

## Travel report

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Here's the report on the journey of two dutch Dogo-Argentino breeders to Argentina, namely Hay Buckinx and Fred Weber.

We started the journey (which ofcourse was full of trouble ) on our national airport Schiphol. From Schiphol we flew to London where we had to change plains to get on the right one heading for Buenos Aires. But the plane in question had some engine damage and needed to be checked by a technical team of British Airway's. So we had to wait..... for about 16 hours or so.... With some anger building up about the trouble we were glad we could get aboard the plane and finally take off for Buenos Aires. On arrival there we were glad to see that even with the delay our partner in Argentine Mr. Luis Milla de la Cruz of the "El Tumi" kennel waited for us on the arrival. From there we had to take an inland flight to Rio Quarto but due to our delay at London the plane was already gone for some hours.... Next solution: a cab... well from Buenos Aires to Rio Quarto was a nine hour drive with three people and a driver in a state of the art argentine cab which overhere would probably ended up on the junkyard already 5 years ago... On arrival in Rio Quarto we were totally exhausted after this trip, without sleep, long waiting an being 42 hours on the road by now.

After making aquantance with Mr. Luis his wife Mercedes, his daughters Laura and Sandra and his two son's Lucho and Carlos we got a chance to see his kennel. Well, the quality of the dogs was without doubt, many dogo's here with excellent breed and show capacity.

The next day we started up with continueing the discussion that was already started by phone and snail-mail. Lucky enough Mr. Luis had done his homework thoroughly. It must have come to some people's attention that there has been a lot of import lately from argentina. Sad but true is that there is hardly a health check on the dogs before they are send over the world. Our main purpose here was then to set up a standard procedure for the examination of import dogs on HD, rontgen and hearing test's. As stated before we started that discussion already before by phone and mail, also inviting other breeders to participate in this goal. From the few reactions of other dutch breeders we had only one responded really positive but after a mail message from us with our departure dates to argentina we recieved no response what so ever. That's why it is easy to understand that we could spend all our time on Mr. de la Cruz. Well as said Luis did a proper preparation and already established a function communication line to the University of Rio Quarto. We promptly recieved an invitation for a tour and a following conversation opportunity. It looked as all the right equipment and the needed knowledge was available already at the University, also almost every student from the veterinarian faculty is a child at home at the house of the fam. Milla de la Cruz to gain knowledge by learning from the vast and variety in knowledge of animals that Mr. de la Cruz has. For that he already earned the respect of the staff of the University.

Our surprise was even bigger when it seemed that we were going to be invited to a interview on television. The word got out that two dutchmen were very interested in the dogo-argentino and the plans we have on improving the the problems with HD and deafness. At that point we had to look as foreigners on the common culture amongst breeders and

their "light" opinions on breeding dogs. A common breeder here will quickly look at his new nest for the purpose of the dogs. A deaf pup will be quickly killed. Dogs with apparent showquality's are separated and the other pups are mainly given away to local friends and hunters. There is no check what so ever for HD at that point.

The common sense is quit simple on that, if my dogs can run after boars and puma's then it can't have trouble's with the hips. Apparently is being forgotten that only young and fit dogs are used for the hunt and that a hunt dog retire's as 5 or 7 usually. So just about in the age that the first hip problems can appear. In that tv interview we really pointed out these problems and we clearly stated that it is very important that the problem is being studied from both sides, from the originator's side and the foreign breeders side. It looked as they were really excited about the plans. It is ofcourse preferable that more breeders in argentine are made aware of these problems and with the help of Mr. Luis de la Cruz we have made a step in the right direction.

Ofcourse we have seen loads of dogo's overthere.... just to watch them without any other concerns, simply trying to get a picture of the average quality of dogs from the local breeders. We can tell you that it is mainly high quality and we were also suprised by the fact that there were so many dogo's around, not just with the breeders and hunters but also with the local people. We also visited other local's too where we were allway's generously invited to enter and often stayed for hours to talk about a lof of difference things like common grounds and differences between nations and people.

Furthermore we have been invited twice to a real hunt with professional hunters who together with their dogo's were gonna hunt for boars and puma's. As we are quite crazy about our race we ofcourse accepted the invitation to finally see what the dogs could do with their skills. Exactly at midnight we left with the hunters and their dogs, respectivaly two pure dogo's and two crossbreeds dogo/greyhound ( for their speed ) on a big american pick-up onwards to the pampa's. With a big searchlight the wide area is being searched for boars or puma's.

Suddenly there was action. Immediatley the dogs noticed too and flew off the truck. The two crossbreeds were faster at the boar and tried to stop it, but they couldn't really endanger the boar.

breeds arrived and you could clearly see what kind of breed it is, they attacked the boar without hesitation and wouldn't let go off the boar anymore until the hunter arrived and finished the boar with a dagger. What us surprised was the following: The dogs were completely turned open for a minute ago but even us, total stranger to the dogs could lead the dogs away from the boar without any sign of aggression towards us.

They were only aggressive to the boar in action and that was it. Despite the fact that we our talking about 4 grown up male's who are at the top of their senses and after taking down the boar even amongs eachother showed no sign of aggression. They worked together en lay afterwards with the boar in the back of the pick-up without any incident.

They way back was made to the house of one of the hunters were the boars was professionally slaughtered and immediately was partially prepared and cooked by the Mrs. of the house and eaten by the hunters and their complete family's, Luis and us. It was a happening we never will forget which was closed with a feastmeal with 10 to 12 persons. This complete hunt and eating trip would be done over again four day's later. The people we met were friendly people who even in their harsh circumstances still build up the respect they have for their dogs. Although we must say sideway's that the way the dogs are raised and kept wouldn't be acceptable to our western standards. The dog only has it's value in it's work and there has the respect of the owner, in this case the hunt, but when it can't hunt anymore because of age or disabilities it will surely end up as a chaindog on a yard with a chain of 4 meters were it will not move from until it dies cause taking the dog for a walk as we know it is not done overhere. A dog that can't work anymore loose the respect from the owner and it's value very quickly.

As last we have done a lot of difference and also very pleasant things as eating and drinking together with the very hospitable family's and we even have played a game of mini-soccer against the faculty students that we under the name of " Holland versus Argentina " won, to our surprise.

We hope that we have made with this holiday/worktrip a unique step towards a healthy cooperation with a worldwide respected dogo breeder in collaboration with a real university, but also have made a lot of new, young and mindrefreshing friends who will do their best when they are veterinarians to ensure a healthy future for our race...

With kind regards,

F.R. Weber & H. Buckinx

