

Date: Tue, 25 Feb 2003 16:35:36 -0500  
To: psg@poodle.org  
From: "Mary Jane T. Weir" <mjtweir@hurontario.net>  
Subject: PSG: arched neck

Dear Susan:

Julie is correct. The arched neck requires three physical conditions to be perfect - "well-laid back shoulders" - at least a 38-45 degree of layback, measured along the spine of the scapula. The neck should rise smoothly forward and up from the body, not abruptly. The second pre-condition is the forelimb assembly placed well back on the ribcage - ideally in the 6th rib, but you can get a minor arch on the 5th rib. The third precondition is the oval chest, because the barrel rib forces the shoulders forward and out. In a properly built poodle, the elbows and forelegs are much closer to the centre of the picture, with the arched neck and head balancing the rearlimbs and body (since the forelimbs are primarily a means of support and should be at the centre of gravity.) The shape of the neck itself is broader at the base and tapers to the point just behind the occiput of the skull - the axis vertebrae, where the arch of the neck occurs. To eyes accustomed to a ewe neck, this arched neck will seem shorter, but if you measure it, it often is actually longer - another optical illusion.

Many of the Poodle people on this list admired Bunny - the Ibizan Hound winner of the Westminster Hound Group this year. One of the reasons she is so "elegant" is that she does have well laid back shoulders, the correct shape of chest and the shoulders well back on the ribcage - probably the 5th rib. The point of her breastbone - the menubrium - is forward of the point of shoulders. Where she differs from the good poodle construction is in the placement of the elbow ahead of the deepest part of the chest - and Ibizan chests should not be as deep as a Poodle's. (see the group and BIS pictures at <[www.westminsterkennelclub.org](http://www.westminsterkennelclub.org)> Her neck rises smoothly from the body, with no tell-tale roll of flesh over the withers, indicating steep shoulders and a ewe neck. She does not have as full an arch as a correctly built poodle should have - but she also doesn't have a coat to confuse the eye! However, a correct poodle would have the head carried similarly, but with a more pronounced arch and further ahead (because there would be a lot more forechest).

I've spent some time looking for pictures in Poodles. Unfortunately, in the 3/4 view normal to show pictures, clever scissoring can give the illusion of an arched neck on what is basically a ewe neck. However, in the PR stud issue, 2000, Jaketo's Ghost rider in the Sky looks to have something of an arch, and is probably on the 5th rib. - rather like Bunny. (I am relatively certain of this because I went over and measured most of the dogs on his dam's side.) Both Wycliffe Jacqueline and Annsown Sir Gay had proper fronts and arched necks - you can see their pictures, full profile, in Lydia Hopkins The new complete Poodle, c1969. In Poodles in America, vol 1, p. 45, there is a good picture of

Percy Roberts with a Salamagundi dog with a correct front and arched neck. Opposite, on p. 44, Ensarr Astre looks, in my opinion, to have a ewe neck. On p. 38, Donar von Eisentor, in the HCC, has a beautiful front and arched neck.

In gaiting, a correctly-built poodle will carry its neck elevated but forward, not like a swan lying over its back. The incorrect ewe neck distorts the shape of the muscles in the neck which do the main job of carrying the head (and the bird), and therefore will tire much quicker than those of the arched neck.

I do have slow-motion film of a correctly-built poodle, 43 degree layback, and front on the 6th rib, moving; the ease, efficiency and power are very much in contrast with what we normally see today.

Mary Jane