

VIZSLA HEAD PLANES

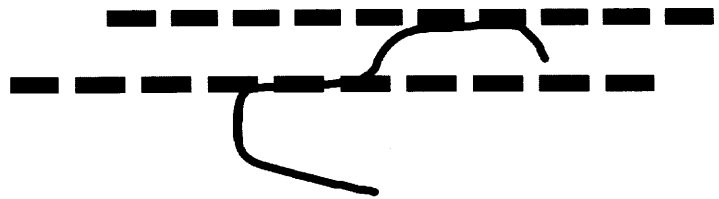
Have you ever watched a class of Vizslas in which it seemed as if every other dog had a slightly different style of head? A possible explanation for this diversity may be that our standard is silent or ambiguous on a few aspects of the ideal Vizsla head. One of these is the correct relation between the plane of the topskull – along a line drawn from occiput to stop – and the plane of the muzzle – along a line drawn from stop to nose tip. Head planes may be convergent, divergent or parallel, each giving a distinct ‘look’ to the head.

While all fanciers would readily agree that convergent head planes, as seen on a Pointer, are incorrect for the Vizsla, there is apparently no consensus beyond that. In an *AKC Gazette* breed column, May Carpenter strongly condemned a Vizsla head with “level planes” – “a brick on a brick” – as incorrect and faulty. French breeders, who refer to this as a “setterized” head, would agree with her. On the other hand, in *The Vizsla* (2000), Clif Boggs asserts that, “a non-parallel plane of the muzzle and skull is not desirable.” And a Canadian breeder of some experience assures me that parallel head planes are correct in our breed.

As mentioned earlier, our standard is of no assistance on this point and simply states that



DIVERGENT



PARALLEL

It seems there is no consensus about correct head planes for the Vizsla.

the muzzle should be “narrow, end squarely, and have clean straight lines.” The latest revision of the Hungarian/FCI standard (1999) is also silent on the question. The American standard, however, indicates that the foreface “should taper gradually from stop to tip of nose” and the British standard calls for the muzzle to be tapering. A tapering muzzle is wedge-shaped and is “of greater diameter at its origin (i.e. at base of stop) than at its apex” (H. Spira, *Canine Terminology* 1982). A muzzle that is tapering “from stop to nose” will result in divergent head planes and it would appear that both the U.S. and British standards call for divergent head planes. Could the lack of any definition of correct head planes in both the Hungarian/FCI and Canadian standards, on the other hand, be taken to indicate that both parallel and divergent head planes are acceptable?

What do you consider correct? Parallel head planes or divergent head planes? Or both? I have my own answer to these questions and hope this short discussion has helped you define your own. Comments on this column are welcome and can be sent to me at the address below. – François-R. Bernier, 42 de la Gravit , Hull, Que. J9A 2Z2; e-mai: vizslas@bajnok.com