

Breed Standard Miniature Australian Shepherd

Published by the *North American Miniature Australian Shepherd Club of the USA*
as adopted by the membership in May, 2002

GENERAL APPEARANCE: The Miniature Australian Shepherd is a well-balanced herding dog of small to medium size. Bone is also moderate and in proportion to body size. 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.



Merle bitch with Tri dog

in background. Trim color is optional and not to be preferred

Disqualifications: Toy like features
(i.e. domed head, bulging eyes, fine bone)

CHARACTER: The Miniature 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 reserved with strangers, but does not exhibit shyness. Although an aggressive, authoritative worker, viciousness towards people or animals is intolerable.

Disqualification: Viciousness **Fault:** Undo shyness

HEAD: Clean-cut, strong, dry, and in proportion to the body. The top skull is flat to slightly rounded, its length and width each equal to the length of the muzzle, which is in balance and proportioned to the rest of the head. The muzzle tapers slightly to a rounded tip. The stop is moderate, but well defined.

TEETH: A full complement of strong, white teeth meet in a scissor bite. An even bite is a fault. Teeth broken or missing by accident are not penalized.

Disqualification: Undershot bites; overshot bites exceeding one-eighth (1/8) inch

EYES: Very expressive, showing attentiveness and intelligence. Clear, almond-shaped, and of moderate size, set a little obliquely, neither prominent nor sunken, with pupils dark, well defined and perfectly positioned. Color is brown, blue, amber or any variation or combination thereof including flecks and marbling.

EARS: Set on high at the side of the head, triangular and slightly rounded at the tip, of moderate size with length measured by bringing the tip of the ear around to the inside corner of the eye. The ears, at full attention, break slightly forward and over from one-quarter (1/4) to one-half (1/2) above the base.

Severe Faults: Prick or hound-type ears

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 bobtail or docked.

FOREQUARTERS: The shoulder blades (scapula) 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 approximately 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: Width of hindquarters approximately equal to the width of the forequarters at the shoulders. The angulation of the pelvis and 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 quality 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.

Severe fault: Non-typical coats

COLOR: All colors are strong, clear and rich. The recognized colors are blue merle, red (liver) merle, solid black, and solid red (liver) all 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. Reds and red merles have liver pigmentation on nose, lips and eye rims. Butterfly nose should not be faulted under the age of one year. 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 at the withers.

Disqualifications: Other than recognized colors, white body splashes. Dudley nose

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 top line remains firm and level.



SIZE: Height for dogs and bitches is 14 inches up to 18 inches at the top of withers. Quality not to be sacrificed in favor of size within the guidelines of this breed standard.

Severe fault under 14 inches and over 18 inches.

For Preferred height read Breed Standard Guidelines Booklet

Disqualification's:

- ✓ Monorchidism and Cryptorchidism
- ✓ Toy like features (i.e. domed head, bulging eyes, fine bone)
- ✓ Other than recognized colors, white body splashes, Dudley nose.
- ✓ Viciousness
- ✓ Undershot bites; overshot bites exceeding one-eighth (1/8) inch

Working together in dog sports such as Frisbee, Agility, Herding, Flyball, Obedience, etc. is encouraged as a means to channel the MAS energy in a fun way for both dog and owner. Training classes once or twice a week helps provide mental and physical challenges and often cements the close bonds formed between dog and owner

Herding



Mini Aussies have a strong and instinctive desire to herd. In fact, you may see this drive to herd when they play with other animals. While this is instinctive, learning to do it effectively and efficiently is something both dog and owner can train together in.

Agility

This is a fast paced sport in which the handler directs the dog over and through a series of obstacles, including jumps, tires, teeter-totters, tunnels, A-frames, and weave poles.

Is This The Right Breed For You?

Miniature Australian Shepherds are loving and devoted companions to their families but are generally reserved with strangers. This natural reserve means that this is not the dog that will bound up to strangers to be petted, but instead will stand firmly by your side until introductions are made and the MAS sees that the stranger is acceptable to you. While this trait makes them wonderful guardians of home and family, it does require early socialization with people outside the family. Their intelligence and loving nature make it easy for them to form strong bonds with their family.

The MAS is a herding dog with strong natural instincts. Unfocused, this herding instinct may be used inappropriately to herd small animals (like cats) and children. Chasing bicyclists, or other fast-moving objects is often appealing to them as well, and should be curbed as a young puppy. A herding dog will often nip at the heels of livestock to get them moving, and many puppies may try this on their humans as well. Teaching the MAS not to chase, herd or nip at these inappropriate targets will not subdue their natural instinct to herd livestock.

The MAS is not a "busy" dog that is in constant motion but they are a high energy dog that needs a purpose or a job to do. Basic training in Obedience is strongly recommended as a means to teach dog and owner how to work together. Playing and exercise should be a daily routine with the MAS. Small jobs around the house keep the MAS' mind and body challenged, such as picking up the newspaper, or finding toys.

The Mini Aussie is a fun, intelligent, highly motivated dog with a great sense of humor and play. Bringing a Mini Aussie into your home and family can be a rewarding experience for years to come.

What Is A Reputable Breeder?

You have decided that a Purebred dog is for you. What is your next move? What steps should you take to insure that your pup meets your requirements? Doubtless, this purchase should receive thoughtful consideration. It's no loaf of bread you're buying--this little pup will be a member of your family for a decade or more. Choosing a reputable breeder is primary to your objective.

Since it is almost impossible for YOU to know what any of these little pups will grow into physically and emotionally, you must rely entirely upon your faith in the person from whom you are purchasing your pup. There are three options open to you in choosing this person.

1. **PET SHOP OR DEALER.** The Worst Choice Possible! Pups are poorly bred and raised. They are thought of as merchandise (the loaf of bread) to be sold for a high profit. This high profit is possible because little has been put into the care of these pups. Many are sickly. Pet shops rely heavily on impulse buying via "the doggy in the window," which is no way to choose an addition to the family.

2. **BACKYARD BREEDER.** Also a Poor Choice. This is the person who owns a pet "purebred" and thinks it would be "fun" to have puppies or maybe that it would be a great experience for the children. Even worse, perhaps it's being done to make money. Usually this breeder knows little about grooming and care, and still less of the breed history or the breed standard or how his dogs conform to it. The backyard breeders do not do regular examinations by veterinarians on any possible problems with their breed, nor do they x-ray hips. They are not even aware of breed problems nor do they care. Their goal is to produce pups and when the "fun" is over, sell them quickly.

3. **HOBBY BREEDER. The Very Best Choice.** The serious and dedicated hobby breeder regards their dogs as just that--a hobby. They do not expect a huge profit. When someone breeds dogs for enjoyment and for the pleasure and thrill of producing the very finest specimens possible, rather than for profit, the result is SUPERIOR. These breeders acknowledge responsibility for each and every puppy produced and stand behind every dog they have bred. Without question, your choice should be the HOBBY BREEDER.

It is an interesting fact that poor quality pups from pet shops and backyard breeders are usually sold for the same price and some times even more than those purchased from the serious hobby breeder. All three of the above types of breeders sell puppies that may be NAMASCUSA register able--this is not an assurance of quality or dedication to the breed. So, the question is: How does one recognize the serious, dedicated hobby breeder? Prepared below is criteria that you should require your breeder to meet before you consider purchasing your purebred dog. Do not be afraid to confront them with these requirements. It is your RIGHT and you can rest assured that the dedicated breeder will respond positively and with pride.

- Belong to a local breed club or a national all-breed club. Ideally, he or she belongs to several. However, sometimes this is impossible if there is no local breed club in the area. The reason for this requirement is that this sort of participation indicates depth of involvement. This breeder is exposed to other points of view, learns more about his breed, general dog care, modern breeding practices and is kept up to date. He is breeding in accordance with a Code of Ethics.
- Be involved in showing their dog(s). This means that your breeder is not breeding in a vacuum. The breeder who does not show has no idea how good his dogs really are and is deprived of the opportunity to share information and ideas with others. Showing provides the competition which encourages breeders to produce better dogs. The breeder who shows wants to prove how good his dogs are in competition and is putting his breeding program on the line. He is not relying on just a pedigree to indicate quality. Even though you do not want a show dog, you deserve a pet that is the end result of a carefully planned litter--a pup which received the same care as a potential champion. The Breeder who is known by others and has a reputation to uphold will undoubtedly be as careful and honest in selling you your pet as he is in selling his show dogs.
- Give you a period of time which to allow you to have the pup examined by a veterinarian to determine his state of health, so that both of you are assured as to its health. If a problem should arise, it can then be quickly resolved. This period of time is usually 48 to 72 hours.

- Give you written instructions on feeding, training, care and grooming. You should also be given the pup's health/shot records. The breeder should supply you with information where you can purchase books about the breed.

- Be able to show you proof that their stock has been x-rayed and is clear of hip dysplasia, with certification from OFA, GDC, Guelph (Ontario, Canada), or PennHip.

- Make it clear to you that their responsibility continues long after you have taken your puppy home. Indeed, until your pup has departed this earth. Many dedicated breeders will ask that the pup be returned to them or placed with new owners who meet with their approval if for any reason you are unable to continue ownership.

- Be curious about what kind of dogs you have had in the past and what happened to them.

- Ask questions like whether or not you have a fenced yard or if the pup will be walked on lead.

They will make certain you understand all the negative aspects of owning a dog as well as the positive. Having the pup's best interests at heart to say nothing of theirs and yours, a reputable breeder will take great pains to place his pups properly the first time around. A returned pup is a traumatic experience for all concerned and therefore, the breeder who is always willing to accept a puppy back will want to make certain that this specific purebred dog is the breed for you.

- Be able to show you a clean environment, well-socialized puppies and a dam with a good temperament (happy and self-assured).

- Be willing to give you references--names of people who have purchased pups from him in the past or of others in the breed.

- Perhaps be a bit hesitant to sell you a pup until they know more about you. Will not pressure you into deciding immediately, and encourage you to see other litters before making your final selection.

- Provide a written contract and/or conditions of sale.

- Require spaying or neutering of pet quality puppies. Breeders spend a lot of time and effort planning breeding programs designed to improve the breed. They selectively carry on their programs with only the best quality available. Pet quality puppies should be loved and enjoyed as pets. Reputable breeders don't want their dogs being used just to "make puppies" or worse yet, to have their puppies end up in "puppy mills" where they will be mass produced. Therefore, they will require that pets be spayed or neutered before being registered with NAMASCUSA.

If your breeder meets all the above criteria, you are in good hands. If you find yourself with a negative response to any of these, think twice, discuss the situation with someone else. Don't be impulsive and **DO ASK QUESTIONS!**

KEEP THIS IN MIND: YOU ARE PROBABLY GOING TO PAY FOR QUALITY. WHETHER YOU GET IT OR NOT IS UP TO YOU!