

DOGS *NOT* IN CANADA

THE CANADIAN KENNEL CLUB RECOGNIZES 164 BREEDS, BUT THERE ARE HUNDREDS MORE WORLDWIDE, SOME OF THEM RARELY SEEN OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN.

Istarski Gonic – Istrian Hound



ORIGIN:
15th-century Croatia

ORIGINAL PURPOSE:
Hunting dog on rabbit, hare, fox and wild boar

DESCRIPTION:
A very handsome dog with an immaculate white coat bearing orange or lemon markings. The body should be 10 per cent longer than the height at the withers. His noble head is rather thin and has a delicate stop. The colour of the oval eyes is as dark as possible. The long thin ears are broad, slightly narrowing toward the tip. The neck is powerful and slightly arched. The breed looks like a real worker: a muscled back, strong thighs and rounded ribs. Fore- and hindquarters are muscled and the forelegs should be absolutely straight. The tail is strong, narrowing at the end. His movement is light and steady.

The smooth-coated variety has a short, dense, fine and shining coat. The rough-coated variety should have a harsh coat (five to 10 centimetres) with an undercoat. The breed standard is very precise about the location of the markings: the ears and parts of the head are usually orange or lemon. Orange should never prevail but can be seen around the rib cage and at the tail set. A third colour, if only a few hairs, is not permitted. Eliminating faults are, for example, grey or black markings, an incorrect bite, a short head and/or short muzzle and ears set too high.

HEIGHT/WEIGHT:
Varies from 44 to 56 centimetres. Ideal height for males is 50 centimetres and for females, 48 centimetres. An adult dog weighs about 18 kilograms.

YUGOSLAVENSKI

As a result of the recent Balkan Wars, the Republic of Yugoslavia no longer exists. Several Balkan countries have become independent (again), borders are changing, national organizations have been established, flags and hymns predating the Second World War have resurfaced and the map of Eastern Europe has been altered considerably. More than the countries, governments and borders have changed in this part of Europe.

The dog world has changed as well. Before the recent Balkan Wars, the Yugoslavian Kennel Club was respon-

sible for pedigree dogs, stud books, etc. Since the 1990s, the new independent countries – for example, Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia – have had to rebuild their pedigree dog world. The names of some breeds once known under the prefix *Yugoslavenski* have become *Sprski* (Serbian), *Bosanski* (Bosnian) or *Crnogorski* (Montenegrin). In a few cases, countries have disputed a breed's nationality. But today the new Balkan countries agree on the countries of origin. *Yugoslavenski* has gone forever. Here, we'll discuss one of the five native breeds of Croatia – the Istarski Goniã or Istrian Hound.

GONIÄ

In various European countries, different names are used for hounds. In France, a hound is a *chien courant*, in Germany a *Brack*, in Switzerland a *laufhund* and in the Scandinavian countries a *stövare*. In Slovakia it's a *kopov*, in Poland an *ogar*, in Spain we know the hound as *sabueso* and in Italy he is called *segugio*. In the former Yugoslavian countries, a hound is a *goniä*.

When speaking about the Balkan hounds, it can be quite difficult to be certain which breed is meant. For example, in Italy the *Segugio dei Balacani* is called the *Sprski Goniä* because, after the Balkan Wars, Serbia was appointed as the country of origin.

ISTRIA

Istria is a peninsula now belonging to Croatia and Slovenia. It is situated in the northern part of the Adriatic Sea, surrounded in the west by the Gulf of Venetia. This part of former Yugoslavia has always had a strong relationship with Italy. Around 1250, the Venetians conquered the peninsula and stayed for roughly five centuries. In 1797, at the peace treaty of Campo Formio, the Austrians received Istria as a kind of war booty. In 1918, Istria became part of Italy, but in 1947 Italy had to give up the major part of the peninsula to the newly formed Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In 1990, Croatia proclaimed the independent Republic of Croatia. The government of Yugoslavia responded by sending troops. The rest is history: Croatia became heavily involved in the Balkan Wars and 250,000 people had to leave their homes. After the death of their president, Franjo Tudjman, in 1999, the elections of 2000 changed Croatia into a true democracy.

Being so close to Austria and Italy, the influence of those two countries can still be seen in Istria. This part of Croatia is loved by people from western Europe because of its culture, beaches and beautiful landscapes.

OLDEST HOUND IN THE BALKAN REGION?

The Istarski Goniä – Istrian Hound – is one of the oldest hounds of the Balkan region. The Croatians believe this hound is a direct descendant of the old Egyptian herding dogs. In St. Mary's Chapel in the village of Pazin, a fresco dating from 1474 shows two dogs hunting hare. Experts believe that these dogs are early specimens of the smooth-coated Istarski Goniä. This dog is also mentioned in old chronicles and depicted in early-18th-century paintings. Bishop Petar Bakiä from Dja-kovor described the Istrian Hound in 1719: "Usually



The fresco in St. Mary's Chapel (Pazin, Croatia), dating from 1474.



The Istarski Goniä is considered the most handsome hound in the region.

this hound can be found in the Croatian coastal areas." At that time, the Istrian Hound was bred pure in several Benedictine monasteries. The dog's native country, the peninsula of Istria, has always been in contact with its 'free' neighbours – one of the reasons we are relatively well informed about the Istarski Goniä.

KRAINER BRACK

Four Istrian Hounds are depicted in de Bylandt's *Hondenrassen*, published in four languages in 1904. Three years later, Col. F.B. Laska described the breed in an Austrian-Hungarian yearbook for pedigree dogs. He stated that the Istrian Hounds were more popular than the Austrian Hounds. A new description followed in 1933, written by Mr. H. Zimmerman in *Das Lexikon der Hundenfreunde (Lexicon of Dog Friends)*. Then, the breed was called Krainer Brack, deriving from the Krajina, a rural area in Slovenia. Thanks to the hard



The photo, taken in Bratislava in 2004, shows the native hounds of Croatia. Left to right: rough-coated Istarski, two Posavski Goniās (hounds from the region of the Posavina River), a rough-coated Istarski and a smooth-coated Istarski.

PHOTO: COURTESY ANTE LUCIN

work of Dr. Ivan Lovrenāiā, the Istrian Hound was recognized internationally. In his kennel Podgora, Dr. Lovrenāiā bred the rough-coated variety by crossing a smooth-coated Istarski with a French Griffon Vendéen. His kennel in the village of Vrhinka and that of Baron Henrik Lazzarini (Smlednik) were the most important kennels of rough-coated Istrian Hounds in their day.

EXCELLENT TRACKING DOG

The Istrian Hound is an excellent tracking dog, used for hunting rabbit, hare, fox and wild boar. Hunting is its passion and hunters prize the obedient and devoted temperament. The breed's appearance is striking – white with orange or lemon markings that easily distinguish it from other Balkan Hounds. Like many other hounds of the world, the Istrian Hound produces a sonorous sound when barking.

Experts believe that some types of the smooth-coated variety look like the French Porceleine. At first glance, the rough-coated variety resembles some French Griffons and the Italian Spinone.

TWO COAT VARIETIES

In the Croatian language, the smooth-coated Istarski Goniā is called *Ostrodlaki*, the rough-coated *Kratkodlaki*. The first rough-coated Istrian Hound registered in the stud book was Burin JRB 3, bred by Dr. Lovrenāiā. Much earlier, however, the Istarski was first entered at a dog show in 1866 in Vienna. To be precise, the first Istarski was entered under its correct name: Istarski

Goniā. This dog was owned by the Slovenian breeder and hunter Karl Galle. The Yugoslavian stud book of 1938 shows 118 Istrian Hounds (smooth coated) – five of which were living abroad. The same stud book contains 75 rough-coated Istrian Hounds, all of them bred in the Podgora kennels. The breed standards of both varieties were presented to the Yugoslavian Dog Breeding Federation in 1938 and published in 1939.

CLAIM AND BATTLE

Today, there are approximately 5,500 registered smooth-coated and about 1,800 rough-coated Istrian Hounds. The FCI recognized the breed in 1949, but the first FCI breed standard wasn't published until 1973. (The most recent standard dates from 2000.)

Due to the disintegration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a new country of origin had to be established for Yugoslavian pedigree dogs. During the FCI meeting in Mexico (May 1999), it was decided that Croatia would be the native country of the Istarski Goniā. The decision was not taken without striking a blow; the Slovenian Kennel Club states that they have the first claim on this breed. Essentially, they are right because the recent development of the Istrian Hound has taken place in Slovenia. However, after nine years of battle, Croatia 'won.' A breed club was formed in 1988 in the city of Umag.

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