

Breeding Dogs in the 21st Century

Today's dog breeder faces more obstacles than ever before.

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I had always assumed that the half-brother bred to half-sister combination was at its best when the like parent was the sire. It had produced the most champions. As I investigated further, however, I found that the combinations that seemed to produce quality that passed on to succeeding generations were more apt to come from the breedings in which the like parent was the dam there were more outstanding producers down the line.

A mistake all too often made by aspiring breeders is to think that the combinations themselves are the keys to success. They fail to realize that no combination in the world will produce quality if the individual dogs involved are not themselves of quality! Unfortunately, there have been many profound books and popular lectures that expound the use of breeding combinations, without stressing that the main ingredient to their success is the quality of the individual dogs involved in the combination. The fact that mediocre individuals with a mutual ancestor are brought together does not magically transform an undistinguished gene pool into quality.

Interestingly, I also found in my Cocker breeding programs that, as successful as the granddaughter back to grandsire combination was, there was more to it than the combination itself. That is, although in some lines breeding a bitch back to her paternal grandsire worked best, in other lines, the maternal grandsire was more apt to produce the quality I was after.

Home Free - Not! When I became involved in breeding Bichons Frises I felt confident that the breeding combinations I had employed in my days in Cockers would have me on the road to success in nothing flat. Putting those principles into action proved otherwise.

A little background on this new venture might help set the scene. Contrary to all I had learned previously, my Bichon Frise breeding program was based on a male rather than a bitch. For the benefit of those who might not know, his name was Ch. Chaminade Mr. Beau Monde. Actually, I really didn't want him I wanted his sister. I wanted her because she resembled her dam (Ch. Reenroy's Ami du Kilkanny), who was in my opinion the best I had ever seen in the breed up to that time. The sister, however, had been sold to someone else, so I took the male to have, if nothing else, "something to show."

As he matured I couldn't help but appreciate his quality and when asked to make him available at stud, I did so. His first litters for others were outstanding. The bitches in the litters bore a striking resemblance to each other and to his dam, Ami. They were shown, and most finished quickly with brilliant records. Some of them went on to become group and all-breed Best in Show winners.

Males from those breedings were good, not great. But I relied upon the half-brother to half-sister combination of my previous experience to give me what I was after. I bred one of the better Mr. Beau Monde sons to one of his outstanding daughters. Results? Mediocre at best. I made several different breedings of individuals with the same relationship.

Also, by this time I had Mr. Beau Monde granddaughters to breed back to him, but this combination proved no better to be honest, even less satisfying than the half-brother, half-sister matings. Yet, he continued to produce superior quality for almost everyone else who bred to him.