



Queen Victoria's Italian Volpinos

Volpinos were once classified
as Pomeranians

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left - Queen Victoria with her beloved Turi

As there was great public interest in every aspect of Queen Victoria's life we are fortunate to have several first hand accounts of the dogs that shared her life. The Queen's late-life interest in small to medium Spitz dogs, then thought of as Pomeranians, is well recorded. Articles appeared in British newspapers, the New York Times, magazines of the day and various canine periodicals.

During a holiday in Florence – late March to mid April of 1888 – the Queen acquired a foundation stock of Italian or Florentine Spitz dogs also known as Volpino Italiano.

It is important to remember when reading of the Queen's interest in Pomeranians that the same dogs she favoured are no longer classified as Poms due to the quirks of modern Kennel Club breed designations. If she were alive today eyebrows would be raised at her quest to 'interbreed' Italian Volpino and small German Spitz dogs but as this was in line with many other breeders of the era nobody doubted her motifs. Here is some information gleaned from various sources about these dogs.

GENA or GINA – No. 32545 KC Stud Book 1892

Breeder, date of birth and pedigree stated as unknown – this was a very common occurrence in early records. She was lemon and white in colour.

Owner listed as – Her Majesty the Queen's, Home Park, Windsor. It is reasonable to assume she was born in early 1888.

Gena was incorrectly entered in the Stud Book under 'dogs' but it is a matter of public record Gena was a bitch. Her name was also spelt Gena instead of Gina!

Gina was exhibited at the first Crufts and was diplomatically placed equal first with the experienced show dog Rob who later became the first white champion Rob of Rozelle.

Gina weighed 7.5lbs and was referred to in the New York Times as 'one of the most famous dogs in the world' and 'an especial favorite with the Queen'. After noting she came from Italy she is also called a toy Pomeranian. In both the Scotsman (December 1891) and the Stock-keeper a kennel visit by George Krehl was recorded – Gina's weight of 7.5lbs was noted along with her show wins of two first prizes in February 1891 (at Crufts) this being the first time she was ever exhibited.

Mr G Burgin wrote of 'little tiny Gena' that she 'is one mass of white, silky wool and has the most charming manners'.