



Swedish Native Breed

Västgötaspets

Swedish Vallhund

FCI-group 5

FCI-nr 14

Date of publication of the official valid standard:
29 October 2013



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Male of excellent type



Female of excellent type



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Origin and history

Swedish Vallhund is an ancient Nordic Spitz breed - the dog type is known since the Viking era.

The short legged herding dogs caught the interest of Count Björn von Rosen and K G Zetterstén in the early 1940's.

They started to locate the remaining population and began the work to recognize them as a breed.

The first breed standard was published by Svenska Kennelklubben in 1943.



*Count Björn von Rosen with his
"short legged herding dog"*



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History



The first brood bitch
"Vivi", born around
1935



A male from the 1960's



A male from the 1970's
(who could still win today)



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Function



Photo: Tarja Leponiemi



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Function

The original function of the Swedish Vallhund was, and still is, to herd the cattle of the farm and also to guard the farm and alert if intruders should appear.

If the dog could not fulfill this work the farmers simply put the dog down as the dog was considered a working tool and there was no room for sentimentality. I.e; only the most useful dogs were selected for breeding.

The Swedish Vallhund has been, and hopefully always will be, a natural and unaffected farm/family dog.



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Character

- Typical behaviour for the breed is to be watchful, energetic, fearless and alert.
- The Swedish Vallhund must not under any circumstance show shyness or aggressiveness.
- They are robust and can get very old.
- Easy to learn which make them useful to all sorts of tasks. The breed is nowadays a multi function breed.
- They need to be activated in some form in order to be satisfied.
- The Swedish Vallhund likes to feel free and values its owners trust to walk without a lead!



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General appearance

- Low on legs, but not too low to the ground.
- Powerful without being coarse, nor too light.
- The Swedish Vallhund is a working dog and shall give the impression of being able to work all day long.
- Ratio of height at withers to length of body 2:3.
- The ideal height is for a male 33 cm and for a female 31 cm.
- The coat is easy to manage. They shed coat regularly.



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General appearance

Male



Excellent male. Note the topline and correct moderate angulation.

Male



Excellent male.

Female



Photo:
A. Lundblad

An almost perfect bitch. Feminine. Correct bone, size and balance. Excellent angulation and topline. Excellent head.



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Example of three excellent Swedish Vallhunds
with good breed points.



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Head

- The head should be clean and relatively long. Viewed from above it should be tapering evenly towards the nose. The muzzle should be almost as long as the skull and the bridge of nose and skull should be parallel.



An excellent male head.
Could have slightly less wrinkles.



Excellent female head

Photo:
A. Lundblad



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Excellent heads

Males



A correct male head. Note the good markings even when red.



Females



Strong but feminine head. Correct details. Note the perfect and well defined markings.





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Heads



Excellent head.



A little too flat stop.



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Eyes

Eyes should be of medium size, oval in shape and dark brown.



Excellent eyes
and expression



Excellent shape
and colour



Too round eyes



Too light eyes
(wolf-like)



Obliquely placed
eyes give a hard
expression



Light and round eyes gives
the wrong expression

Be aware of eyes too round and protruding or eyes obliquely placed or placed too narrow, which will spoil the expression.



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Ears



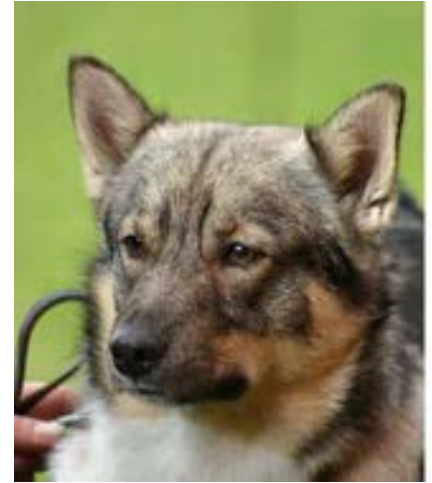
Excellent expression, well shaped and well set ears (perhaps a little too pointed)



Good size but too wide set ears



Too large ears, set too wide and low



Ears a little small and a little low set, and widely set due to rather a wide skull.

Be aware of too soft and unsteady ears.

Body

- The back should be level and well muscled.
- The loin should be short, broad and strong.
- The croup should be broad and slightly sloping.



Grey female with an excellent back.



Grey male, a bit short in back and too round and steep in croup.

Body

- The Swedish Vallhund should have a relatively deep ribcage of good length.
- If the ribcage is too deep, it can affect the movement.
- It is important to view the dog from the front as there are too many wide fronts with loose elbows. **These dogs should not be awarded the highest gradings**, no matter how beautiful they are viewed from the side.
- The front construction is very important considering the type of work they were bred for.



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Forequarters

Forearms viewed from the front should be slightly bent, just enough to give them free action against the lower part of the chest.



The Swedish Vallhund should not have totally straight limbs. Exaggerated bend of forearm, weak pasterns or too toed-out is not desirable. Strongly toeing out, weak pastern or too flat feet are serious faults for any working dog.



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Forequarters



Too wide front, too straight legs and too light in bone.



Too wide front.



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Hindquarters

- Hindquarters should be parallel, well angulated and strongly muscled.





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Tail

- Two types of tails occur; long and all variations in length of naturally short tail. In both cases all variations of carriage are permitted as there is no norm for the carriage.
- About 40 % of the Swedish Vallhund are born with naturally short tail. The length of a naturally short tail can be from 10 centimetres to no length at all.
- Dogs without tail (i.e. not even one vertebra) can appear as if they have a sloping croup, but this might be an illusion.
- **Please note! Type of tail must *never* influence the gradings and placings!!!**



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Tails of different length and carriage



Type of tail must **never** influence the gradings and placings!!!



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Movement / gait

- Movement should be sound, parallel and efficient with good reach and drive.
- The Swedish Vallhund should move with purpose and energy.
- It is important with a good drive!
- Tripping or pacing is not desirable.
- Front movement should not be high stepping or paddling.



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Movement / gait



...sound, parallel and with drive...



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Movement / gait





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Coat

- Coat must be functional in all kinds of weather.
- Top coat of moderate length, hard, tight and lying close to body. Undercoat is soft and very dense.
- The breed club in Sweden considers the **hard and dense top coat of correct moderate length** to be one of the most important attributes for the breed.



Too long coat – a severe fault!

Also notice the excess of white.



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Colour

- All colours should have darker top coat on back, neck and sides of the body.
- Lighter markings on shoulder, so called harness markings, and light cheek markings are highly desirable. This is one of the characteristic features of the Swedish Vallhund!
- Please note that cheek markings should exist in all of the colour varieties.
- White markings are permitted but must not exceed more than 30 % of base colour (more than 30 % is a severe fault).



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A strong male (reddish grey).
Wonderful balance, size and bone.



Male of excellent type (greyish yellow),
although a little exaggerated forechest
and a little deep in brisket.



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Excellent female
(reddish brown)



Excellent
female (grey)



A substantial dark
grey female.
Often this colour
will produce a
good harsh coat
texture.



Excellent
female (grey)





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An excellent specimen of the breed.
Strong male with good balance.



This male is more of a cobby type.
Note the excellent red colour.
Wonderful topline and rear end.
Just a fraction low on legs.



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A feminine strong bitch, note the excellent length of neck.



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Male with too short neck.



Female of very good type. Could have better angulations in front.





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Example of incorrect colours



Lack of cheek markings
and too wide blaze
(*Good or Sufficient*)



White - *Disqualifying*

Severe faults

- Short or rounded skull.
- Short muzzle.
- Lower jaw recedeing, narrow or weak jaw.
- Pincer bite.
- Lack of molars (M3 not taken into account).
- Roach back.
- Soft coat and stand off coat.
- Coat too short or too long.
- Lack of undercoat.
- White markings exceeding 30% of base colour.
- Height severely diverging from the ideal height.

Disqualifying faults

- Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities shall be disqualified.
- Over or undershot bite.
- Blue eyes, one or both.
- Hanging ears or semi-erect ears.
- Long, curly coat.
- Black, white, liver brown or blue coat colour.

Judging the Swedish Vallhund

- The Swedish Vallhund is not an easy breed to judge when you consider the variation of type. Therefore it is suggested to study the standard at a great length before accepting judging appointments.
- It is required to be extra careful and to mention in the critique, the facial and harness markings. This is an important part of the Swedish Vallhund and not something we want to lose.

Judging the Swedish Vallhund

- Please be attentive of soft backs and equally carped and raised toplines.
- The Swedish Vallhund should not have a soft coat. The coats have become softer, which should be commented on when judging.
- As a working dog, movement is of great importance. It is NOT enough to send a dog up the ring and back.

Related breeds

- The Swedish Vallhund is considered one of the authentic Swedish breeds.
- It is a bit unclear though if they may be related to the Welsh Corgis, but modern research believes that the Swedish Vallhund in fact is of Swedish origin.



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Problems to take into account

- The Swedish Vallhund is in general a sound and healthy breed.
- No known breed specific illnesses.



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The working Swedish Vallhund



Dog (to the left) waiting to start at a working test.

Photo: Konny Njord



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The working Swedish Vallhund



Photo: Konny Njord



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The Swedish breed club
for the Swedish Vallhund;



<http://vastgotaspets.se>