, or overly refined, does not make a different type dog from others of its breed. Dogs of the same breed are basically the same type. Differences in individual features and conformation are exactly that. These features and the dog's general conformation must be evaluated point by point, faults against virtues, to decide which dog most closely conforms to the ideal type described in the Standard, and is thus the more typical, or better specimen of his breed.

A typey dog catches the expert eye on sight, being the very embodiment of his breed's heart and character. It is not just balance, nor flashy style, nor sound action, but a living example of the distinguishing features which make him of one special breed. A dog lacking in type is a common dog with little to offer his breed, even though he may be well-balanced, sound, and beautifully presented. A dog excelling in type is a valuable asset to his breed, even should he possess minor flaws in other respects.²

Nicholas considers the understanding of type to be one of the key elements in qualifying a person to be a dog show judge. Her five essentials: **Type, Balance, Style, Soundness**, and **Condition** she considers to be the key words in the vocabulary of a dog show judge. But of these, type is the *sine qua non*, for without it the dog is not a true representative of his breed and cannot be judged against the Standard for that breed.