

WHEN IS A KORTHALS GRIFFON 'NOT' A KORTHALS GRIFFON. AND WHAT WOULD EDUARD K. KORTHALS SAY ...?

by Colin Perry

THE KORTHALS GRIFFON:

The Korthals Griffon is a recent addition to the hunting dog scene in the United Kingdom. It is still not found in large numbers in any country. Here in the U.K. there are around two hundred and sixty or so examples; within this population there is growing concern among qualified breeders over increasing deviation from the breed standard. In particular the type & colour of the dogs coat. DNA tests were then used to shed some light on this ... But first, lets take a look at the wonderful Korthals Griffon.

With the Aristocracy controlling most of the best hunting in Europe. Rough haired dogs were very popular - some better than others. This is where Mr. Korthals steps in ...

Competition between royalty & aristocrats for the best and most versatile hunting dog grew, with many houses and estates refining their dogs and pedigree. Eduard Korthals, through his own initiative and subsequent sponsorship 'created' the rough haired friendly dog that now carries his name. Then, in the early part of the 20th Century ... A war came, closely followed by yet another! The map of Europe changed, old power bases disappeared or crumbled; noble houses, estates and families just evaporated.



Le Mikado (3115)

These events, as bi-products of war, almost 'erased' the once great kennels and breeding programmes of the hunting/sportsman's hound in Europe. All the continental breeds suffered; names we know well today almost disappeared into the pages of history along with the men & women and estates that created them. Pedigree's left shattered and small were sympathetically re-energized to increase numbers and their breeding gene pool for the various breeds; these included the German Wirehaired Pointer, Český Fousek and the Korthals Griffon. Today, the Korthals Griffon is still little known by many ... Even in the hunting dog world.

BREEDING:

With DNA genetic testing & modern computer applications and systems, we can, with authority, determine the true genetic make-up of an 'original' and of a mongrel (hybrid) for a specific canine breed; there are even commercial businesses such as Mars Veterinary, VetGen and others who offer a service to private owners based on current genetic finding. Farmers across Europe already use these techniques (through a service or agency) for domestic cattle rearing & animal husbandry, a similar method is also used for thoroughbred horse breeding.

"People are carrying out breeding which would be first of all entirely illegal in humans and secondly is absolutely insane from the point of view of the health of the animals"

Professor Steve Jones
University College London

Breeding any animal is fraught with problems and disaster ... the breeder is almost playing a 'God'; and some pedigree dog breeders already think they are! Effective dog breeding is done to match an approved written standard along with documentation as proof of 'fit for purpose'; these are the Right and Left hand of breeding pedigree dogs - the body being experience & honesty followed by the truth & good judgement of the canine authorities and respected judges.

When litters are produced one can 'see' within weeks if the dog matches the breed standard for its pedigree ... those that do not or have some form of abnormality, are euthanised or not registered as pedigree. And breeding of the registered offspring continues, matching Sire and Dame to the breed standard and fit for purpose; and from as distant pedigree blood lines as possible, to lessen the eugenics effect.

BREEDING WITHIN THE UK:

Being an island with 'strict' rules and regulations on the import of animals (*now relaxed and harmonised with the E.U*); it prevents almost all canine breeder's of any specific pedigree dog to leave and return easily; so they breed within the UK - its easier and cheaper. A BBC documentary, aired in 2008 'highlighted' this practice stating that many pedigree dog

"In some breeds they are paying a terrible price in genetic disease."

breeds are suffering acute genetically based problems because 'looks' are emphasised over health when breeding dogs for show. The BBC programme, "Pedigree Dogs Exposed", says dogs suffering from genetic illness are not prevented from competing in dog shows and have gone on to win "best in breed", despite their poor health.

It says physical traits required by the Kennel Club's official breed standards, such as short faces, wrinkling, screw-tails and dwarfism, have inherent health problems.

Other problems occur because of exaggerations bred into dogs by breeders trying to win rosettes, it adds. The programme shows a prize-winning cavalier King Charles spaniel suffering from syringomyelia, a condition which occurs when a dog's skull is too small for its brain. It says deliberate mating of dogs which are close relatives is 'common practice' and the 'Kennel Club' actually registers dogs bred from mother-to-son and brother-to-sister matings.

Scientists at Imperial College, London, recently found that Pugs in the UK are so inbred that although there are 10,000 of them registered, it is the equivalent of just '50' distinct individuals. Steve Jones, professor of genetics at University College London, said: "People are carrying out breeding which would be first of all entirely illegal in humans and secondly is absolutely insane from the point of view of the health of the animals.

This documentary shone an unfavourable light onto the 'Kennel Club' and in particular their processes, methods and apparent disregard. In later days the Kennel Club has stated it is working hard to alleviate these issues. A Kennel Club spokesperson said "we are working tirelessly to help improve the health of pedigree dogs". Currently the Kennel Club is placing a lot of its weight behind its own 'Assured Breeder Scheme', a very positive step for all.

THE PEDIGREE KORTHALS GRIFFON:

Owners and breeders in the UK of the Korthals Griffon follow their own experiences and take

the advice of other breeders (right or wrongly) in breeding their dogs under Kennel Club guidelines. The official breed club has strongly recommended 'all' Korthals Griffon breeders seek breeding mates 'outside of the United Kingdom' in an attempt to prevent health and genetic problems from such a small available gene pool. For many breeders it seems it is not an option and not their personal concern?



We are lucky with the Korthals Griffon because it is a relatively "new breed" as stated earlier. Being re-introduced into the UK around

2002. And, in the hunting dog world, it's also a "new breed"; Eduard Korthals registered his 'new versatile hunting griffon' in 1887 and from that time forward, we have 'breed records' and 'club records'. These can be used as de facto reference to the dogs origins, style, colour and original breed standard. Club breed books and achievement books together with early photographs and descriptions accurately inform us of who & what a Korthals Griffon hunting dog truly is.



As an Official breed club, registered with the Kennel Club; *the Korthals Griffon*

Club United Kingdom is in a fortunate and favourable position here. There are few examples (in comparison to other counties and other hunting dog breeds) of the Korthals Griffon in the UK. With dedicated responsible breeders & selective breeding along with the Kennel Club's help and guidance, 'true' Korthals Griffons could and should be effectively bred here. For some, the UK is the last best hope for a 'true' Korthals Griffon as registered by Eduard K. Korthals almost 125 years ago now.

A WORRYING EVOLUTION:

Within the last decade Korthals Griffon breeders have seen pronounced 'anomalies' in the litters bred? With indicators of this in the early 1990s; and some people in the dog world also expressing a notice of colour anomalies in the Korthals Griffon even further back? Importantly, a good proportion of offspring do not meet a true 'breed standard' ... their coats are ill formed or they display a caramel or 'tan' colour... most visible as yellow/tan areas or 'spots' in the offspring affected. This moving to whole litters who are displaying 'tan or tricolour markings' overall - Yet bred from pedigree registered Korthals Griffons?



A Korthals Griffon carrying and displaying the 'y' chroma. A great dog, good hunter, wonderful family member & dependable friend. Does not conform to breed standard

Clubs and individuals contacted one and another to discuss and share information and to find the root cause. It was found that these “Tan Points” were popping up in Canada, USA and France. This is an obvious visual sign of a genetic ‘difference’ or a ‘throw back’ becoming more prevalent within the pedigree of the Korthals Griffon. Along with these visual ‘cues’ (some more pronounced than others) came health problem indicators, Korthals Griffons now suffering from minor ailments never previously recorded - not in high numbers, but they are there ... is there a connection? These worrying developments came to the ear of this author in 2008 and the inference was that the ‘culprits’ were emanating from France? Empirical research ensued, bolstered by the new animal gene findings of 2007. A personal report was published as a guide to understanding the ‘four eyes’ in 2009, revised in 2010; outlining the problems and the fact that these issues were genetically based, furthermore, apparently coming from ‘outside’ the Korthals Griffon gene pool!

“In the case of breeding a good hunting dog - that is what the breeder is looking for, more so than hitting a breed standard for show “

Cross breeding is nothing new in the pedigree dog world with many breeds ‘afflicted’ by



creative infusion of other breeds; English springer spaniels, Dalmatians and others are examples of this. It is nothing new in the French canine world either. Many breeders of pedigree dogs there are often "creative" in their mating and breeding lines; the official French Kennel Club also employ a mechanism to allow for cross breeding under certain special circumstances and the registration of such. From these facts, one could argue that every breed of hunting dog in France has

had at least a ‘drop or two’ of English, Irish or even German hunting dog blood in it; surreptitiously added at some point over the years.

Also consider that many French breeders are not overly ‘religious’ about pure pedigree breeding. The ‘culprits’ in the “pure Korthals Griffon” breeding debacle [played out by owners and breeders in France recently] know how to ‘play’ at pedigree breeding to win field trials and perhaps, also in the show ring for first place or the extra gold rosette. Many a French breeder will admit that no breed is as pure as virgin snow anywhere in the world. Breeding methods, rules, moral codes and requirements differ from country to country, even region to region; one can also expect some ‘creative breeding’ to have also taken place in Germany and other nations too. The Americans, to their credit, “owned up” to creative breeding of the Korthals Griffon with Český Fousek [an almost identical dog breed] because of concerns with the limited gene

pool available - 'visually' this dog (hybrid/mongrel ?) is identical to the Korthals Griffon breed standard! In these difficult times since 2008 'money' also plays its part in pedigree dog breeding along with the ever present 'ego' of the breeder and their 'line'. In the case of breeding a 'good hunting dog' ... that is what the breeder is looking for, more so than hitting a 'breed standard' for show. If their canine authority or kennel club is prepared to register it as pedigree - even better too! And no-one need know that some 'fairy dust' was ever used.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:

As is the case with scientific and medical advances, additional and new research has come to the fore with regard to canine genetics and the '*K-locus*' part on '*Chromosome 16*' of the known "colour of coat" test for genetic indicators, one of many indicators or '*Chroma Genes*'; these include "*e*" (yellow/white-cream-red-apricot), "*b*" (brown/chocolate/liver) and "*y*" (yellow/tan). The '*ky allele*' allows the '*A-locus*' to be expressed. This

'A allele' in the Korthals Griffon is the one that appears to cause the colour difference or Tan points. Genetics is a vast and complex science that continues to evolve into revealing new mysteries; the '*K-Locus test*' is just one of many.

Microscopic evidence of the 'building blocks of life' are becoming illuminated by the scientific community and these

are being used in original ways to help improve domestic animals for food, for health and in particular, thoroughbred horses & endangered animals. The results gained are almost evangelical in their findings and in breeding recommendations. This new tool kit is now being actively used in pedigree dog breeding programs and it also plays a key part in veterinary pharmaceutical drug design.



The latest information regarding the 'culprits' as proof of outcrossing or 'hybridisation' of the Korthals Griffon pedigree (creating a mongrel). Has come from an independent Korthals Griffon owner in Washington state, USA. Here, Carol Ptak, who holds a Bachelor's degree in re-combinational genetics, has used registered and imported proven pedigree data supplied by Barbara Young, and other public domain sources as the basis of her analysis. That author, using this paper trail analysis has 'tracked back'

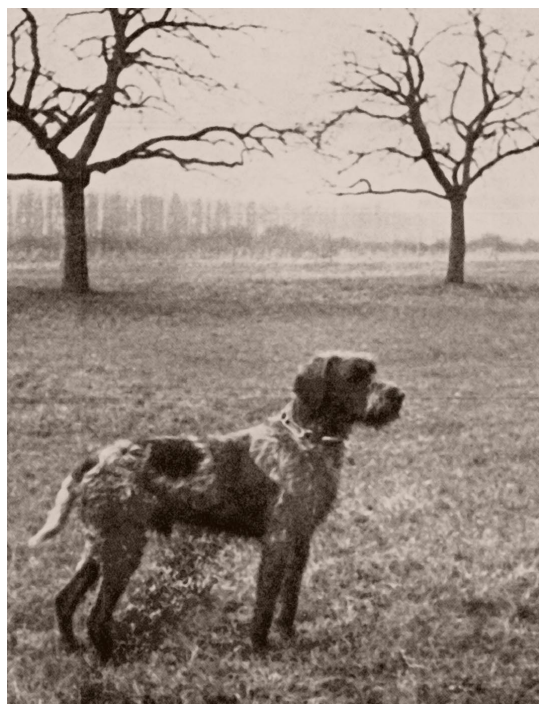
the Korthals Griffons in the USA (*Wirehaired Pointing Griffons* - as they are called there) who carry or display the 'K-Locus' as a *ky*, (being the yellow/tan colour indicator) to dogs in France. This

information coupled with previous and revised information on canine genetics claims proof that an exterior blood line carrying the **ky** colour indicator was infused into the presumed 'pure' Korthals Griffon gene pool; or via an exposure of a 'creative' mating occurrence; as I earlier referred to. But this is hardly 'scientific' with the findings verifiable through other methods, so a balanced view must be taken as the '*ky allele*' can be found, to some degree, in a considerable number of other dog breeds.

WHEN IS A KORTHALS GRIFFON 'NOT' A KORTHALS GRIFFON?

As previously stated, with diligence one can track a Korthals Griffon's pedigree "all the way back" to Mr Eduard Korthals. That's what a pedigree is and how it should be ... But this is more than just a 'paper trail' of pedigree or a provenance of birth, rather we must search for a 'true' genetic trail to origin. The "basis" or focus of the argument so far is centred on the 'K-locus test' (pioneered by VetGen in the USA I believe) and in particular its indicating a 'yellow or tan' property with regard to the colour of the dogs coat. If we take the

premise that 'creative breeding' has taken place with many European hunting dogs/gun dogs, then there is a strong probability that the Korthals Griffon was also 'out-crossed' with hunting breeds that DO NOT carry the 'A allele' as predominantly ... such as the German wirehaired pointer as example. That breed does not carry or show a 'ky' chroma indicator, the same as many other similar breeds, the Český Fousek included. By hidden creative breeding in Europe, the Korthals Griffon gene pool has expanded exponentially to encompass the additional genome's and in all probability so have the 'other' breed(s) too. The gene pool is naturally bigger than we seem to think or imagine. Dispelling the so called 'need' for the KB/ky Korthals Griffon in great numbers or at all.



Dog breed eugenics or 'pedigree breeding' is a volatile area, one fraught with problems and disasters; as indicated at the start of this document and outlined in the BBC documentary some years ago. So when is a Korthals Griffon not a Korthals Griffon? If we look back at the original breed standard written by Korthals himself, and those documents & descriptions from 1887 on, we can see that there is no yellow or tan indicated in the

breed bibliophile anywhere that I could find; there is 'orange' mentioned? The FCI breed standard states, "equally permissible are white & brown and white & orange coats". You can find this statement in other authorised breed standards as well. Orange is part of the RED (genetic) family ... and so is the colour TAN technically. While 'permissible' they are not favoured in the Korthals Griffon and particularly not by people who use/work their dogs. So now the search for an 'answer' becomes more complex and open to conjecture! Looking at the DNA colour of coat gene test - there are 'three' possible expected results for a Korthals Griffon; 1). KB/KB = no trace of 'y' 2). KB/ky = carrying, likely not to display 'y' and lastly 3). ky/ky = carrying and displaying 'y'.

One could breed Korthals Griffons that 'hide' the ky colourings but still carry the 'y' marker ... BUT there is now a chance breeding that their offspring will 'display' the yellow/tan colour markings AND perpetuate the 'ky' even further into the gene pool ... making the litter worthless as a (true) Korthals Griffon to all but the ignorant. This does not detract from the dogs abilities as a versatile hunting dog (unless the colour difference is excessive) and owners/sportsmen-women who do not wish to breed, may be satisfied with that ... but the 'ky' potential still exists! Finally, it is also of note to say that, when born, Korthals Griffon puppies are mostly dappled 'white' with dark markings, as they age, the white defuses and the darker colour takes more prominence. It can be up to two years before the coat has set.



I am reminded here of a Volkswagen motor car television advertisement ... When is a VW Golf NOT a VW Golf? This British Television advertisement is a prime example of something that 'claims' to be something: <http://youtu.be/rGEvdM9f6f4> But clearly it is not?

WHAT WOULD EDUARD K. KORTHALS DO?

Well ... I can only speculate. I think he would revel with the 'magnifying glass' of animal genetics. He did spend a good proportion of his and other's time and dedication in developing the versatile hunting dog breed that carries his name, along with a vast amount of other peoples money in the process. Accepting the strong probability that his 'original' has been infused with other

European KB/KB or even KB/ky hunting dog blood, allowing for an expanded gene pool.

Responsible breeders, Breed Clubs and Canine bodies now have a duty of care to only allow “*KB/KB tested Korthals Griffon pedigrees*” to breed without restriction so as to eliminate or at least ‘restrict’ the ky or yellow/tan colours. Canine Judges ‘must’ also educate themselves of this too.

If British owners and Breeders of the Korthals Griffon are resolute, they can and should rescue this breed from its tangle of colours and eradicate the ‘ky’ marker in dogs that are allowed to reproduce. And those that meet breed standard ‘but carry the ky’ should and must be restricted from breeding via formal breed restrictions, and if needs be, export restrictions too - registered with the Kennel Club. The British breeders should also seek out ‘like minded’ continental breeders to expand and protect the British Korthals Griffon gene pool and the origins of the Korthals ... And I think Mr. Korthals would appreciate and agree.

Colin Perry

Annex:

References and information for the reader:

University College London - Genetics Institute:
[ugi](#)

VetGen USA:
[VetGen - Veterinary Genetic Services](#)

VetGen DNA based breeding strategies:
[VetGen: Veterinary Genetic Services - Canine - Breeding Strategies](#)

Genetics Org. Domestic dog analysis:
[Linkage and Segregation Analysis of Black and Brindle Coat Color in Domestic Dogs](#)

[Mapping DNA structural variation in dogs](#)

HealthGene Canada:
[Veterinary Laboratory | Veterinary DNA Diagnostic Services – HealthGene Toronto](#)

Mars Veterinary:
[Mars Veterinary](#)

Mars ‘Wisdom Panel’ United Kingdom - DNA ancestry:

[UK Canine DNA Testing, Canine Ancestry](#)

University of California - Davis:
[UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Laboratory](#)

Sheila Schmutz - Genetics of Coat colour and type in dogs:
[Dog Coat Color Genetics](#)

Carol Ptak - Purebred or hybrid?
[Gryphon Ranch](#)

Canine diversity:
[Canine Diversity Homepage](#)

Kennel Club and DNA profiles:
[DNA Profiling - The Kennel Club](#)

Fédération Cynologique Internationale, Korthals Griffon Breed Standard (in English):
[FCI - Breeds nomenclature](#)

French Kennel Club:
[La Société Centrale Canine](#)

Authentic Korthals Griffon association:
[Griffons Korthals Authentiques, 3AGK](#)

British registered breed club:
[The Korthals Griffon Club of Great Britain](#)

American registered breed club:
[AWPGA - American Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Association](#)

Wirehaired Pointing Griffon club USA (Český Fousek infused):
[Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Club of America](#)

Please note that the period images images have undergone restoration, scanning and manipulation in the various digital processes to obtain what you now see within these pages. Colin Perry has been around dogs & working dogs most of his life, was instrumental in importing Korthals Griffons and was a founding member of the UK breed club. And also has a web site at www.korthalsgriffon.org.uk that offers information on the breed.

© Colin Perry - March 2012
email: contact@korthalsgriffon.org.uk