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ABOUT THE PUMI
By Lajos Kis - 1980

In Hungary everyone knows the three ancient pastoral dog breeds the Komondor, the Kuvasz and the Puli.

The fourth Hungarian pastoral breed, the Pumi, however, is not as well known. The number of breeders who have been focusing on this terrier like breed is quite small.

The Pumi's origin goes back to the 18th century when French terrier type herding dogs entered to Hungary herding Merino sheep from the west and they interbred with the ancient Puli.

The controlled design and "construction" of the today known Hungarian pastoral breeds started at the Budapest Zoo in 1914.

At the beginning, the Pumi was not separated from the Puli. They treated and considered it as an offshoot of the Puli. They called it "the Puli with standing ears" or the "Puli of the Somogy region" (that is located in the Western part of Hungary.)

In his book, "Hungarian Dog Breeds," published in 1924, Emil Raitsits specifically discusses the Pumi and describes it as a regional terrier type version of the Puli that evolved overtime. Soon after it has begun the conscious breeding and separation of the Pumi from the Puli breed.

After separating the two breeds, the public welcome of the results could not have been more different. While the Puli has become a canine fashion icon in Hungary the Pumi's popularity was far more limited. To paraphrase the Nobel Laurate ethologist Lorenz Conrad, when a dog breed becomes overly popular, it often results in the detriment of the breed.

Luckily, the Pumi has avoided this feat by combining all good attributes inherited from the Puli combined with its terrier like disposition.

There are no limits to the Pumi vigorous exploratory nature. He charges if he needs to, nothing bothers him and it's also capable to stay next to his owner calmly while staring him for hours.

It is typical to the Pumi that he learns elimination inhibition in a very short time (in 2-3 months)

The Breed easily adopts to both, indoor or outdoor living. As a testament to the breed's hardiness I can report that in November of 1978 my Pumi bitch gave birth to seven puppies in an outside shelter in -20 Celsius and every single puppy not only survived but strove.

The Pumi's coat is curly and does not need any special care. By brushing the coat monthly the dog is easily ready for a conformation show.

The following story is to prove the versatility of the Pumi breed. We took three Pumis to one of Budapest's Dog Training facilities. When the dogs in the group were ready to learn attack on command, all three Pumis got highly aroused and charged the dummy with no hesitation. One of them, even latched on the dummy's arm and hold onto it quite a while.

Unfortunately, there are only four kennels, Sziki, Kutyavari, Csilleberci and Szepvezerpusztai that consistently working on the overall improvement of the breed. These kennels are also responsible that the Pumi confidently can be presented at conformation shows in black, grey and white colors.

The next goal is to improve the Pumi's phenotypic homogeneity, via collaboration of breeders.