

Working Standard of the Bracco Italiano.
(The Pastrone Standard 1937.)

The gait is a trot, long and brisk. Brief periods of galloping are tolerated when re-crossing previously covered ground, at the beginning of the hunt or in cases where the dog encounters a new situation. Above all, the rule when working scent is the trot, this is a lively movement that covers the ground well.

The dog during the hunt should quarter at distances of about 100 metres (330 ft) or more from the handler well spaced and in relation to his excellent smell. These actions confirm that the dog is hunting correctly.

It is evident that in the Bracco Italiano (as with the other trotters) the preoccupation with the scent is of prime importance. Unlike the lightning reaction of the great gallopers the Italian Bracchi treat the process as a complex mental process that is easily read in his expression, which is one of thought.

The hunt is extremely diligent and gladdened by the almost continuous motion of the stub of the tail; the carriage is erect with the neck a little extended in order to hold the head high with the nose angled acutely from the horizontal (towards the ground).

Upon detecting a light scent the dog gradually slows and returns extremely prudently towards its presumed origin, head held high as described above, pacing, without any other manifestations apart from the ears cocked to the maximum and tail motionless and slightly lowered. If the dog realises that it is on residual (old) scent then he should resume the hunt as before. If however he decides that the scent is leading him closer to game he should slow and his final steps should be very slow often gently feeling the ground with his paw before putting his weight on it as if afraid to make a noise. And when the dog points he stiffens his tail, raising it slightly. His tail, when the dog is both pointing and hunting, may be carried horizontal, slightly raised, or slightly lowered.

The over all deportment of the dog is noble, imposing, alert but calm, well erect and slightly forward balanced. The neckline should be a little raised and the head carried up with the nose decisively towards the ground (approx. 30 degrees from the horizontal).

If while hunting he encounters scent which indicates that game is very close he will immediately slow and take up a posture similar to when standing still, only with his neckline a little more pronounced and the tail a little lower. He and will then gradually take up the behaviour described in the previous paragraphs following the scent, which brings him into contact with the game. Sometimes this movement is preceded by an undesirable short stop.

A dog that senses he is suddenly upon the game (and only in this case) will stop immediately. He will stay, more often than not, upright, or with the limbs a little flexed with the head turned down towards the game. Exceptionally the dog may halt in a contorted or twisted pose.

If the game attempts to escape along the ground while being hunted, the dog should track it "on the wind" by its own physical movement, exercising caution not to disturb where possible dry branches or noisy leaves while maintaining contact with it. During this action the dog must maintain the tension as in the pointing phase.

So the dog repeats the "spin" action prudently but decisively, without wavering not halting without a preceding gradual slowing.

It's evident that dominating by direct emanation and maintaining where possible a contact distance his advancement is conditioned by the game. When the game finds itself on especially favoured ground and tries to make its escape the dog shows that all the prudence which he characterises doesn't hinder him from being a tenacious tracker. In this case it may be that the dog finds itself in a circumstance where an abrupt halt is required, when unforeseen he finds himself upon the fugitive that has turned upon itself, or after an obstacle 'et similia'.

Of the characteristics of the Italian bracco (and of the other continentals) is that to have complete contact with the handler, which the dog must never abandon.

The calm and reflective nature of the dog is ideal to condition the work in various circumstances such that he can complete the above actions corresponding to the best conditions of wild and ambient in a frame more restrictive when required.