

## Thoughts on La Tollara

Although the request to write a report on the show came quite late I found it rather easy to write this general comment as I have vivid memories of the dogs shown under me. I was well pleased with my main winners and the overall quality was up to international standards. Your committee is very lucky to have the privilege to host the Raduno at the Centro Cinofilo Alessandrino as this is a lovely venue with ample space for a large outside ring in the fields and if need be suitable bad weather accommodation. However dogs, exhibitors and visitors enjoyed a lovely day out in the sun and the show proceeded in a very relaxed atmosphere.

I had to take a few hard decisions on the way as the competition between some of the top exhibits was pretty tight. This was the case in particular between the two champion dogs **Ares Good Side** and **Unloved Kevin della Collina dei Ciliegi** and also in the choice for best dog. Again when making up my mind for the bitch CAC between **Golden Hill Collies of the Lario Lake** and **Born to Shine**. In the end the quality of expression was decisive as I found the desired sweetness in my winners. Having said that I want to give credits to the lovely heads of Unloved Kevin and Born to Shine, the latter probably the best headed exhibit of the show. I was also well impressed with the overall qualities of my dog CAC winner **Papillon Flight Nero della Cambianella**. He has the most gorgeous outline and construction and shows this off with his huge white collar. A very glamorous dog. I was well surprised to find out that I had seen him the day before – working sheep in the muddy grass. What an added bonus to have such a born showman and working abilities as well! Pleased to hear that this was his crowning CAC – well deserved. At the end of the day I found myself very lucky to have **Ares Good Side** compete with his sister **Ablaze With Light** for best of breed as both these dogs are outstanding in eye and expression, of a lovely type, well constructed and handled to their advantage. Being the only adult entered my best smooth **Romolo di Casa Bocci** unfortunately had no competition. He is a quality specimen – well constructed, very sound and of a lovely type. He should be able to do well in strong and international competition. For best in show expression was the key to success for **Ablaze With Light**.

I will conclude with some general remarks. To my opinion the most important problem in the breed remains front construction. However I was quite pleased with a fair number of exhibits that had a good reach of neck and sufficient length of body. This adds so much to the overall elegance and is essential for soundness. I want to focus this time on a few other developments that worry me. In recent times there appears to be an increasing number of dogs with the following shortcomings. A return of rather big and heavy, deep tipping and wide set ears. And it seems that we are also starting to lose the lovely straight line of nose that had become familiar. Old times seem to relive with so many drop offs! What worries me most though are the many big, round and often light coloured eyes. We have to make sure that we get rid of these. Remember that the eye should be almond shaped, medium sized and of dark brown colour. Without this we lose the desired sweetness and expression to me is paramount. The standard is very explicit about its importance!

I would like to thank the committee of the Italian Collie Club for their kind invitation and all the exhibitors for their entries and the sporting way in which they accepted my decisions. Special thanks to the members of the committee that looked after me so well during the weekend and presented me some lovely meals. Thanks Laura and Luca! Ciao to everybody!

Ruud Santen