

IMPRESSIONS

2007 Sieger Show – Braunschweig, Germany

THE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG – GERMAN SIEGER SHOW

“This is an edited version, with the exceptional agreement of the author”

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Held in Braunschweig, situated in Northern Germany, some 40 miles (60 km east of Hannover, this is the first time the Sieger Show has been held here. Braunschweig is a recently modernized city with a very attractive layout and old town.

Braunschweig, the city of Henry the Lion, is the biggest city in the south-eastern part of Lower Saxony. It is characterised by an appealing and exciting blend of the past and the present, tradition and the future.

There was some difficulty with available hotel accommodation, with many visitors staying in hotels some distance from the venue. Some out of choice, to exercise and accommodate their dogs in a rural surrounding, others because most 3 and 4 star hotels within Braunschweig were fully booked early in the year.

Let this serve as a strong recommendation for the many thousands planning to attend next year's Sieger Show at Aachen, to reserve their Hotel accommodation as early as possible. The hotels in Aachen are also very likely to be more expensive than the usual venues for the Sieger Show, so make sure you budget accordingly. It appears their prices rise steeply when a major event is held at the Equestrian Centre.

The Braunschweig Sieger Show 2007 was held in the Eintracht-Stadion, a superb venue for this hugely popular World Sieger Event, far more suitable than the venue for 2006, Niederrheinstadion Oberhausen, and very close to the excellent venue at Ulm, near Stuttgart. I fully appreciate the difficulties the SV have in finding suitable venues each year, and the tremendous organisation that goes into the planning and staging of this enormous event. We should all appreciate and thank everybody involved who work so hard to put this fabulous event on for us, year on year. Long may it continue, and long may we enjoy continuous improvements in all aspects of this vitally important event for the GSD.

The rings for the two Junior (12 to 18 months) classes (male & female) and the two Yearling classes (18 to 24 months) classes (male & female) were a short and pleasant walk from the main stadium, spacious well sized rings, with valuable access around all sides, which is of huge benefit to spectators and the numerous double handlers. It was notable how improved the facilities were for double handling, a very important part of exhibiting and presenting the German Shepherd Dog to its best advantage.

Inside the main stadium the seating was closer to the dogs than the usual stadiums at other Sieger Show venues. This considerably improved the experience for the spectators, and reduced the need for binoculars. It also offered some wonderful vantage points around the stadium to see all the famous dogs and their progeny, and the first 20 of the younger classes when they were paraded in the main stadium around noon on the Sunday. This was hugely appreciated by the spectators and exhibitors, many leaving the show feeling they had gained more from this show, than many previous Sieger Shows.

I sincerely hope the SV make plans to hold this event again in Braunschweig in the near future, as well as Ulm, another of my favourite venues.

There was a variety of facilities for various foods and drinks, Bratwurst, western steaks (marinated pork steaks) especially, and copious supplies of fabulous German beer, all of which was certainly enjoyed by many Brits. Many stalls selling a variety of dog-related products were located around the stadium.

The usual social gatherings took place, especially amongst friends and acquaintances from different countries. It is a valuable aspect of the Sieger Show to meet up with people and discuss the GSD world, its ups and downs, the speculation and the rumours, the tips for success, the disappointments, and the likely winners and placings for each class, etc. etc. This is a most enjoyable part of this great show and it provides many an insight into a person's knowledge and perception of the German show scene. It always surprises me how many people fail to grasp the German Show System, and that the judging for this spectacular event starts back in April each year. It would be useful for the GSD League, the progressive WUSV Breed Club here in the UK, to hold seminars on the German breed & show system. Other WUSV clubs in various countries could do the same, I am sure they would be well attended and appreciated by all.

The final groups of the Working Classes (over 2 years) are judged in the main stadium on the Sunday afternoon. Of necessity, because of the very large entry, all the classes are placed in groups of approximately 50 to 60, and to cater for the larger younger classes, there can be as many as four groups, as for example in the young female class. It is quite normal when a group has been judged, for several from the front of a lower group to be moved up to compete in the next highest group.

The weather forecast suggested the show would have some sunshine, cloud, some showers and rain, over the 3 days. Whereas the weather for most of the show was very good; with some cloud and heavy rain on Friday, on the Sunday the weather was almost perfect for the dogs and spectators alike. The temperatures were quite pleasant during the three days. Considering this show was being held in Northern Germany, which has weather similar to the UK, many feared it could rain, and dampen their pleasure. I am sure most people had packed clothes suitable for their best and the worst expectations.

Once again I have compiled the '**MAIN RESULTS**', on my website www.videxgsd.com, I hope you find these useful. It also means you can easily see all the major winners, and the sire and dam of each one, at a glance, which also highlights those males producing the best youngsters at the show.

The 2007 Sieger Show brought a change in the Judges for the **adult working class females**, **Bernhard Norda** of the Klostermoor kennel, and the judge for **adult working class males** being **Reinhardt Meyer** of the vom Bergmannshof kennel, Reinhardt is the newly elected National Breed Warden of the SV.

Bernhard Norda is a well known SV judge. Bernhard has a quiet and pleasant manner, and his ability and experience while judging the Working Class females was a pleasure to watch.

Reinhardt Meyer, with his election to National Breed Warden of the SV, in December 2006, brought many questions and expectations as to how he would judge the Working dog males, and how he would implement some of his declared plans and views on our breed. Reinhardt is well known for his strongly held views regarding our breed's future direction; he has a steely determination which will ruffle many feathers in the SV hierarchy, and amongst his fellow Judges, and Körmeisters. I will refer to this later.

The Ursus bloodlines figured prominently throughout the classes; however it is clear that other bloodlines are now emerging, and combining very well with the many qualities Ursus gave our breed. It should be always be remembered that the strength and substance that Ursus gave, and which continues through many of his sons and daughters, can combine well and benefit the medium sized males with medium strength and substance. The successful kennels in our breed know the value of a producing female line, and the careful consideration that must be given when looking for suitable dogs to complement their female.

One of the prominent bloodlines in 2006 was that of **Dux della Valcuvia**. His son **Quantum von Arminius** VA2 and the Quantum son, **Zamp vom Thermodos** making VA1 & Sieger, continues to produce very well. Zamp had an outstanding progeny group. The very best group I have seen in all my visits to the Sieger Show. For me it topped his group of 2006. This bloodline is without doubt going to play a major role in the future development of our breed.

In my previous "Impressions" I stated the value of top producing females in a Stud dogs pedigree, and the Dux, Quantum, Zamp bloodline emphatically proves this point. Couple these top producing females with outstanding producing Sires and you can see the important sire line that has emerged. This is exactly what makes these bloodlines so valuable to our breed. Of course they will be combined with other lines, and continue to make a positive contribution to our breed.

There was the usual large number of dogs excused at this year's Sieger Show. I despair at this annual exodus. It is an insult to the Judges, and should be more tightly controlled. I am aware, from emails received, that many exhibitors felt their dog has been insulted by the Judge, with an unworthy call out place given to their dog, and this is why they withdrew their dog. My response is simply this, you have entered your dog for the Judges opinion, when you get it, just accept it. I am always surprised at the apparent acceptance by the Judges of the Sieger Show, of these insulting levels of withdrawals.

The inclusion and placement of some VERY BIG males in this class, and other classes, including some VA males and females, and other Adult females, in this year's Sieger Show, raises fundamental questions as to the integrity of the German Körung system. To say it LACKS integrity is certainly not an inaccurate statement.

The SV Körung requires all Class 1 males being measured at 65 cms or less at their withers. Of course a male over 65cms up to 66cms can only receive a class 2 Körung, and according to the SV rules and regulations, EVERY MALE OVER 66cms CANNOT BE AWARDED A KORUNG and EVERY FEMALE OVER 61cms CANNOT BE AWARDED A KORUNG. The SV rules further state there is NO appeal against a Körmeister's decision in this matter, even if he measures a 65cms or 66cms male at a higher measurement, and consequently he denies the male a Körung. Such rules are unreasonable in our sport. NO man is an island unto himself, and absolute power corrupts.

Many believe that Herr Reinhardt Meyer is going to seriously tackle many challenges facing our breed, particularly the size issue, the jury is out. Clearly this must be an immense task for Reinhardt, as this year there were some VERY BIG males in his VA group and the rest of his class. **(The Italian Sieger results will also influence many people with regards to any serious assault on the size problem – with Nando making Sieger)**

I certainly have more to say on the issue of size. However do not think that I dislike big dogs - my clear position is that **I simply want our breed size standard raised to a**

genuinely realistic one. The dishonest practices regarding measuring that prevail in Germany, and elsewhere, must end; it is simply no longer acceptable or tolerable.

Many German dogs winning top honours are being used extensively at stud, and often sold abroad. I believe that many of these dogs have completely false height to wither measurements in their Körung, which if the measurement was accurate, under the SV existing rules & regulations would STOP such dogs receiving a Breed Survey (Körung) pass grade. Such a loss to our breed would be a tragedy. In the past many well oversize males, including many Siegers and VA's, have been hugely beneficial to our breed's progress. Can you imagine our breed today without some of those great (big) males? SV rules & regulations should not exclude such males from our breeding pool, and their inclusion should not rest on the breaking of such rules and regulations, this is why I call for changes.

It has been reported to me that many German Import males, with Class 1 Körung, were entered in this year's Canadian Sieger Show, and I was informed that the German SV Judge measured these males, and threw them out of the adult class, for being oversize. I am also informed that many of the incensed owners of these males are considering legal action against the SV, for providing their Korung's, under their rules and regulations, with obvious and very serious inaccuracies. I would like to receive more information about this occurrence and any similar. There can be no doubt that changes have to be made in our breed standard relating to the size of our GSD, and to the Rules and Regulations connected to measuring dogs.

Our current breed standard states the ideal size for a male is 62.5 cms - what a joke - how many males do you see of this size among the thousands at the Sieger Show? It then goes on to allow 2.5 cms either side of this ideal. Can you even imagine a male of 60 cms; I would collapse in hysterics if I ever saw one. And if I ever bred one I would be very concerned about its genetic makeup. Can you imagine taking a male of less than 62.5 cms into a show ring, or using such a male in your breeding programme? We need to get real, I have been in this breed for well over 30 years, and I am a Championship Show Judge and a reasonably successful breeder. I despair at our breed standard regarding height to withers, and I am angry at the insults to my intelligence that I am forced to tolerate on a continuing basis. At many GSD Shows, throughout the World, when I am told dogs have a Körung class 1 from Germany, and then when I look at them, and even having measured some of them, they are higher than 66 cms, and many go up to 70 cms.

It is way beyond time that the SV stop refusing a Körung based on oversize, and change the Breed Standard on size. I would suggest that 65 cms is the ideal size for a male, and we should allow 2.5 cms either side of this for a Class 1 Körung. Outside of this range should result in a Class 2 Körung, and an appeal should be allowed if the owner disagrees with the measurements taken by the Körmeister. One thing I am absolutely certain about, well over 95% of males in the Show rings around the World, fall within my suggested measurements. With a very large portion within the upper half.

We have a breed standard for size, which is considered sacrosanct, "cast in stone", by the SV, the SV Judges and Körmeisters. Then this system allows these very people to persist in inaccurate measuring, particularly in the Körung, on a very selective basis. If anyone thinks my questioning of a Körmeister's ability to measure both accurately and honestly is wrong, and we do not need an appeal system, then let the perfect Körmeisters step forward, please.

If the SV doubts the size of the problem, or in any way wishes to challenge my comments and assertions, I would respectfully request that they organise the independent measuring of the first 20 dogs in ALL classes at the Sieger Show 2008, in Aachen. My suggestion is NOT intended to replace the judge's responsibilities in any way

whatsoever; it is intended to provide independent and factual information of the size of each of these exhibits. The measurement information to be published in the SV Zeitung at the earliest opportunity. Such open and transparent checks on easily obtained information about the top dogs at the Sieger Show, on an annual basis, would be invaluable to our breed's future progress. Surely this is obvious to all.

I am not forgetting for one moment that this Sieger Show is the "German Sieger Show". However the SV are fully aware of the Worldwide responsibility they hold for our breed, and the Worldwide impact this Sieger Show has. Not forgetting the SV Worldwide power and influence through the WUSV

I firmly believe that if the SV do not introduce changes to the Breed Standard regarding size, and changes in their Rules and Regulations regarding size, especially with regard to their Körung, they will in future be faced with litigation cases from within Germany and from around the World. They should be aware that we live in ever increasing litigious times, as well as very easy and comprehensive global communications. The current situation is unsustainable, the challenge is to formulate changes which are sustainable and will encourage transparent honesty. Perhaps legal action may be directed at the Körmeister who have such absolute power regarding the Körung, and particularly measuring the size of the dogs.

Note Körung Rule: 2.5.4 The decision of the acting Körmeister is final. An objection against it is not permitted.

Note Körung Rule: 6.4 Measurements and weights

The measurements for weight, depth of chest and chest diameter can be taken by the Körmeister or his authorized helper or Körung manager; the withers measurements are taken by the Körmeister.

Note Körung Rule: 7.5 Unsuitability for the Körung **b)** Oversize or undersize of more than 1 cm;

Note Körung Rule: 7.7.3 The breed survey can end, become invalid, through the process of revocation. This comes about through a recommendation by a Körmeister or conformation judge to the Köramt (survey office at HQ). A "hold" can be put on the process of recording the survey results for whatever time is necessary to iron out any possible problems.

The Sieger Judges in 2008, and all SV judges, should measure **EVERY DOG**, that is shown in Germany, and where they are oversize – they should implement **Körung Rule: 7.7.3** immediately – if they cannot do this, then at least be honest about the ACTUAL SIZE PREVALENT in our breed, and adjust the breed standard accordingly. Ostrich behaviour is unacceptable. The size problem is NOT reducing, if anything it is growing, we need to face up to reality, and implement new breed standard height measurements urgently. I totally refute the argument that if the breed standard height is raised, our breed will get even bigger. This is an argument put forward by those that wish to retain the present dishonest and corrupt system. **The way to absolutely ensure this does NOT happen is very simple**, Judges and Körmeister's measure honestly and very strictly, with absolutely **NO EXCEPTIONS**, not even for friends or other Judges or Körmeister's, or any other connections. The SV must then implement a Rule to remove a Judge or Körmeister from office if they measure any dog dishonestly. Perhaps the famous German "efficiency with quality" can be illustrated by the SV in this important matter.

Perhaps the SV Judge of the Canadian Sieger Show 2007 – had the courage (sic) to throw oversize dogs out of the class, but not enough to implement **Körung Rule: 7.7.3** above. Then again perhaps he did???

Again I make no apologies for writing about these very serious issues here in my **IMPRESSIONS**. The Sieger Show is the most globally important and globally influential German Shepherd Show. We must highlight all the most important issues affecting the breed's present and future for open debate, so that they may be taken seriously by the powerful and influential German Shepherd organisations, especially those within Germany- the Homeland.

I now look forward to **next years Sieger Show** to be held in **Aachen**, near **Cologne** (Koln), in North West Germany. It is a prosperous City, with very good, albeit expensive Hotels, many 3 and 4 star Hotels charging around £10 (150 Euros) per night, often with breakfast extra. So please book your Hotels early if you do not want to be disappointed. Holland and Belgium are very close to the venue, and if you are prepared to travel, say up to 25 miles, you will be able to book into some reasonably priced Hotels. Rose & Harry Emmett had once again organised their excellent Sieger Trip to this year's Show, and I understand they will be organising it again for next year and hopefully for many years to come. Because of the closeness of the venue, Aachen, to Dover –Calais, some 3 hours drive from Calais, the coach trip will be going straight to the Hotel in Aachen. It is very well supported and appreciated by all - the atmosphere on their trips is excellent. Because they are cutting out the usual French overnight stay, the trip should be of shorter duration. For those of you who have never been to a Sieger Show, or have not been for some years, make up your mind to go in **2008**. God willing I will see you there.

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