

The Dalmatian

~ the newest member of your family!



Congratulations on making a Dalmatian a part of your family!

The “Dal,” as he is known worldwide, is an intelligent and affectionate breed, which means constant companionship, love and attention — often expressed by following you from room to room.



With this pamphlet, the Dalmatian Club of America would like to provide you with some basic information about our breed’s physical characteristics, and his personality as well. We hope it will help you to better enjoy this new member of your home.

The Dalmatian’s most unique physical feature is, of course, his spots. He is medium in size, usually between nineteen to twenty-four inches when measured at the shoulder. Males and females vary in weight, but the most common range is forty to sixty pounds.

Activities

Of both sporting and working heritage, he is ideally suited to be a family pet. He can also be an eager participant in a wide variety of different performance events: agility, rally, barn hunt, lure coursing, dock diving, road trials with horses, and obedience. Some are certified therapy dogs. And every single one of them is dependable and sensible enough to let you know when your guests or the mailman arrives — even before the doorbell rings. The Dal does it all!

Grooming

Clean by nature, he is one of the few breeds that grooms himself, and has none of the odor common

to other dogs. Even when you stroke his extremely soft coat, your hand will still smell fresh. He does shed year round, but a little bit of regular brushing helps to minimize this. A bath three to four times a year is usually enough, and breeders discourage frequent bathing, as soap removes the natural oil that keeps his coat in good condition; in addition, a dry coat means an itchy coat. He needs his toenails trimmed weekly, but removing the hooked tip is all that is necessary. The condition of his teeth should be part of his annual checkup with the vet.

Health

All responsible breeders work toward genetic health for the breed, investigating potential sires and dams for sound temperaments, as well as testing hips, eyes, ears, and thyroid. Congenital deafness in one or both ears at birth is one of the things every Dalmatian breeder must address, and all responsible breeders conduct a BAER hearing test on all their litters. You should have received the results of this test when you bought your puppy. If you did not, please consider having him evaluated by a canine hearing specialist as soon as you can.

Regular veterinary care and appropriate vaccinations — about which your breeder should advise you — are essential to make sure your new dog is both healthy and happy. The Dalmatian



is an easy keeper, but does have the genetic predisposition to develop bladder stones. Because “blockage” with a stone is life threatening, it must be treated as an emergency. A few simple steps will limit the possibility:

- 1) a “low purine” diet – most commonly found in kibble with a protein percentage in the low twenties;
- 2) plentiful clean water; and
- 3) frequent opportunities to empty his bladder.

Should a problem develop, a prescription diet and/or medication from your vet can help alleviate the condition.

We now know that reaching physical maturity before neutering is an important component in helping to prevent blockages, and The Dalmatian Club of America strongly urges you to wait until your Dal celebrates his first birthday to do so.

However, neutering your new Dal is an important consideration. Many breeders have “spay and neuter agreements” in their contracts and sometimes sell their companion puppies on “limited” AKC registrations. Altering your Dal will not change his personality, or even – contrary to popular conception – make him lazy or fat. Just as in people, an obese dog is the result of too many calories and too little exercise. Giving him “people food” or too many treats, can quickly transform a handsome, lean animal into a pudgy one.

Training

Taking the time to teach your dog basic obedience for his – and your own – mental health is also extremely important. This sort of training is most effective when dog and owner learn together in a professional class. Common commands like “sit,” “down,” “come,” “stay,” “off,” “leave it” and

“heel” provide him with the skills needed to be a happy and well-behaved member of your household, which will matter to you greatly during your many years together. Often new owners begin training their puppy for good citizenship, and end up happily involved in competition sports that the agile and intelligent Dalmatian enjoys so much.

Puppy classes for beginners are widely available. Ask your vet or breeder for recommendations.



Last, but not least, don’t forget to take your new pal along with you whenever you are able, whether to work, to play or just to run errands. By exposing him to new places, new faces and a variety of different experiences, you will make him more settled and sociable. A social Dal is a *happy Dal* – one who will be a true ambassador for the breed.

Resources

For more information about your new Dalmatian, or about the Dalmatian Club of America, and to explore joining our national club, visit

www.thedca.org

Also, please visit



www.DCAF.org

to learn how you can support the Dalmatian Club of America Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to the health of dogs and of Dalmatians in particular.

