

good breeders ???

There has been a lot of discussion with little agreement on social media about what a good/ responsible breeder is. AKC rolled out a Breeder of Merit program a few years ago in an attempt to identify what they thought were good breeders.

This conversation got me thinking, the way I see it we have a 2 fold problem; Loss of breed type and a general disinterest in the breed.

When we choose to breed we become the keeper of the standard and we should be holding it dear because loss of type means loss of the breed. There are some basics that identify type and they should never be compromised. One of them is movement.

The Dalmatian is a coaching dog bred to cover lots of ground without tiring. Therefore movement has to be correct.

I was having a conversation with an Aussie breeder/ judge about their standard. She mentioned that Aussies have a good layback of shoulder. My response was just like a dal. She told me “not the dogs she saw in the ring. Most of them have straight shoulders and short upper arms.” So when I attended a judges education seminar and heard the presenter telling these potential judges not to bother looking for a good front because you won’t find one, I was horrified!

Every breed was bred for a specific job, the Dalmatians job was to coach, protect and keep the barns free from rats. The Dalmatian is a distinctly spotted dog, poised and alert, strong, muscular and active. Free of shyness, intelligent in expression, symmetrical in outline and without exaggeration or coarseness. The Dalmatian is capable of great endurance combined with a fair amount of speed” This first statement in the standard explains what Dalmatian type should be.

Every weekend we see dogs in the ring with bad shoulders, short upper arms, long neck, dogs that paddle, dogs that reach from their elbows, dogs with restricted movement, long dogs and over angulated dogs in their rears. These are all dogs that lack breed type...

We all have our own ideas of what a good responsible breeder is and does, but a good breeder, breeds for type, and a good breeder reads their standard often.

Do you look at breeding coefficients when you put together a pedigree? Or do you choose your stud dog based on wins and rankings?

When was the last time you considered dominant & recessive traits before breeding?

Did you know that “a reaching gait covering a maximum of ground with a minimum of effort is recessive and dependent on correct angulation?

Did you know that a good layback of shoulder is a recessive trait?

Good breeders know this and use their knowledge to produce sound dogs, and sound dogs exemplify breed type.

Our generation is fortunate to have some health testing available but it is just a small part of our arsenal for good breeders to use. No one starts out with a plan to produce unsound dogs but without learning and understanding basic genetics and researching pedigrees we will produce unsound dogs and dogs lacking in type.

Whether it’s basic dog questions or giving encouragement at a dog show, Good breeders mentor their puppy people.

The way I see it, we have a lot of work to do if we expect our breed to survive. We need new people to take over the reigns because let’s face it, we aren’t getting any younger.

We need more DCA mentors, one or two per state is not enough. But in the meantime as individuals we can mentor on our own. We can embrace new exhibitors. We can re-introduce the public to our breed and show them that Dals are not hyper and are great with kids. We can convince puppy buyers to let their kids try junior show. What parent wouldn’t want their kids to learn love and responsibility while keeping them out of the mall and away from the Wii? We can show them how versatile our breed is. We can show them our couch potatoes and our dogs that can jog for hours. We can show them a fabulous medium size dog that sheds less than a golden or a lab.

We all know how great our breed is and it’s time for us, our regional club and our parent club to shout from the roof tops what a fabulous breed the Dalmatian can be.

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