

# PHARAOH HOUND

BY NIKKI RIGGSBEE

The Pharaoh Hound resembles the dogs represented in ancient Egyptian temples, but its more recent historical home was the island of Malta in the Mediterranean Sea. The National Dog of Malta, the breed is known there as Kelb tal-Fenek, the dog of the rabbit, and is used for rabbit hunting. When the breed was introduced to the United Kingdom in the 1960s, it was renamed to “Pharaoh Hound.”

The Pharaoh Hound first came to the United States in 1967. It is listed on AKC’s Low Entry Breeds list and is ranked 174<sup>th</sup> out of 190 breeds in AKC’s 2017 registration statistics. Often with the breeds with lower numbers, the challenge in doing a survey of the breed’s priorities is

finding enough breed experts to participate and then to convince enough of them to participate.

We found eighteen Pharaoh Hound breed experts to invite to take the survey. Fourteen agreed to do so, and ten completed surveys were received. A couple more said they were trying, but theirs were not returned. I was curious that with lower than normal participation how much impact any outliers would have on the results – how skewed the averages would be by the one or two whose opinions were noticeably different from most of the others. Those who contributed to this survey have been in the breed for nearly twenty-five years on average.

*This article is not intended to promote fault or part judging. Nor is it to imply that any characteristic called for in the standard is unimportant. Judging, and breeding, is about prioritizing and about what the judge or breeder will forgive. Discussing priorities can help in learning how to better evaluate a breed.*

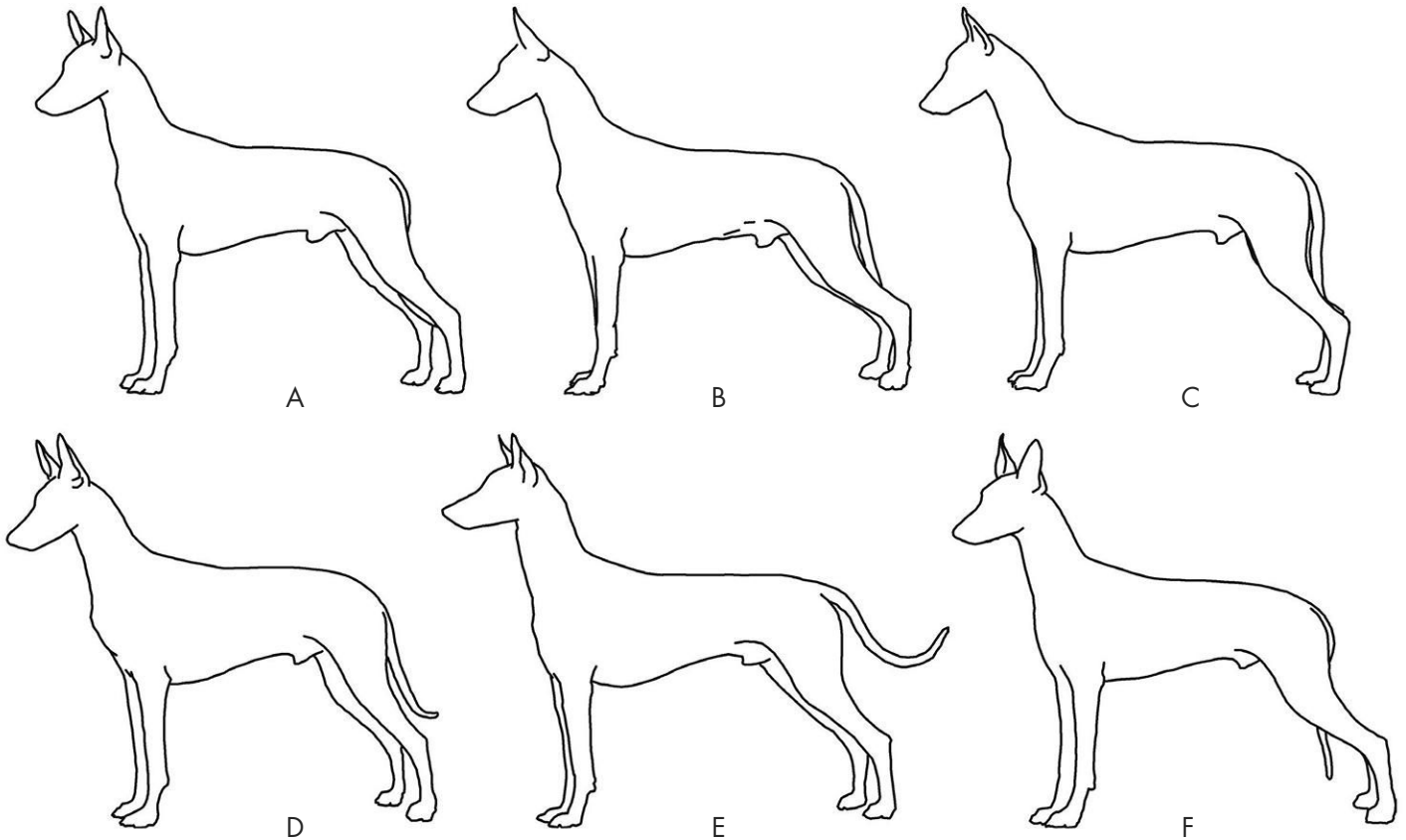


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## Pharaoh Hound Outlines

*Pick Best of Breed and Best of Opposite Sex*

### DOGS



“Ears not fine and large” (tied at 6<sup>th</sup>) well below average, although four thought it quite serious. “Top of skull not parallel with foreface” (tied at 9<sup>th</sup>) was fairly serious for half, but three had it in the last quartile.

“Lacking alert expression” (14<sup>th</sup>) ranked middling for four, but near bottom for another four. Four had “White flecking (coat)” (11<sup>th</sup>) fifteenth or sixteenth, but three had it among the top three, raising its average.

“Height above or below size range” (tied at 9<sup>th</sup>) was very important for four, middling for three, and at or near bottom for another three. Four thought “Screw tail” (13<sup>th</sup>) unimportant, while three had it quite important. “Nose not flesh color” (8<sup>th</sup>) was ranked all over, from first through sixteenth.

Additional input would break the ties at six and nine. But otherwise, no fault had an average rank less than a tenth-of-a-point from an adjacent fault.

Again, to check for the impact of outliers, I removed the lowest rank (highest number) from each of the top eight faults and the highest rank (lowest number) from each of the bottom eight faults. “Nose color” became seventh and “Not lithe” eighth. “Too tall or short” changed to less serious than “Lacking paral-

lel planes.” “Too much stop” and “White fleck in coat” traded places. Overall, not big changes. Two of the surveys contributed as four potential outlier opinions each.

The experts were fairly consistent with the virtues and faults. Structure virtues and faults, including fronts and rears, ranked highly as did movement. Head was around the middle on both. Correct ears were somewhat less important as a virtue, but faulty ears were more serious. Tail was at or near the bottom of both lists.

### Essential Characteristics

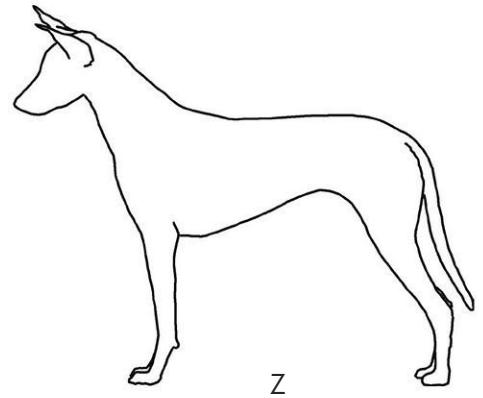
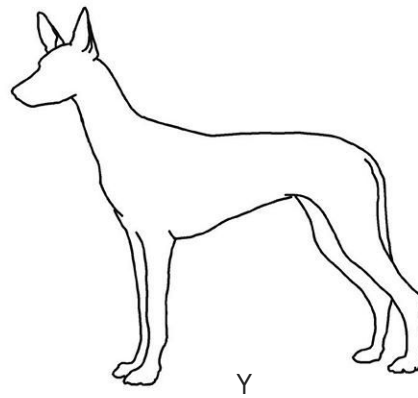
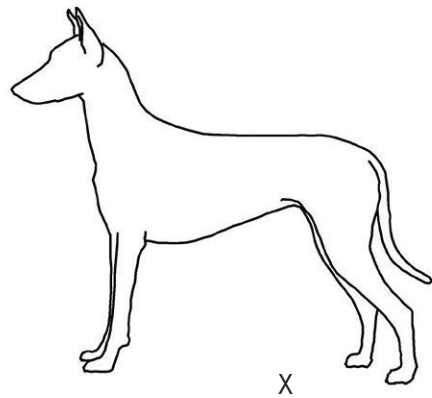
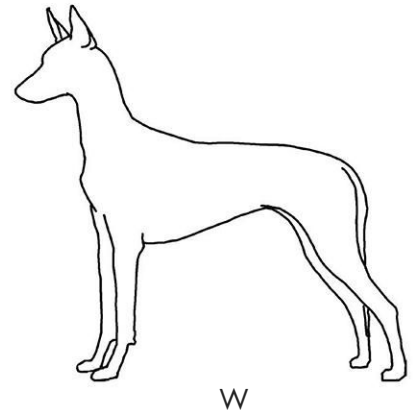
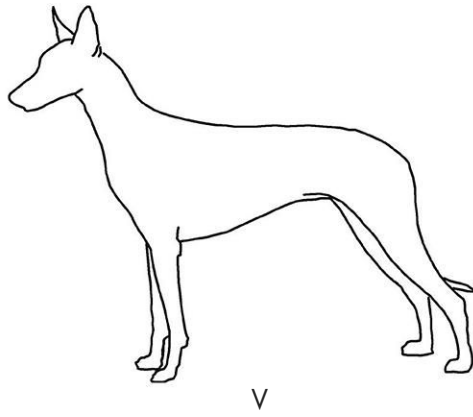
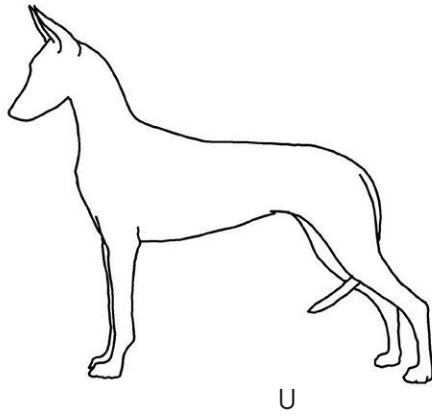
The experts were asked to name four to six characteristics that a Pharaoh Hound must have to be a good one, what they look for when evaluating their breed.

Balance and movement were named most often, with movement comments including good reach, no hackney, athletic, ease, grace, elegance, and no single tracking. Also named frequently were ears (size and placement), head (blunt wedge, good expression, parallel planes, depth of muzzle), and terms such as elegant, lithe, grace, power, and speed.

## Pharaoh Hound Outlines

*Pick Best of Breed and Best of Opposite Sex*

### BITCHES



### Outlines

The experts evaluated outlines of six Pharaoh Hound dogs and six bitches, placing each set first through fourth as a dog show class. The outlines were made from photos of good quality Pharaoh Hounds, but none is perfect. The experts might change their placements if they saw the dogs in real life, went over them, and saw them move.

The dog with the best average score was Pharaoh Hound "D." Those who placed him first wrote "slightly longer than tall, not overangulated in rear," "nicely balanced moderate dog," "correct head, neck, forechest, angulation, and topline," "chest down to elbow, head planes parallel, nice curve of upright ears," "equal moderate angles, slight neck arch, base of tail in line with toes of back feet," and "best return of upper arm, better shoulder angulation."

The second place male was dog "A." Comments on him included "correct moderate turn of stifle," "most balanced, correctly proportioned," "most correct neck set," "best make and shape, outline," and "good neck, head, and topline."

The Pharaoh Hound female with the best average placement was bitch "W." Those who liked her said "outline, make and shape," "nicely balanced with good shoulder angles, correct topline, pleasing neck, correct depth of chest, good pasterns," "slightly longer than tall, definitely a bitch, gorgeous curve of neck, nice layback," and "best overall outline."

Bitch "V" had the next best average placement. Comments on her included "best combination of mass, angles, moderate sweep in rear," "lovely balance, smooth outline, correct neck set, good length of ribcage, and smooth underline/tuck-up," "most functional in build, head better than the others," and "front properly set."

Best of Breed was dog "D," placed BOB by half the experts, with the best overall placement score and most first placements of all twelve. Dog "B" was the only other named BOB by more than one expert.

Dogs "A," "B," and "D" were the only males placed first on any survey. Bitches "W" and "V" were each placed first four times, and bitches "U" and "X" were each placed first once.

Dogs "D" and "A" were placed in the ribbons by all of the experts; "E" and "F" were unplaced on eight surveys. All of the



bitches were out of the ribbons on at least two surveys, bitch “U” most often followed by “V” and “Y.” The group seemed less impressed with the bitch outlines overall.

One expert commented that all breed judges would put up dog “B” and bitch “U.”

### **Additional Notes from the Experts**

The Pharaoh Hound experts offered these additional comments on their breed.

- Pharaohs are a moderate breed, and exaggeration of any feature, although flashy, is a fault.
- Pharaohs are a functional hunting breed that can hunt for hours over rocky terrain. They need substance with athleticism.
- Our breed is medium-sized, slightly longer than tall, sound/balanced, unexaggerated.
- The Pharaoh Hound should be elegant and lithe, never clunky or heavy boned.
- Movement must be with ease, grace, and elegance.
- Many Pharaoh Hounds are becoming far too big; be mindful of size.
- Pharaohs are the only sighthound that does not single track.
- No color is better than another as long as it is a shade of red.
- Skittish temperament on exam should never be rewarded.
- White tail tip is only highly desired, but not necessary.
- Flecking only applies to areas outside the allowed white areas.
- The words “medium” and “moderate” are used six times in our standard.
- They should exhibit good reach and drive with balance, but the “flying trot” with tremendous reach and drive is not correct for our breed.
- We are a rarer breed so judging decisions can have a major impact on the future of the breed.
- All Pharaoh Hounds should have a strong underjaw.
- Depth of brisket should not be past the point of the elbow.
- Let the dogs free stack when evaluating.

Thank you so much to those experts who took the time to help with this project and share their knowledge.