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American Staffordshire Terrier

The American Staffordshire Terrier retains its athleticism and some Bulldog characteristics from its past. Its current popularity is testament to how breeders have ensured that both its good looks and temperament meet the social expectations of modern society.

The American Staffordshire Terrier becomes a Pure Breed



American Staffordshire Terrier



American Staffordshire Terrier (with cropped ears)

In America, English people who emigrated during the 1800's could not bear to leave their beloved pets behind. So the forerunners of the American Staffordshire Terriers we know today arrived in America and, as many originated from the coal pits of England, they first became known as American Pit Bull Terriers. Under this name, they were first recognized by the United Kennel Club in America in 1899.

As the Staffordshire Bull Terrier was not recognized by the Kennel Club (UK) or the American Kennel Club at that time, the Americans began developing their Staffords as a larger and more graceful breed than their English counterpart, still distinguished by their



American Staffordshire Terrier 1987

cropped ears in countries where ear cropping is allowed. At first he was recognized by the United Kennel Club where he was known as a Pit Bull Terrier. In 1936 this breed was first recognized as the Staffordshire Terrier by the American Kennel Club who changed its name in 1972 to the American Staffordshire Terrier.

History of the American Staffordshire Terrier in Australia



Ka-Hanahou Lei O Makana (imp USA)

After almost a decade involved with Staffordshire Bull Terriers, in 1984 Bob and Ruth Murdoch decided to introduce the American Staffords into Australia. Because of quarantine complications from mainland USA at that time, the easiest route was through Hawaii. This foundation pair were a bitch Rockisland's Ho'Omua O Hawaii (imp USA) and a dog, Ka-Hanahou Lei O Makana (imp USA).

From January 1st 1987 the breed was finally ANKC recognized. The dog became a Terrier Group winner, quickly putting the American Staffordshire Terrier on the map here. The Murdochs then bred Champions under the 'Amstaff' prefix. Later they imported a second dog, Ka-Hanahou's Rojo's

Sam (imp USA) who unfortunately was lost to snake bite^[1].

Comparison between the Staffordshire Bull and American Staffordshire Terrier



American Staffordshire Terrier

Originating from the same source, almost a century of development has separated these two different breeds which, at first might appear similar. But a closer examination reveals the difference in the general build of these two breeds. Although the Staffordshire Bull Terrier should be obviously smaller, the American Staffordshire has a far more graceful build with his longer neck and slightly sloping topline.





Ka-Hanahou's Rojo's Sam (imp USA)



The allowable colours of the two breeds have remained remarkably similar. But two colour combinations are not allowed. These are any shade of liver and black and tan. This is because those who first developed the breed believed these colours indicated cross-breeding. However, it is amazing how these colours can suddenly crop up in the best of litters as evidenced by the attached picture of quite a nicely conformed modern Staffordshire Bull Terrier with the typical black and tan marking pattern.



Oops-Undesirable Colour!

	Staffordshire Bull Terrier	American Staffordshire Terrier
General Appearance	Muscular and agile with great strength for its size	Muscular and agile with great strength for its size but graceful without being long legged or racy
Size	Desirable height at withers 36-41 cms (14 to 16 ins), these heights being related to the weights. Weight: dogs: 13-17 kgs (28-38 lbs); bitches 11-15.4 kgs.	Bearing in mind the height and weight should be in proportion, the height for dogs is around 46 - 48 cms (18 - 19 inches) at the shoulder with bitches 43 - 46 cm (17 - 18 inches)
Colour	Any of the following colours either whole or mixed with white: red, fawn, white, black or blue or of the brindle colours. Black and tan or liver highly undesirable.	Any solid, patched or parti-colour is permissible. However all white or more than 80% white or black and tan or liver not to be encouraged.

	Staffordshire Bull Terrier	American Staffordshire Terrier
	 <p>Staffordshire Bull Terrier</p>	 <p>American Staffordshire Terrier</p>
Head	Short through and deep through with broad <u>skull</u> , very pronounced cheek muscles and distinct <u>stop</u> . The nose is black but the foreface should be short.	Medium length and deep through with broad skull, very pronounced cheek muscles and distinct stop. The nose is black but the foreface should be of medium length and fall away under the eyes.
Eyes	Dark and round, of medium size and set to look straight ahead.	Dark and round, set low in skull and far apart
Ears	<u>Rose-shaped</u> or <u>semi-erect</u> but not large	Small, rose-shaped or semi-erect
Mouth	<u>Lips</u> tight, perfect <u>scissors bite</u>	Lips tight, perfect scissors bite
Neck	Rather short, muscular with no <u>dewlap</u>	Medium length, heavy and slightly arched with no dewlap
	 <p>Staffordshire Bull Terrier</p>	 <p>Am Staffordshire Terrier</p>

	Staffordshire Bull Terrier	American Staffordshire Terrier
Forequarters	Forelegs straight, set wide apart with upright <u>pasterns</u> , but front feet may turn out a little (for balance).	Forelegs straight, large with round bone, with upright pasterns. The forelegs are set wide apart (to allow chest development).
Topline	Level	Sloping slightly from withers to rump with a gentle short slope at rump to base of tail.
Body	Balanced, well sprung ribs with chest deep and wide	Fairly short, well sprung ribs with chest deep and broad
Hindquarters	Well muscled with a good <u>turn of stifle</u> and short <u>hocks</u> that neither turn in nor out	Well muscled with a good turn of stifle and short hocks that neither turn in nor out
Feet	Medium sized with well arched toes	Medium sized, well padded feet with black nails in solid coloured dogs
Tail	Medium length, set low and tapering to a point and carried low. The tail's shape and carriage may be likened to an old fashioned pump handle.	Short compared with the size of the dog, set low and tapering to a point. The tail should be fairly straight and never curled or carried over the back.
	 <p>Staffordshire Bull Terrier</p>	 <p>American Staffordshire Terrier</p>
Gait	Free, with discernible power derived from its hindquarters. With economy of effort, the legs should be parallel when viewed from the front or rear.	Springy without roll or pace.
Coat	Smooth, short and close.	Short, close and glossy feels stiff to touch.

References and Further Reading

[1] Information supplied by Ruth and Bob Murdoch

See also our DVD 'Terriers Then & Now' contains more about the Staffordshire Bull Terrier and the American Staffordshire Terrier

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