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Among the peculiarities of the Norwegian Lundehund are six toes on each foot, including five that are triple-jointed and one that is double-jointed on the front feet. Of Thunderpaw's Q RidgeRunners, above, owned by Brenda Solomon, has attained numerous titles, and she hopes to make him "the most-titled Norwegian Lundehund."

### Preparing for a Peculiar Breed

The Norwegian Lundehund, whose name means puffin dog, is one breed that likely appears out-of-the-ordinary to anyone other than Norwegians who understand his origin. Among his peculiarities, the Lundehund has six toes on each foot, including two large functional dewclaws. On his front feet, five of the toes are triple-jointed, like human fingers, and one is double-jointed. His forelegs turn to the side at a 90-degree angle, and his head bends backward, almost touching his back.

Dating to 1591, the puffin dog is believed to have survived the Ice Age feeding on sea birds on the Aric island of Maastrand. It was no easy task. The puffin builds its nest deep in the rock crevices of coastal islands and flights viciously to protect its young. The Lundehund was ideally suited for the job. His small body provided agility, and his extra toes helped him to climb the rocks. He was able to mold his body to fit in narrow passages because of the extraordinary range of motion in his joints, and his upright ears are high and forward, providing a shield from the dripping water and dust of caves.

When a friend thrust a lead in Brenda Solomon's hand at a show, it wasn't until she was gaiting around the ring that she realized the uniqueness of the Norwegian Lundehund on the other end. "I stopped and thought, 'What's wrong with this dog?'" she says. "He had an odd gait, an east-west stance, six-plus toes and other prehistoric traits."

Passionate about dogs, Solomon concedes that she "liked the attention 'Q' got because he was different."

Owner of Colorado RidgeRunners in LaSalle, Colo., Solomon is a longtime breeder of another Nordic breed, the Norwegian Elkhound. Recently, she had been looking for a breed smaller than an Elkhound but larger than a Chihuahua with which she could do agility, rally and obedience.

The Norwegian Lundehund, named "Q" for a character from "Star Trek: The Next Generation," fit the bill. The 19-month-old Lundehund already has earned a Junior Champion title in the ARBA, was the No. 1 Lundehund in 2007 in UKC competition, is a Reserve Best in Show UKC Grand Champion and a Norwegian Lundehund Club of America Champion, is both an International All-Breed Canine Association Rare Breed Best in Show and International Best in Show Champion, and is a certified AKC Canine Good Citizen. Solomon hopes Q achieves both AKC and UKC novice agility titles this year as she is working toward making him "the most-titled Norwegian Lundehund."

Currently serving as vice president of the UKC's American Norwegian Lundehund Club, Solomon says the breed will be admitted to the AKC's Miscellaneous Class on July 1. As she and other club members prepare for the Lundehund to become a fully recognized AKC breed, they are cautious about being prepared to rescue dogs in the event the breed goes through a popularity lull.

"What any rare breed club faces — any club faces — is that you need to be one step ahead and be prepared to rescue your dogs," says Solomon. "I hope that as breeders and founders we're prepared to do justice to the breed."

Another breed soon to enter the AKC's Miscellaneous Class on July 1 is the Cesky (pronounced Chess-key) Terrier, which originated in the Czech Republic. Charlene Ewen of Fort Myers, Fla., has been breeding Ceskies since 1994. A terrier lover, her first breed was the Cairn Terrier, but she developed carpal tunnel syndrome and could no longer perform the handstripping required to maintain the Cairns' coats. The Cesky with his soft coat that is trimmed with clippers offered an alternative.

"The Cesky requires weekly coat brushing but is much easier to keep in show coat," says Ewen. "If you have any type of hand problem, handstripping can tear you apart."

After interviewing European breeders and researching the Cesky Terrier for a year and a half, Ewen found a breeder in North Carolina with a puppy from the line she desired. "My first Cesky's name was 'Loika,' which means love in Czech," she says. "I fell in love with the breed. They are extremely smart and are strong dogs that love agility and retain that upbeat terrier personality."

The Cesky was first bred in 1948 outside of Prague, Czech Republic, by a retired geneticist, Frantisek Horak, who crossed a Scottish Terrier and Sealyham Terrier. The breeder, an avid hunter, wanted a dog that would hunt in packs and work together better than his Scotties; he also wanted a dog that would do well in conformation judging. The breed first appeared in the United States in the late 1980s.

As founder and president of the American Cesky Terrier Fanciers Association, Ewen works with club members to help educate the public and judges about the breed, an essential part of introducing a new breed. Two other parent clubs are now defunct.

"It has been a long, sometimes bumpy, road for our breed, but members of the ACTFA have worked hard toward AKC breed recognition," Ewen says. "We keep moving forward in a positive way. Teamwork is key to obtaining your goals."