
HISTORY

Melting Pot

For many ages, the country of Hungary, situated in the heart of Europe, was the melting pot of Huns, Slavs, Teutons and Turks who lived together in this part of central Europe. During the so-called Great Migration – between the fourth and the sixth centuries – different types of dogs arrived on the Great Hungarian Plain of the

early 20th century, Dr. Raitsits travelled around the country looking for good examples of Hungarian sheepdogs, but seemed more interested in Pulis and Pumis than in the so-called ‘third type’, the Mudi. Nevertheless the Mudi is probably the oldest of the Hungarian sheepdogs, although ‘the great unknown’.

This ‘third type’ of small sheepdogs was and

Mudi

“AN OLD AND RARE HERDING BREED FROM HUNGARY”

text and illustrations by RIA HÖRTER

Carpathian Mountains. The majority were sheepdogs kept by herdsmen who travelled with their flock and originated in Asia Minor. The Magyars (the original name of the Hungarian people) kept sheepdogs from the end of the ninth century, but pedigree breeding and classification of dogs only started in the second half of the 19th century. Before that time, Hungarian sheepdogs were simply divided into two categories: large and small. When breeding, the small dogs were divided from the big ones (Kuvasz, Komondor), but the small ones were interbred. Therefore, the early history of the Mudi is more or less the same as those of the Pumi and the Puli.

‘Third type’ sheepdog

Count István Széchenyi (1791-1860) was the founder of the Hungarian Academy of Science and The Pest County Greyhound Society, and one of the first promoters of Hungarian dog breeds. Another important man in the history of Hungarian dogs is Dr. Emil Raitsits, a professor at the Veterinary Clinic in the city of Budapest. In the

is known in almost the whole of Hungary. It is said that in ancient times this little sheepdog could be found in the lowlands of Pannonia, now parts of Hungary, Austria and former Yugoslavia. Some others believe that he came from crossings between the Puli and the Pumi. And last but not least it is believed that he has derived from crossings between local sheepdogs and the Alsatian or German Spitz. It’s unverifiable, of course, but the last explanation is tempting, especially considering the shape of the head and the expression of the eyes.

Canis ovilis Fényesi

Around 1930, a certain Dr. Deszö Fényesi, director of the museum in Balassagyarmat, was one of the first breeders to become involved in separate breeding of this small sheepdog. He is also the one who named the breed Mudi. Why Mudi? Unfortunately, I have never found a good explanation for this name. (The breed’s name in Latin is *Canis ovilis Fényesi*.)

A new breed standard was written by Dr.



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- even more so than the Pumi or the Puli.**

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A Hungarian 'gulyas', herdsman, drawn by Joseph Kiss.

Zoltan Balassy in 1966 to apply for FCI recognition. This standard was based on only a handful of Mudi's and the main differences between the original standard were accepted sizes and colors.

The F.C.I. approved the breed standard in 1966, but very few people were involved in breeding then and this is still the case today. A new standard was written in 2000 and



*In general, the Mudi gives the impression of a curly-coated small Spitz.
Photo by Alice van Kempen*

the present FCI breed standard dates from 2004.

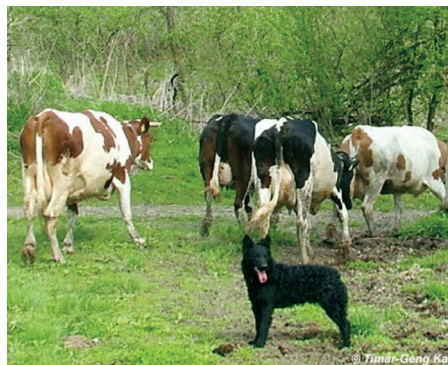
As there were 80 years ago, there are many different types in the Mudi; they form a heterogeneous company, resembling the Spitz dogs in head and the Croatian sheepdog in body.

The Mudi is a real working dog - a farmer's dog - even more so than the Pumi or the Puli. Today, most of them live on the farms in Hungary and very often the litters are not registered. The Mudi is multi-functional - he drives the flock, guards the house and is an extremely good exterminator of small vermin. He is an expert with 'difficult' cattle and has also proven to be a good tracking dog. It is a blessing for this young breed that there is no separation between working lines and show lines. Since the '70s, a small number have been exported, especially to Sweden and Finland. There are about 70 Mudis

in The Netherlands, and worldwide their number is about 1,500-1,750.

A Curly-coated Small Spitz

The distinction between the Mudi and the Puli and Pumi is relatively small, but there are various significant differences. First of all, the eyes



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Photo by Tamár-Geng Katalin*

are oval, dark and set obliquely, while the eyes of the Puli and Pumi are roundish. His ears are pricked, like those of a Spitz. The coat is not corded like the Puli's, but short or half-long and curly. Sometimes Mudis are born without a tail, or with a natural stump tail; this is not regarded as a fault. In general, the Mudi gives the impression of a curly-coated small Spitz. He is not as boisterous as the Pumi and that makes him appreciated as a companion dog in the house. Still, the Mudi is not a dog for beginners. He needs a firm hand and a lot of exercise, especially if there is no real work to do. In Sweden and Finland, Mudis are used as tracking dogs, rescue dogs, for agility, and driving sheep.

In Hungary, these dogs are organized in the Hungarian Puli-Pumi-Mudi Club. A second breed club is named after the man who was the founder of the modern breed: the Dezső Fényes Mudi Club.

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Photo by Tamár-Geng Katalin*

Today there are several breed clubs outside Hungary, for example in the Czech Republic, Finland, Sweden and Canada. The Mudi Club of America was founded in 2004 and “strives to promote, protect, and preserve the Mudi as a healthy versatile working breed, of sound temperament, and proper breed type, while educating fanciers on responsible Mudi ownership.”

Information:

Hungarian Breed Club - www.magyardudiklub.freeweb.hu
Webring Mudis - www.mudi.hu
Mudi Club of America – www.mudi.us
Mudi Association of Canada – www.mudi.ca
FCI breed standard – www.fci.be



As there were 80 years ago, there are many different types in the Mudi.

Origin: 19th-century Hungary

Original Purpose: Sheepdog, cattle dog

Description: The breed is extremely able to learn and keen to work. The body is almost square, rather light in build, but muscled and solid. The head is wedge-shaped, tapering toward the nose, and has very little stop. The pointed ears are a reverse V-shape and carried erect. Pendulous ears and an incomplete set of teeth are disqualifying faults. The ears can be used independently of each other, like radar. Eyes are oval, dark and set slightly obliquely with a daredevil expression. The back is strong and short and slightly sloping toward the croup. The underline is slightly tucked-up. The ribs are somewhat broad and rather flat. Fore- and hindquarters are well-muscled and the elbows are close-fitting to the body. Front feet and hind feet are round with well-knit toes. The tail hangs in repose, but in action it is carried in a sickle shape, above the topline.

In Hungary, the tail is sometimes docked, but according to the breed standard this is undesirable. The head and front limbs are covered by short, straight and smooth hair. On other parts of the body, the coat is very wavy or slightly curled. Colors are fawn, black, blue-merle, i.e. black speckled, striped, brindled or spotted on lighter or darker bluish-grey primary color, ash color and brown. A small white patch on the chest and small white markings on the toes are tolerated, but not desired. Eliminating faults are: aggressive or overly shy, missing teeth, yellow eyes in black dogs, drop ears, albinism, wolf grey colour, black and tan with yellow to brown markings and a coat that tends toward matting.

Height/Weight: Dogs 16 to 18.5 inches (ideal 17 to 18), and 24 to 28.5 pounds; bitches: 15 to 17.5 inches (ideal 16 to 17), and 17.5 to 24 pounds.

