
HISTORY

Situated in the heart of Europe, Hungary (Magyar Köztársaság) is the country of puszta (prairies), the Danube and gypsy music, but also of Turkish occupation, Habsburg emperors, communist regimes and the uprising against the Russians in 1956. Until 1989, Hungary was a Socialistic People's Republic, but today it is an independent democratic state.

of Count István Széchenyi (1791-1860), politician, theorist, writer and the founder of the Hungarian Academy of Science. Breeding pedigree dogs in Hungary has not always been tolerated. After the Austrian period, the First and Second World War and Russian occupation obstructed contact with the free world. On the other hand, being rather isolated for so long may have protected these breeds from quick globalization.

PUMI

Clownish Hungarian Sheepdog

text and illustrations by RIA HÖRTER

For many ages Hungary has been a melting pot of different peoples like Huns, Teutons, Slavs and Turks. Between the 4th and 6th century – known in Europe as the ‘Great Migration’ – several local sheepdogs that later became the national Hungarian breeds had already been developed: the Puli, Pumi, Mudi, Komondor and Kuvasz.

Now the puszta have become agricultural areas and the sheepdogs are all that's left to remind us of the large herds and their herdsmen. Those herdsmen didn't know anything about genes or chromosomes, but they selected their dogs for working ability, strength, stamina and willingness to please. A good hunting dog or sheepdog had the same value as a cow or a sheep; an excellent sheepdog could be worth an annual salary.

RUSSIAN OCCUPATION

From the end of the ninth century, the early inhabitants of Hungary – the Magyars – kept their sheepdogs in the lowlands of the Carpathian Mountains. Only in the second half of the 19th century was the breeding of pedigree dogs begun on the initiative

HUNGARIAN SHEEPDOG WITH A TERRIER HEAD

Hungarian sheepdogs are divided into two categories: large and small. The large ones are the Komondor and the Kuvasz, the smaller ones the Puli, Pumi and Mudi. At the end of the 19th century, scientists divided ‘Puli-type dogs’ into three categories – dogs with coats of rounded or flat cords (Puli), dogs with heads like a terrier (Pumi), and dogs with erect ears (Mudi). The name ‘Pumi’ was used for the first time in 1801 but long after that both names, ‘Puli’ and ‘Pumi’, were used for the same dog, depending on where the animal was living. The name Pumi may have derived from Puli, but no one knows exactly where the name comes from. The first drawing of a Pumi dates from 1815.

EXCELLENT DESTROYERS

The early history of the Pumi is the same as that of the Puli and Mudi. In the 17th and 18th century, however, the first separation took place as the result of cross-breeding with German Pomeranians, French

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Situated in the heart of Europe, Hungary is the country of puszta, with herds and herdsman in traditional horse riding.

Briards, several varieties of terriers and, of course, the local Puli. In the 18th century, large herds of Merino sheep were imported to Hungary and with the herds came the small Pyrenean Mountain Dogs. It's assumed that this breed also contributed to the development of the Pumi. The results of these crossings were dogs with a shorter, curlier coat than that of the Puli. The high-set, erect ears are the heritage of the terriers. Looking at a Pumi, one can immediately see the terrier-shaped head.

Like the Puli, the Pumi originally was a cattle dog but is also useful as a guard dog. Most Pumis are excellent destroyers of small vermin. A Pumi needs a job, because when he can't work he gets bored and will show this through bad behavior and endless barking.

THE FIRST BREED STANDARD

Dr. Emil Raitsits (1882-1934), a professor at the Veterinarian Clinic in Budapest, traveled around

the country looking for good examples to start a stud book. He is also the writer of the first breed standard (1921) and referred to the Pumi as the 'sheepdog terrier'. According to Raitsits, it's very important to preserve the typical terrier qualities of the Pumi. Before 1923, Pumis were shown as local varieties of the Puli, but at the Budapest Dog Show in 1927 the two breeds were already officially separated: 35 Pulis and 12 Pumis were entered.

The Pumi has kept his old function as a cattle driver, but he is also used as a ratter and for hunting small game. As well, he is a companion dog, show dog and agility dog. The present breed standard dates from 2000.

EXTREMELY INTELLIGENT

There is a variety of types, as there was 80 years ago, and especially the heads are different. During the 1950s there were Pumis with a deep stop and sunken eyes, but also some with a sloping foreface and big eyes. Only the coat seems to be consistent. His nickname, 'the clown', comes from a small hair-plume on his ears that gives him an explicit clownish charisma. The breed's temperament is uncomplicated. They can be noisy and sometimes a bit sharp, but they are extremely intelligent and therefore very suitable for agility.

The head is longer and snipier than the Puli's and has less stop. A strong defined stop is an eliminating fault. The Pumi's coat is curly, but does not mat and is quite easy to



Being rather isolated for so long may have protected the breed from quick globalization. An old photograph of a Pumi. Around his neck seems to be the Hungarian colors.

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A Pumi herding sheep. A good hunting dog or sheepdog had the same value as a cow or a sheep; an excellent sheepdog could be worth an annual salary. (Photo: www.nimfea.hu)

groom. Pumis are sometimes born without a tail or with a stumpy tail, but the standard requires a full tail. The smaller or larger ear tufts and typical ears make the clownish picture complete.

In 2005, the Hungarian Pumi Club of America was formed to encourage and promote quality in the breeding of purebred Punnik (plural of Pumi). The Club has a website: <http://www.pumiclub.org/>

Several European countries have breed clubs, for example Norway, Finland, France, Germany and Slovakia.



A Pumi needs a job because when he can't work he gets bored and will show this through bad behavior and endless barking. (Photo: Alice van Kempen)

BREED STANDARD

Origin: 17th century Hungary

Original purpose: Sheepdog, cattle dog

Description: The Pumi is a cheerful medium-sized herding dog of Terrier type. His Terrier character is most obvious in its head. The foreface is elongated and the upper third of the otherwise prick ears bend forward. The length of the muzzle is slightly less than half of the total length of the head. The medium-sized, oval, dark-brown slit-eyes are set moderately wide apart. The body length is equal to the height at the withers. The depth of the brisket is slightly less than half of the height at the withers. The breed is particularly lean and of harmonious appearance. The shoulder blade is long and a little steep. The front legs, placed under the forechest, support the body like pillars. The hind legs are very strong, standing neither too narrow nor too wide apart. The back is short, straight and strong with a slightly sloping croup. The high-set tail forms a wide circle above the croup. The gait is quite lively and spirited, the trot is light-footed and harmonious. The wavy, curly coat forms tufts of varying length but averaging length of 1.5 to 2.75 inches. The coat is never smooth or corded. The colors are various shades of black, white, fawn or grey. A small white mark on the chest and/or a white line on the toes are not faulty. The Pumi has a restless temperament and is extremely bold, a little suspicious toward strangers. Some eliminating faults are aggressiveness or being overly shy, a strongly defined stop, over- or undershot bite, and a chocolate colored or multicolored coat.

Height/Weight: 16 to 18.5 inches for dogs; 15 to 17.5 inches for bitches. Ideal height 17 to 17.75 inches (dogs) and 15.75 to 16.5 inches (bitches). Weight: dogs 22 to 33 pounds; bitches 17.5 to 28.5 pounds.

Information: <http://www.pumiklub.eu/in-english.htm> (Hungarian breed club, in English).