

The breed of the month is...

Dalmation



Overview

The Dalmatian is a large, strong, muscular dog with a skull is about as wide as it is long, and flat on the top. The nose can be black, brown (liver), blue or a dark gray that looks like black, while the medium-sized round eyes are brown, blue or a combination of both. The feet are round with arched toes and the toenails are white and/or black in black-spotted dogs and brown and/or white in liver-spotted dogs. The short coat has fine dense hairs. The symmetrical coat is predominantly white with clearly defined round spots. The spots can be black or brown (liver) which are the preferred colors in the show ring, but can also be, lemon, dark blue, tricolored, brindled, solid white or sable. The more defined and well distributed the markings are, the more valued the dog is to the show ring. Puppies are born completely white and the spots develop later.

Breed History

There is total disagreement about the origin of this breed. Spotted dogs are known throughout history in Africa, Europe and Asia. The breed may be related to the Pointer. Traces of spotted dogs are found in Egyptian bas-reliefs and Hellenic friezes, so it certainly is an ancient breed. In 1700 a dog known as the Bengal pointer, similar to the Dalmatian, existed in England, calling into question the Dalmatian's Yugoslavian origin. In the Middle Ages it was used as a hound. The breed became popular as a carriage dog in the 1800s where they trotted beside and among the horses and carriages, very reliably following their masters, guarding the carriages and horses while the master was occupied elsewhere. Very hardy with great stamina, it was able to easily keep up whether its master was



on foot, on horseback, or in the carriage. The versatile Dalmatian has seen many uses, such as a mascot for firemen, war sentinel, draft dog, circus performer, vermin hunter, fire-apparatus follower, bird dog, trail hound, retriever, shepherd and as a guard dog.

Temperament

Dalmatians were bred to run under or alongside horse-drawn carriages and therefore have a vast amount of stamina and energy. They do not like to sit around all day with nothing to do. They are playful, happy, easy going and very dedicated. The Dalmatian needs a lot of leadership along with human companionship in order to be happy. They will not do well left out in the yard all day and have been known to dig crater-size holes. They get along well with other pets, when properly trained. Quite intelligent, but strong willed this breed requires and does well with consistent training. The Dalmatian is trainable to a high degree of obedience. Half of the people who adopt a Dalmatian puppy do not keep them past the first year. Young Dalmatians are very energetic, and need a tremendous amount of leadership and exercise. If you give them the proper training and exercise they will make a wonderful pet and will calm down after a few years. People who keep them long enough to get past their active stage tend to be very pleased. If you are thinking about adopting a Dalmatian puppy be sure you have the time, are a “pack leader” and have the energy for them. If you cannot provide this for them they will become very high strung, hard to manage and possibly destructive.



Appearance

Height: Males 22 - 24 inches (50 – 60 cm) Females 20 - 22 inches (50 - 55 cm)

Weight: about 55 pounds (25 kg)

Life Expectancy: About 10-12 years

Grooming

The Dalmatian sheds all year round but does so profusely twice a year. Brush frequently to help manage the constant shedding. They do not have a doggy odor and are said to be clean and even avoid puddles. Bathe only when necessary.

Exercise

This is a very energetic dog with enormous stamina. They love to run! They need to be taken on daily, long, brisk walks or jogs where the dog is made to heel beside or behind the human holding the lead. Never in front, as instinct tells a dog that the leader leads the way, and that leader needs to be the human. In addition, it needs plenty of opportunity to run, preferably off the leash in a safe area. If these dogs are allowed to get bored, and are not walked or jogged daily, they can become destructive and start to display a wide array of behavioral problems.



Living Conditions

A Dalmatian is not an ideal dog for apartment dwellers unless it can be taken out for a brisk walk or run several times a day. They are very active indoors and will do best with at least an average-sized yard. Not suited to living outside in cold climates.

Health Problems

Deafness in this breed is relatively high; about 10-12% are born deaf. Dalmatian puppies should be BAER-tested for deafness at about 6 weeks old, and totally deaf puppies should be spayed or neutered. While the breeding of deaf puppies should be avoided, it is very possible to raise a well-adjusted deaf dog. Prone to urinary stones, as uric acid levels in Dalmatians are in general higher than in any other breed they are also prone to skin allergies.