Dalmatian

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Who could help but love the face and demeanor of a Dalmatian (or Dal), especially after two Disney movies in the past have portrayed them in such a positive light? And they are positive dogs - with the right owners. A well-bred Dalmatian, according to the American Kennel Club (AKC) is "poised and alert, muscular and active, free of shyness, and intelligent in expression." Further, the AKC mentions that a Dalmatian is "capable of great endurance, combined with a fair amount of speed."

History

According to the Dalmatian Club of America (DCA), the beginnings of the breed go so far back that researchers cannot agree to their origin. The one thing that is agreed upon is that its distinctive looks have not changed over the centuries. The spotted dogs frequently accompanied gypsies, which is probably why its history takes it to so many different regions.

Living with a Dalmatian

A Dalmatian is born pure white and gets his spots as he grows. He is a very active and alert dog and should have regular daily exercise and a lot of attention from his owner. If you are not prepared to give him the attention and training that an intelligent dog needs, a Dalmatian may not be for you. Temperament varies throughout the breed. Observe the parents' temperaments when looking at a litter of puppies. The Dalmatian's short smooth coat requires little grooming. One health concern in Dalmatians is congenital deafness, which occurs in about 12% of the breed. Responsible breeders have their litters tested for hearing impairment (called the BAER test) and should have the paperwork for their puppies' new owners.

Interesting Breed Facts:

Popularity: 76th in 2008; with 983 registered with the American Kennel Club (AKC).

First recognized as a breed: The Dalmatian Club of America (DCA) was founded in the early 1900s.

AKC Grouping: Non-Sporting.

Size: Height between 19 and 24 inches at the shoulders. Weight is anywhere from 45-70 lbs.

Appearance: The short coat is dense, fine, and smooth, with a sleek, glossy appearance. The Dalmatian is a white dog with distinct spots, either black or brown (properly called liver). Head is in balance with the overall body and free of loose skin. The eyes are set well apart, round and deep into the skull. Drop ears are set high, and carried close to the head. The skull is flat and the muzzle is powerful. The Dalmatian's expression is alert and intelligent.

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#1 preventable problem:	Lack of attention and lack of exercise. If you want a Dalmatian, expect to spend a lot of time with him, teaching him what is acceptable in your household.
Preferences:	Being near his owner, variety in training, agility competitions.
Best features:	Quiet, intelligent, hardy, and reserved.
Biggest challenge to owners:	Because the Dalmatian is intelligent, and thus dislikes repetition, he sometimes can be a challenge to train. Dalmatians, however, are usually food-motivated, so keep plenty of treats in your pocket when you're training!

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