

Australian Shepherd



The Australian Shepherd does not originate from Australia! He is a product of the USA, his origins going back to the Basque/Spanish sheepdogs. Basque shepherds emigrated to Australia in the latter part of the nineteenth century taking their 'blue' dogs with them. When they then in turn went on to the Americas the dogs travelled as well, hence the Americans' naming of them.

Built on powerful lines, he can turn his very intelligent mind to obedience, agility, and tracking as well as to his basic role as a worker on farm or ranch. He has already made himself a wide circle of friends since he first appeared in the United Kingdom. His intelligence, high energy levels and tendency to be territorial demands a committed owner, willing to devote the time and energy required to provide him with proper training and lots of exercise.

What about Health Issues?

You may be aware that some breeds of dog (and crossbreeds too) can be susceptible to inherited disease. Of course you want to be sure that the puppy you choose is as healthy as possible, and you would like to know that it has not inherited any undesirable disease-causing genes from its parents. There is some help in that DNA tests for diseases in purebred dogs are available for some conditions in some breeds, but there are not very many such tests just yet! There are also, however, a number of clinical veterinary screening schemes that dog breeders can use to increase the probability of producing healthy puppies.

Details of the various screening schemes, both veterinary and DNA, that are available to breeders in the UK can be found on the Kennel Club's website at:

www.thekennelclub.org.uk/doghealth

Puppy buyers should be aware that, at present, the application of various health screening results to breeding programmes is not always straightforward, and breeders may make choices for various reasons. A responsible breeder though, will always be willing to discuss relevant health issues with you. Breed clubs are often useful sources of breed-specific information.

And what health screening is relevant for the Australian Shepherd?

Kennel Club Accredited Breeders must use, or are strongly recommended to use, the following screening schemes and/or advice for sires and dams:

- BVA/KC Hip Dysplasia Scheme
- BVA/KC Elbow Dysplasia Scheme
- DNA test CEA/CH
- DNA test prcd-PRA
- Blood test for Pelger-Huet Anomaly
- DNA test HC-HSF4
- BVA/KC/ISDS Eye Scheme
- DNA test MDR1
- DNA test Cobalamin Malabsorption

This list is not necessarily comprehensive and you should still ask breeders and refer to breed clubs about health issues in the breed.