

Dear committee of the Finnish Border Collie and Australian Kelpie breedclub,

I want to thank you for a lovely experience to being invited into your beautiful country to judge Border Collie males at your speciality 2018.

The Show venue was lovely and the weather conditions were better than expected, we only needed a break in Championclass due to a short rainshower.

It was really nice to be able to rate a small excerpt of Border Collies from puppy class to veterans.

I have had the honour to judge all puppy classes and found a very nice ee red male and an outstanding example of a red merle bitch, whom I was awarding "Best Puppy" and who won "Best Puppy in Show" later under Martin Johansson.

Although not my preferred colour, this puppy caught my eyes the moment she entered the ring. She was pure balance, nothing overdone, all there. Just right for her age, I am seeing a big future for her.

My junior males were a bit of a Challenge for me, but actually I liked them and hope, they will be growing into something; lovely length of legs, lovely necks, good angles, but very immature due to their size. Maybe I will meet any of them in a few years time.

My adult classes were quite different. Some really showy ones, some were lovely stood; all types of heads and body shapes.

I need to tell you that I have not been very happy with the handling of most of the dogs.

Actually it was nearly impossible to move a whole class together without them getting crazy.

So I tried to give them a better chance to move them one by one.

I think it would only be fair to your own dog to prepare it better for shows. Some of your dogs were beaten under their value for sure, but I can't place a dog (better) if it does not behave or does not show its movement.

At the end I have had a nice line-up for best males in Champion quality and I chose the veteran dog for its breed type, correct shape, balanced body and an adequate movement. My second best male was very nice as well and could have won another day for sure.

I have a few things in mind that I do not want to withhold from you:

Problems that are often seen in a modern type of Border Collies these days and also on that day are an incorrect eye placement, often along with round, black eyes.

It may look pretty and teddy-bear alike for some, but is incorrect as it is of no use for a working dog when its peripheral vision is limited.

Another problem comes with this modern type: a short and deep muzzle, often seen with loose lips.

Those strong, deep heads come along with too much substance very often – so a very different type, some breeders have to be very careful when loosing breedtype!

Listen to experienced breeders and judges, who say that “you need to recognize the breed only in its silhouette standing and on the move”. Well, this does not need any more explanation.

Another thing that really has made me sad was some dogs in adult classes that did not show any sign of “life” to me nor to their handlers; no temperament nor expression. I can’t bear seeing dead black eyes on a Border Collie. And I have seen some.

And the last topic, which really needs some discussion is movement. To being honest, I have only seen a very few adult males that moved like a Border Collie. Some may have moved better if trained better for the Show, some were having severe problems in body balance and the required angulations in front and rear.

There was a beautiful Border Collie with breed type, beautiful body balance, perfect angulations, expression and his daisy-cutting movement gave me goose bumps. Unfortunately he was not able to participate in regular classes, at least he won the “special classes”.

I loved the temperament and attitude of the Junior winner, best bitch and BOB and in the battle for Best in Show she showed a better rear movement than the BOB Kelpie that I got, so I awarded her Best in Show at the end of the day. Loved the sparkles in her eyes and she was well put together. She moved with ease and drive. Congratulations on her breeder and owner.

Let me thank you for a very fair handling in the ring, all dogs were clean, none of them was anxious, some wanted to kiss me, what I really prefer to statues;-)

I would suggest organizing a handling seminar, paired to a breed show maybe or training classes for showdogs. What a pity to leave quality fallow.

Thank you for a wonderful weekend in your beautiful country!

Yours faithfully

Lisi Ertl