

Societa Italiana Collies NEPI 6-10-2017

When I was first contacted to judge this show, I have to say I was over the moon, thought all my Christmas's had come at once, etc. etc.

Anyone who knows me understands how much I like Italy, the Italian way of life, the food, the wine, I mean what's not to like and I keep going on about how I would love to retire to Italy. I was asked by the secretary having booked the flights to change the date to a week later, which I duly did. I was met at the airport and taken to my accommodation Monte dell'Olmo which was a agri tourist place only a few minutes drive from the show venue and was told that I would be picked up for my meal that evening at 8.30pm and it was now 7.30pm giving me one hour.

I went into my challet and was amazed at how spacious it was. It had it own kitchen diner lounge, bedroom and on-suite.

Quickly unpacking and choosing what to wear, I then had a shower, which I have to say was brilliant, not the turn it on give it a tweak, try it, give it a tweak type of thing. No it was turn it on set it at the middle and it was good to go. Needless to say I showered morning and night the whole time I was there, with temperatures hitting 38 degrees, yes it was lovely weather too.

I was picked up by someone banging on the door who I discovered was Claudio Ciaravalle and driven to a fantastic family run and very busy Italian restaurant on the outskirts of the town I was staying near and I proceeded to have a nice cold beer and a fantastic Italian Porcini mushroom pasta dish, while the pizzas that arrived for other diners looked enormous. Needless to say we had a great night and I was dropped back off near midnight and told I would be picked up around 8am by the President Luca Bernardini and taken to the show venue where they were setting up the show and letting some Rough Collie loose on some sheep.

I slept like a log and woke to my phone alarm which was set at 7am, had my shower and went for breakfast and then decided I would walk up to the main road to meet the President, about a 1 mile walk in lovely countryside on the edge of the town called Nepi.

Well I must have looked strange in my red jeans white shirt and Kennel Club tie standing on the street corner (don't even think about making a comment) then up comes the President with passenger Laura Recalenda and off we go to the venue.

Bosco Mignolo was the venue for the weekend activities a rural location on part of an agricultural equestrian centre with dog training and pet store.

I arrived just as the first rough collie was being shown how to herd sheep by Roberto Francehetti and it was lovely to see the instinct of the herding dog in a Rough Collies, they seemed to learn quite quickly and only the odd snack at the wool so the temperament was also good for the job, Brilliant to watch.

Then it was buffet lunch at Casale Della Ghiandaia followed by 2 lectures from local vets. I picked up quite a bit of what was said as I understand Italian more than I speak it.

It was pointed out to me afterwards that my nose had caught the sun and was red, I joked that it was coordinated with my jeans.

When I retired that evening I read the UK Breed Standard as I always do before any judging appointment to reaffirm it in my head.

The day of the show I was again picked up by Luca Bernardini and on arriving at the show was introduced along with the Smooth Collie judge Giacinto D'Alessio who was judging first.

I started judging and was immediately impressed by the standard of Collies, with few exceptions they were all of good substance and confirmation with only one or two with minor movement problems which was not helped by the bumpy ground in places in the ring.

Coat and condition was again very good considering they had just been through the hottest summer in Italian history I believe with temperatures over 40 degrees for months. Head and expression on nearly all was excellent with only a few that were slightly full in eye, one or two who could have had higher set ears and only one with a slight receding back skull. I suppose my point here is that the standard of Rough Collie in Italy is of a very high standard and are a credit to their owners.

My best male winning the CAC was from Libera Maschi, Free Male Class and was Mopava Polar Sun Gold (My Souls du Clos de Sea Wind X Quand Elle Peu della Crona Ferrea) a three year old sable and white owned and shown by Riccardo Prandstraller and the CAC gave him his Club Champion title, subject to any confirmation.

The bitch classes as in the UK were supported more and my best bitch and Best of Breed and Best In Show was from the Campioni Femmine Champion Females Class and was Keyline Marilyn Monroe (Your Silver Sunshine Von Haus Rosenpracth X Keyline Kuala Lumpur) a three year old blue merle of outstanding quality and presented and shown to perfection by owner Emanuela Licini.

What a show though, a fantastic atmosphere smoothly run and relaxed, more people should have come to see such a lovely well run and organised show, they would have enjoyed it so much. Congratulations to President Luca Bernardini, Laura Recalenda who was always busy sorting out things in the background and big thank you also to Claudio Ciaravalle who I believe was the man behind the venue and who has a big passion for horses as well as dogs. A big thank you to everyone who helped make the show such a success and above all thank you to the exhibitors for coming, without you there would be no show. I miss Italy already and can't wait to get back.

Gracie Mille Societa Italiana Collies.
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