

Touchstone Australian Shepherds

Welcome to Touchstone Australian Shepherds/Aussies Only at dogsdogsdogs.com. We hope your visit here will introduce you not only to our canine companions, but also lend to further introducing the Australian Shepherd. We've been serious Aussie enthusiasts since 1981, however the first Aussies in the family were around 1910 when grandparents kept what was commonly the generic farm dog/shepherd(see photo of Gull Lake, Sask, Canada-a dark blue merle featured). While our grandparents went on to raise American Cockers and English Bulldogs we diverged to follow our fancy for the Aussies we met on the horse show circuits and saw in the movies(ie "Run, Appaloosa, Run" with the dogs of Jay Sisler).

Our first Aussie was a heavily Flintridge(an early line of Australian Shepherds)bred, blue merle female. While looking for an appropriate match for her we happened upon Barbara

(Nielsen)Hager of Blue Isle Aussies. She offered us the option to purchase CH Blue Isle Peacemaker of Auriga/GUNNER and our history began. GUNNER not only gave us our first champions from our first two litters, CH Touchstone Pzaz Extraordinaire/JAZZ(multiple Breed and Match wins) and CH Touchstone Show Gun Annie/ANNIE, but on the way to ANNIE's championship she won the 1985 Australian Shepherd Club of America(ASCA) National Specialty Best of Breed Puppy with Barbara Hager on the lead. GUNNER went on to create his own successes often with the help of friend and mentor Barbara. He earned multiple Best In Specialty Wins, multiple Top Ten cuts at ASCA National Specialties and multiple Records of Merit. He fired our enthusiasm for the breed and the pursuit of the Aussie show dog. We built our foundation on blending dogs from GUNNER's pedigree with dogs similar in type, trainability, soundness and instinct. Over time we have incorporated various foundation lines that offer strengths to compliment and complete the goal of the versatile Aussie-successful in the show ring, pleasing and devoted as a companion, ready to take direction/instruction, a superior athlete and maintaining the basic herding instincts/stock sense to call upon when requested.

In the beginning we did not own or promote the red dogs, but when a little red merle male appeared in 1990 little did we realize the friends he would introduce and the ambassadorship he would achieve...our most accomplished dog, ASCA/AKC/CKC/World/FCI-Int'l/PR/Mex/IABKA-Int'l CH Touchstone Mercury Rising, DNA-



CP/PHOENIX has been achieving firsts ever since his show career began. He was the first Group winning Aussie in Canada and the first to achieve the titles he now bears. Currently in Europe, PHOENIX is undefeated at the breed level in his European endeavors and is multiple group placing. His enthusiasm is infectious and a real crowd pleaser. He adores "his public" and is a social butterfly. His success initiated our goal to produce rich, red dogs of the finest quality. We have been blessed with multiple accomplishments with our red dogs and continue to seek to perfect our lines, individuals of all colors, with the ever changing demands of the world in which they will live.

Our dogs have not only excelled in the all breed show rings around the world, but have served in a multitude of other capacities to include: flyball masters and champions; regional frisbee winners; lams/Superdog performers; scent hurdle dogs; search and rescue workers; multi-titled agility dogs; top dog rankings in conformation and obedience; high in trial stock and obedience winners; assistance/therapy tasks; junior handling associates; ranch dogs; and, the ever important role as the devoted family companion.

Touchstone(and Aussies only) offers multiple services ranging from the dogsdogsdogs.com website listings to occasional litters/young adults/titled dogs, stud service and handling/conditioning. We plan to be offering Aussie artwork, giftware and related articles. We also plan to sponsor a guest or visitor to our site and/or highlight individuals from around the world competing and living with their Aussie(s).

-regarding litters/puppies: We average two litters per year. The litters are bred with versatility in mind, but our

main priority is that each puppy be placed in a family home with companionship first followed by directions in chosen career(s). All pups in all litters receive two DHLPParvoCorona boosters, regular worming and a genetic eye screen by a licensed veterinarian ophthalmologist. Parents of all litters are certified free of hip dysplasia through OFA(see OFA description), cleared annually for eye abnormalities by a licensed veterinarian ophthalmologist and maintained on monthly Interceptor(heartworm) therapy and Advantage for protection against fleas.

Most of the litters are all four colors or red carriers. Every puppy is accompanied with a written contract/guarantee outlining the rights of the buyer and expectations of the seller(very basically guaranteeing replacement/refund for disqualifying faults in show/breeding animals and hereditary, disabling conditions in pets, but expanded to fit the needs of the individual buyer). All pets are sold on a limited registration with a spay/neuter agreement.

-regarding young adults/titled dogs/retired dogs: We occasionally offer a young adult or titled individual that is a repeat of a pedigree for us or is not fitting into our specific program goals. We have contracted to raise and show individuals for specific time periods prior to shipping to their new owners(ie-raising and showing through championships and OFA/eye certification prior to shipping overseas), but this requires excellent communication from the buyer with relations to expectations and requirements on both sides of the contract. The occasional "retiree" comes available when done in the competitive arena or retiring from active involvement in the breed(most of our girls produce 1 to 3 litters in their lifetime and retire at or

around age 7 either to live with their co-owner families, us or a family/individual requesting an older animal).

-regarding stud service: We maintain some individuals(owned and/or co-owned) that we use in our breeding program and offer them at limited stud to bitches meeting certain qualifications. Our most basic requirements include a certification from a veterinarian that the bitch is free of Brucellosis and current on all vaccinations, OFA certification(or certification from the country with which the bitch is maintained), certificate verifying the bitch to be free of hereditary eye abnormalities, three generation pedigree and color photos illustrating coloring and conformation. We require all puppies in all litters be evaluated genetic eye abnormalities by 8 weeks of age by a licensed veterinarian ophthalmologist.

-regarding handling/conditioning: These services are contracted on an individual basis with respects to the animal being maintained by the owner and delivered for the period of the shows or show weekends or an animal being maintained by us(trained, conditioned, etc)for a show season or specific title goal. We have finished numerous champions of our own, our bloodlines and for other Aussie enthusiasts and taken these animals to Group and show wins in multiple countries and breed organizations.

We frequently cooperate with other breeders to produce a combined blend of two lines offering, what we hope to be, the best of both lines to future puppy homes and often keeping an individual(or co-owning)for our own future(s). These cooperative efforts enable us to reach across the country and internationally.

We welcome all inquiries, specific or gen-

eral, and offer a general information packet with elaboration on specific dogs or upcoming litters if requested. We highly recommend the book, "ALL ABOUT AUSSIES" by Jeanne Joy Hartnagle Taylor(Alpine publishing) as the best resource text on the breed.

Note: We recommend and emphasize the safety measures provided by secured environments for your puppy/dog. The old adage, "good fences make good neighbors" also holds true in keeping your dog in favorable status with your neighbors. Puppies/dogs allowed to roam free are not only endangering their own lives if encountering vehicles, dog control officers, unfriendly individuals, etc., but they can cause accidents when drivers swerve to avoid them and they can cause poor neighbor relations if they damage other people's property. The unsupervised dog, of any breed, is a potentially dangerous dog. A fenced yard provides a place where your canine companion can safely play, sleep, explore. A kennel is a reasonable containment if the animal is allowed out to be with the family and to exercise freedom. Crates/air kennels act as seat belts for your dog in the car and safe zones for the uneducated puppy/dog in the house for short periods(while unattended/unsupervised). We also recommend permanently identifying your canine companion through the use of microchipping or tattooing.

Australian Shepherd Club of America, Inc
for general club and breed information
Business office, registry:
6091 E State Hwy 21
Bryan, TX 77808-9652
World wide web address: <http://www.asca.org>



United States Australian Shepherd Association(AKC affiliated)
Information: Sharon Fontanini
3121 SW 18th St
Des Moines, IA 50315 phone
(515)282-0677

The Australian Shepherd
Dr. Hart, in *The Perfect Puppy*, illustrated the Aussie by the following description: "You my dream of a dog so obedient that it seems to read your mind and anticipate your wishes...The breed that would appear to come closest to this ideal is the Australian Shepherd".

It is commonly told that the Australian Shepherd is not a derivative of Australia, but actually an American-made breed. It is said that the dogs early in the breed history were companions to the Basque shepherds and natives of Portugal. These shepherds took their flocks of sheep to

Australia and along went the shepherd's dog. When the shepherds came to the United States again they brought their dogs. These "little blue dogs" developed into what is the modern day Australian Shepherd.

The Australian Shepherd Club of America, Inc(ASCA) is the original parent club for the Australian Shepherd. In 1977 ASCA published a breed standard(see <> below) as a guideline for breeding and showing/judging the Aussie. This has been the standard to which each breeder reflects when developing a line, but one will find that Aussie type varies widely based on the geographical region and frequently on the purpose for which the dogs are produced.

In general the Australian Shepherd is a moderate-sized dog with moderate bone, moderate coat and moderate angulation. The overall agility and athletic ability are factors of the well-balanced individual(as well as conditioning). They are a breed with great enthusiasm and keen attention. While the general description of Aussie temperament includes "reserved with strangers" this is not to excuse poor temperaments of vicious or shy dogs. An aggressive working style is not to be confused with the aggression displayed in individual personalities-the latter of which is not tolerable in social situations. The Aussie is frequently remembered by people as "the little blue dog I had as a kid on the farm". In actuality the Australian Shepherd has a wide variety of color patterns based on two basic color schemes of black and red(liver). The blue merle is the color responsible for the "little blue dog" memories. This color is a mixture of black and gray coat with or without the addition of white and/or copper(tan) trim/points. These dogs will

have black nose leathers, eye rims and lips. The red merle is a blend of the liver color(varying in shades from brown to chocolate brown to deep mahogany)with a lighter red color with or without the additon of white and/or copper trim/points. These dogs have liver nose leathers, eye rims and lips. The black dog may be a bi-color(with white or copper trim), a tri-color(with white and copper trim) or solid black. The red dog may be a bi-color, tri color or solid individual. Many of the current day show dogs boast the white collars, socks and blazes, but there is no preference listed in any breed standard with regards to color or markings. The ASCA breed standard does stipulate that the individual animals be of "strong, clear and rich" color with unrecognized colors(ie sable)being disqualifying. Excessive white markings characterized by body splashes, white extending beyond the withers at the root of the hair and white monopolizing the eyes and ears(versus predomination of base color) are also disqualifying and undesirable. The basis for the excessive white markings being undesirable originates from excessively white individuals produced by merle-to-merle matings that carry a "lethal" gene-called homozygous merles these individuals are potential candidates for visual and audio problems(including total blindness and deafness).

As stated above the Australian Shepherd should not display viciousness towards people or other animals, but temperaments and personality characteristics range from soft and submissive individuals to hard and dominating characters. The words "soft" and "hard" relate to interaction with the training environment with respects to a "soft" dog being more responsive to direction and requiring minimal correction and the "hard" dog

being more of the "pack-leader" variety that frequently challenge the experienced handler/trainer and runover the novice owner/handler/trainer. For most family companions an animal on the softer end of the range to mid-range will bear the most success for novice or less-experienced owners. This is not to say that a submissive puppy/dog is a good choice because the submissive animal may also be the shy and/or fearful animal which can become the dangerous "fear-biter". Nor does this imply that the "hard"/dominant individual dog will be the toughest on stock—it may just be dominant over the owner and willful to fulfill it's own choices. Shyness in a puppy or adult may be a factor of inadequate socialization. Sometimes this can be overcome with vigorous socialization upon acquiring the animal and sometimes the results are permanent(lending to a potentially fearful dog).

In addition to personality traits it is important to note the energy characteristics of the individual puppy/dog. The Aussie is noted for enthusiasm and eagerness to please his/her owner. The highly energetic animal may be exactly what the competitive obedience handler/trainer seeks, but often not the animal for the average companion dog. Energy requires release which demands direction. Add high trainability to energy and one can have either a delight or a curse. A high power obedience prospect is a handful of energy and much incidental training can occur. The moderate energy puppy may not always be the perfect obedience score, but is easier to live with in an average family household. Aussies are easily directed and thus their energies can be tamed with tasks in the form of retrieval games, walking(jogging with the older dog), herding, dog sports, etc.. Undi-

rected energies can become destructive energies leading to unauthorized digging, chewing, chasing, etc.. Decide on the goal for your prospective puppy/dog and describe this goal to the breeder(s) so that the most suitable personality and energy characteristics can be matched to your expectations for you dog and you. Australian Shepherds and children...the Aussie is a sensitive breed and relates to the adult environment what it learns as a puppy. Most Aussie puppies exposed or raised with children learn to be gentle and appropriately enthusiastic with children. As it was discussed that the unsocialized animal may be shy and furthermore become a fear-biter, the animal not socialized with children during the puppy's formative period is often unable to relate to the idiosyncracies of children in the animal's adulthood. Children commonly move quickly and irratically and frequently make noises uncommon to most adults. The Aussie puppy(or any puppy) needs familiarity with normal activities of children in mulitple social settings in order to become reliable with children. The best situation for educating the puppy is to enroll in a puppy socialization class that encourages the entire family to attend. This will give the puppy every opportunity to meet and greet people of all ages(and puppies of all ages and breed)in a setting that educates them on proper citizenship and future expectations for social settings. Socialization cannot be emphasized enough! A great deal of what the Aussie puppy becomes is founded by what the owner invests in training, socialization and general care and guidance. Provide every opportunity for your puppy/dog to build a solid foundation for a cooperative, lifelong companionship with people. The socialized Aussie, taught to be friendly



and well-mannered, will still be protective in an “as necessary” situation. The unsocialized animal is an unreliable reaction waiting to happen.

Australian Shepherds as a whole are relatively free of hereditary problems, but some hip dysplasia and eye abnormalities occur (other conditions outlined in “Genetics of Purebred Dogs” include dwarfism, cleft palate and spina bifida). Hip dysplasia (and/or any orthopedic problems) is best diagnosed through xray. The most common current practice for rating hip dysplasia is based on xrays taken at 2 years of age and submitted to the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) in St Louis, MO. The xrays are read and evaluated by a panel of three veterinarians that issue a rating based on general breed characteristics. OFA ratings of Excellent, Good and Fair are given numbers and certification. Ratings of mild, moderate and severe abnormality in the hip joint are not given numbers or certification. Penn hip is another evaluation technique that can be done on puppies and advised to be repeated annually. Again ratings are given based on xrays submitted. Some breeders are now xraying elbows, but this has not become the common practice. Elbow xrays are also submitted to OFA for certification evaluation. In relation to managing the occurrence (and discouragement) of eye disorders in the breed, conscientious breeders and breed enthusiasts employ the licensed/certified veterinarian ophthalmologist to screen all puppies in all litters between 7 and 8 weeks of age and all adults on an annual basis. The genetic eye screen evaluates the individual for the absence or presence of both hereditary and non-hereditary eye anomalies. Those individual animals receiving a normal screening are eligible for certification through the Canine Eye Registration Foundation (CERF) and can obtain a CERF number (valid for one year from the date of examination).

Both ASCA and AKC are now offering the availability for DNA testing individuals. DNA testing will certify parentage on individuals and verify parentage on litters from certified parents. These are not mandatory tests.

Multiple breed registries recognize the Australian Shepherd, but each registry has specific requirements for individual registration. Investigate the organization(s) in your country or with which you wish to register your Australian Shepherd prior to purchasing your Aussie. Inquire of the breeders you contact as to what registries their dogs are registered.

<In May of 1991 the American Kennel Club approved their own breed standard for the Australian Shepherd which became effective January 1, 1993. This standard varies some from that of ASCA. Copies of the official breed standards may be requested from the individual organizations.>

For any dog you buy (Aussie or other breed) ask what guarantees or contracts the breeder offers. The following points should be addressed in your guarantee/contract:

Do the terms define the expectations of the breeder/seller and the guarantees to you?

Does the contract fully describe the animal you are purchasing and include informa-

tion such as the registered name, litter/registration number, date of birth, color, sex, sire, dam, when eyes were checked, when the animal was vaccinated, etc.?

For the average pet you should seek guarantees regarding:

Crippling hereditary hip dysplasia-you will need to xray your animal at two years or prior to that time for definitive diagnosis. We suggest all animals be xrayed at one year of age if they are going to participate in activities requiring jumping and high stress activity.

Hereditary disabling eye abnormalities-your puppy should be checked free of abnormalities at 6-8 weeks and annually thereafter. Some abnormalities do not limit the sight of the animal, but make it unsuitable for breeding. Be sure to ask about any disorders and eye clearances.

Creippling hereditary condition not specified, but of occasional occurence.

For a show/breeding animal you should seek guarantees regarding:

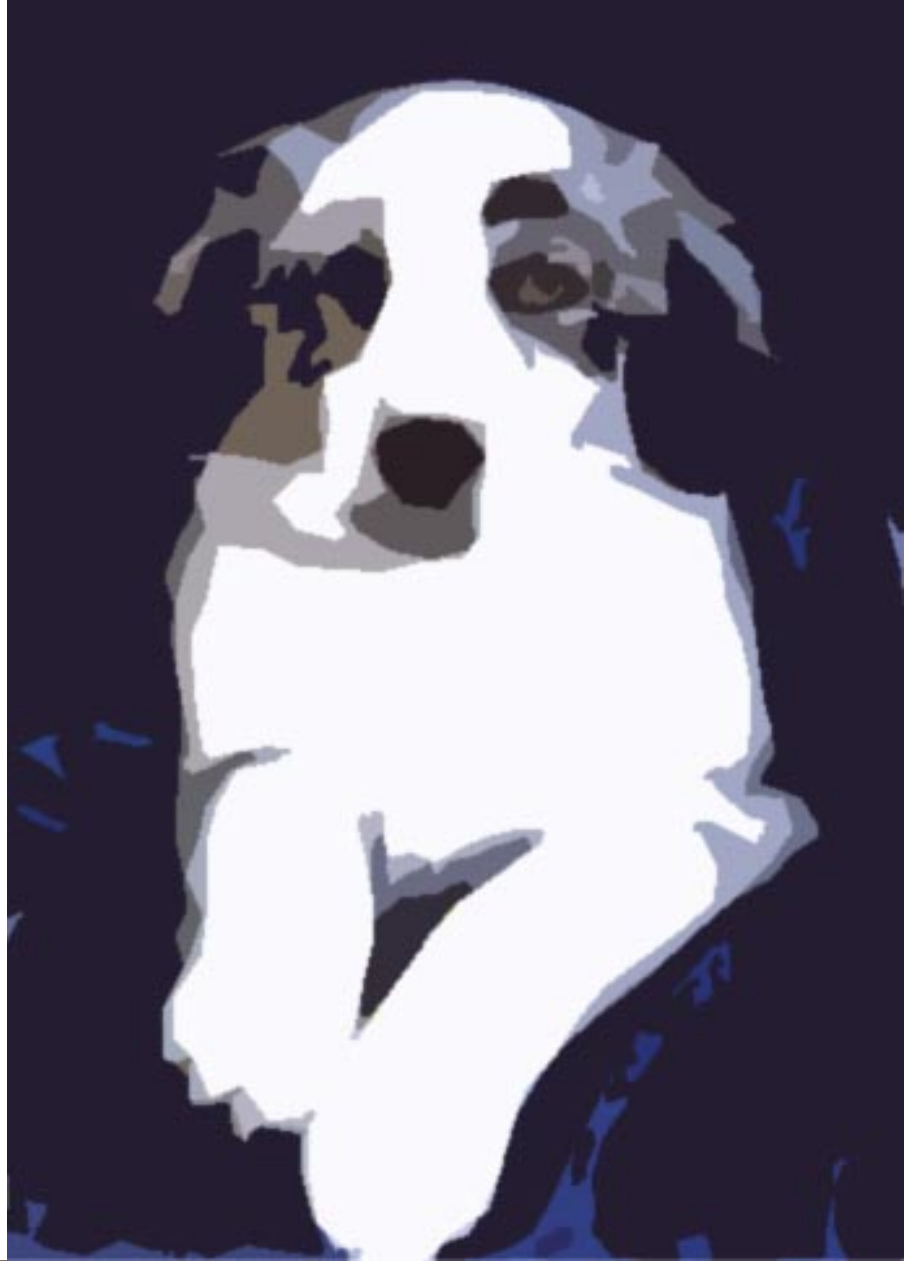
Hereditary hip dysplasia-this will require you xray at 24 months and submit the xrays for evaluation by an authorized agency(ie OFA, Guelph, etc).

Hereditary eye abnormalities rendering the animal unable to be certified-your responsibility will be to obtain annual eye examinations by a certified veterinarian ophthalmologist and keep these annual records.

Disqualifying faults(in the Aussie:(ASCA standard):monorchidism, cryptorchidism and malocclusion(extreme undershot or overshot-greater than 1/8 inch)(note-excessive white in the Australian Shepherd is also disqualifying, but something the buyer sees when purchasing the animal)

It is your responsibility to request to see the certifications for hips, eyes and other disorders or ask for certification numbers for the parents. You should receive copies of these papers when you get your puppy and you may ask if the litter was checked by an ophthalmologist. It is also your responsibility to keep the animal safe, well-nourished and properly housed and exercised.

Normal guarantees stipulate what sort of refund and/or replacement is available in the event your animal suffers from any of the described conditions or any individual situations written into the contract. The contract should be in writing, signed by at least the buyer and seller(a witness is usually optional) with a copy going to each party. Some contracts have time limitations and other limitations based on the individual dog, buyer and seller. Many show dogs are listed with requirements of being shown at a specified number of shows per year for specified number of years. A basic contract can be expanded with an addendum and personalized to fit your needs and the needs of the seller. The contract is for the protection of the seller, buyer and animal.



Current puppies available:

Born 3/28/98

Sire: CH Heatherwind Roc-N-Rolo Three B, CGC, CD/ROCKY

Dam: ASCA/CKC/IABKA Int'l CH(major AKC pointed)Touchstone Red Delicious/
BOBBI

ROCKY is basically linebred on the Talkook kennel with some outs to the Hall of Fame/CH Las Rocosa Little Wolf X CH Christmas Wishes of Windermere cross. He is a marbled blue merle with lots of attitude and eagerness to please.

BOBBI is a full sister to multiple CH Touchstone Mercury Rising, DNA-CP/PHOENIX. She is nearly complete with her AKC championship(needs 4 single points)and will start work on stock next year.

Both parents OFA Good and eyes cleared

Available-Red tri male/SIMON - show potential. very mellow and attentive

Blue merle female/BOOGIE - very correct with lots of go power

Red tri female/CHA CHA - smaller girl would be excellent for agility/a pistol