

The Dalmation

Contributed by Admin
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THE DALMATIAN

Before the Kennel Club found it necessary to insist upon a precise definition of each breed, the Dalmatian was known as the Coach Dog, a name appropriately derived from his fondness for following a carriage, for living in and about the stable, and for accompanying his master's horses at exercise. As an adjunct to the carriage he is peculiarly suitable, for in fine weather he will follow between the wheels for long distances without showing fatigue, keeping easy pace with the best horses. He appears almost to prefer equine to human companionship, and he is as fond of being among horses as the Collie is of being in the midst of sheep. Yet he is of friendly disposition, and it must be insisted that he is by no means so destitute of intelligence as he is often represented to be. On the contrary, he is capable of being trained into remarkable cleverness, as circus proprietors have discovered.

The earliest authorities agree that this breed was first introduced from Dalmatia, and that he was brought into this country purely on account of his sporting proclivities. Of late years, however, these dogs have so far degenerated as to be looked upon simply as companions, or as exhibition dogs, for only very occasionally can it be found that any pains have been taken to train them systematically for gun-work.

The first of the variety which appeared in the show ring was Mr. James Fawdry's Captain, in 1873. At that period they were looked upon as a novelty, and, though the generosity and influence of a few admirers

ensured separate classes being provided for the breed at the leading shows, it did not necessitate the production of such perfect specimens as those which a few years afterwards won prizes. At the first they were more popular in the North of England than in any other part of Great Britain. It was at Kirkby Lonsdale that Dr. James's Spotted Dick was bred, and an early exploiter of the breed who made his dogs famous was Mr. Newby Wilson, of Lakeside, Windermere. He was indebted to Mr. Hugo Droesse, of London, for the foundation of his stud, inasmuch as it was from Mr. Droesse that he purchased Ch. Acrobat and Ch. Berolina. At a later date the famed Coming Still and Prince IV. were secured from the same kennel, the latter dog being the progenitor of most of the best liver-spotted specimens that have attained notoriety as prize-winners down to the present day.

In appearance the Dalmatian should be very similar to a Pointer except in head and marking. Still, though not so long in muzzle nor so pendulous in lip as a Pointer, there should be no coarseness or common look about the skull, a fault which is much too prevalent. Then, again, some judges do not attach sufficient importance to the eyelids, or rather sears, which should invariably be edged round with black or brown. Those which are flesh-coloured in this particular should be discarded, however good they may be in other respects. The density and pureness of colour, in both blacks and browns, is of great importance, but should not be permitted to outweigh the evenness of the distribution of spots on the body; no black patches, or even mingling of the spots, should meet with favour, any more than a ring-tail or a clumsy-looking, heavy-shouldered dog should command attention.

The darker-spotted variety usually prevails in a cross between the two colours, the offspring very seldom having the liver-coloured markings. The uninitiated may be informed that Dalmatian puppies are always born pure white. The clearer and whiter they are the better

they are likely to be. There should not be the shadow of a mark or spot on them. When about a fortnight old, however, they generally develop a dark ridge on the belly, and the spots will then begin to show themselves; first about the neck and ears, and afterwards along the back, until at about the sixteenth day the markings are distinct over the body, excepting only the tail, which frequently remains white for a few weeks longer.

The standard of points as laid down by the leading club is sufficiently explicit to be easily understood, and is as follows:--

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GENERAL APPEARANCE--The Dalmatian should represent a strong, muscular, and active dog, symmetrical in outline, and free from coarseness and lumber, capable of great endurance combined with a fair amount of speed. **HEAD**--The head should be of a fair length; the skull flat, rather broad between the ears, and moderately well defined at the temples--_i.e._ exhibiting a moderate amount of stop and not in one straight line from the nose to the occiput bone as required in a Bull-terrier. It should be entirely free from wrinkle. **MUZZLE**--The muzzle should be long and powerful; the lips clean, fitting the jaws moderately close. **EYES**--The eyes should be set moderately well apart, and of medium size, round, bright, and sparkling, with an intelligent expression, their colour greatly depending on the markings of the dog. In the black spotted variety the eyes should be dark (black or dark brown), in the liver-spotted variety they should be light (yellow or light brown). **THE RIM ROUND THE EYES** in the black-spotted variety should be black, in the liver-spotted variety brown--never flesh-colour in either. **EARS**--The ears should be set on rather high, of moderate size, rather wide at the base, and gradually tapering to a round point. They should be carried close to the head, be thin and fine

in texture, and always spotted--the more profusely the better.

NOSE--The nose in the black-spotted variety should always be black, in the liver-spotted variety always brown. **NECK AND SHOULDERS**--The neck should be fairly long, nicely arched, light and tapering, and entirely free from throatiness. The shoulders should be moderately oblique, clean, and muscular, denoting speed. **BODY, BACK, CHEST, AND LOINS**--The chest should not be too wide, but very deep and capacious, ribs moderately well sprung, never rounded like barrel hoops (which would indicate want of speed), the back powerful, loin strong, muscular, and slightly arched. **LEGS AND FEET**--The legs and feet are of great importance. The fore-legs should be perfectly straight, strong, and heavy in bone; elbows close to the body; fore-feet round, compact with well-arched toes (cat-footed), and round, tough, elastic pads. In the hind-legs the muscles should be clean, though well-defined; the hocks well let down. **NAILS**--The nails in the black-spotted variety should be black and white in the liver-spotted variety brown and white. **TAIL**--The tail should not be too long, strong at the insertion, and gradually tapering towards the end, free from coarseness. It should not be inserted too low down, but carried with a slight curve upwards, and never curled. It should be spotted, the more profusely the better. **COAT**--The coat should be short, hard, dense and fine, sleek and glossy in appearance, but neither woolly nor silky. **COLOUR AND MARKINGS**--These are most important points. The ground colour in both varieties should be pure white, very decided, and not intermixed. The colour of the spots of the black-spotted variety should be black, the deeper and richer the black the better; in the liver-spotted variety they should be brown. The spots should not intermingle, but be as round and well-defined as possible, the more distinct the better; in size they should be from that of a sixpence to a florin. The spots on head, face, ears, legs, tail, and extremities to be smaller than those on the body. **WEIGHT**--Dogs, 55 lbs.; bitches, 50 lbs.