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Standard, Miniature & Toy Australian Shepherd Standard

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Australian Shepherd is a well-balanced dog, no matter whether Standard, Miniature or toy. He is attentive and animated, showing strength

and stamina combined with unusual agility. Slightly longer than tall, he has a coat of moderate length and coarseness with coloring that offers variety and individuality in each specimen. An identifying characteristic is his natural or docked bobtail. In each sex, masculinity or femininity is well defined. Bone is moderate and clean with coarseness, heaviness or lightness being undesirable.

CHARACTER

The Australian Shepherd is intelligent, primarily a working dog of strong herding and guardian instincts. He is an exceptional companion. He is versatile and easily trained, performing his assigned tasks with great style and enthusiasm. He is naturally reserved with strangers but does not exhibit shyness. Although an aggressive, authoritative worker, viciousness toward people or animals is intolerable. Fault: Undue shyness.

HEAD

The **head** is clean cut, strong and dry. Overall size should be in proportion to the body. The muzzle is equal in length or slightly shorter than the back skull. Viewed from the side the topline of the back skull and muzzle form parallel planes, divided by a moderate, well-defined stop. The muzzle tapers little from base to nose and is rounded at the tip.

Expression - Showing attentiveness and intelligence, alert and eager. Gaze should be keen but friendly. **Eyes** are brown, blue, amber or any variation or combination thereof, including flecks and marbling. Almond shaped, not protruding nor sunken. The blue merles and blacks have black pigmentation on eye rims. The red merles and reds have liver (brown) pigmentation on eye rims. **Ears** are triangular, of moderate size and leather, set high on the head. At full attention they break forward and over, or to the side as a rose ear. Prick ears and hanging ears are severe faults.

Skull - Top flat to slightly domed. It may show a slight occipital protuberance. Length and width are equal. Moderate well-defined stop.

Muzzle tapers little from base to nose and is rounded at the tip. **Nose** - Blue merles and blacks have black pigmentation on the nose (and lips). Red merles and reds have liver (brown) pigmentation on the nose (and lips). On the merles it is permissible to have small pink spots; however, they should not exceed 25 percent of the nose on dogs over one year of age, which is a **serious fault**.

All colors are strong, clear and rich. The recognized colors are blue merle, red (liver) merle, solid black and solid red (liver) and with or without white markings and/or tan (copper) points with no order of preference. The blue merle and black have black pigmentation on nose, lips and eye-rims; the red (liver) merle and red (liver) have liver pigmentation on nose, lips and eye-rims. . On all colors, the areas surrounding the ears and eyes are dominated by color other than white. The hairline of a white collar does not exceed the point of the withers. Disqualifications: Other than recognized colors, white body splashes, Dudley nose over 1 year of age. Teeth-- A full complement of strong white teeth should meet in a scissors **bite** or may meet in a level bite. Disqualifications - Undershot. Overshot greater than 1/8 inch. Loss of contact caused by short center incisors in an otherwise correct bite shall not be judged undershot. Teeth broken or missing by accident shall not be penalized.

NECK AND BODY

The neck is firm, clean and in proportion to the body. It is of medium length and slightly arched at the crest, setting well into the shoulders. The body is firm and muscular. The topline appears level at a natural four-square stance. The chest is deep and strong with ribs well-sprung. The loin is strong and broad when viewed from the top. The bottom line carries well back with a moderate

tuck-up. The croup is moderately sloping, the ideal being thirty (30) degrees from the horizontal. Tail is straight, not to exceed three (3) inches, natural bobbed or docked. We do allow non docked dogs to accommodate our foreign breeders, as some countries do not allow docking of tails. We also recognize that some people choose not to dock for personal reasons.

FOREQUARTERS

The shoulder blades (scapulae) are long and flat, close set at the withers, approximately two fingers width at a natural stance and are well laid back at an angle approximating forty-five (45) degrees to the ground. The upper arm (humerus) is attached at an approximate right angle to the shoulder line with forelegs dropping straight, perpendicular to the ground. The elbow joint is equidistant from the ground to the withers. The legs are straight and powerful. Pasterns are short, thick and strong, but still flexible, showing a slight angle when viewed from the side. Feet are oval shaped, compact, with close-knit, well-arched toes. Pads are thick and resilient; nails short and strong. Dewclaws may be removed.

HINDQUARTERS

Strong and muscular. Width of hindquarters approximately equal to the width of the forequarters at the shoulders. The angulation of the pelvis and the upper thigh (femur) corresponds to the angulation of the shoulder blade and upper arm forming an approximate right angle. Stifles are clearly defined, hock joints moderately bent. The metatarsi are short, perpendicular to the ground and parallel to each other when viewed from the rear. Feet are oval shaped, compact, with close-knit, well-arched toes. Pads are thick and resilient; nails short and strong. Rear dewclaws are removed.

COAT

Of medium texture, straight to slightly wavy, weather resistant, of moderate length with an undercoat. The quantity of undercoat varies with climate. Hair is short and smooth on the head, outside of ears, front of forelegs and below the hocks. Backs of forelegs are moderately feathered; breeches are moderately full. There is a moderate mane and frill, more pronounced in dogs than bitches. Non-typical coats are severe faults.

COLOR

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GAIT

Smooth, free and easy; exhibiting agility of movement with a well-balanced, ground-covering stride. Fore and hind legs move straight and parallel with the center line of the body; as speed increases, the feet, both front and rear, converge toward the center line of gravity of the dog, while the topline remains firm and level. Joints do not bend or twist when in motion.

SIZE

STANDARD: Height for both male and female is 18 inches up to 23 inches at the top of the withers.

MINIATURE: Height for both male and female is 14 inches up to 18 inches at the top of withers.

TOY: Height for both male and female is 10 inches up to 14 inches at the top of the withers.