

Volume 19 / Issue 03 • MAY 2019

Animal Scene

MYSTERIES
OF TAAL
LAKE

CATTITUDE

ANIMALS
CLINGING
TO
EXISTENCE

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BULL TERRIER

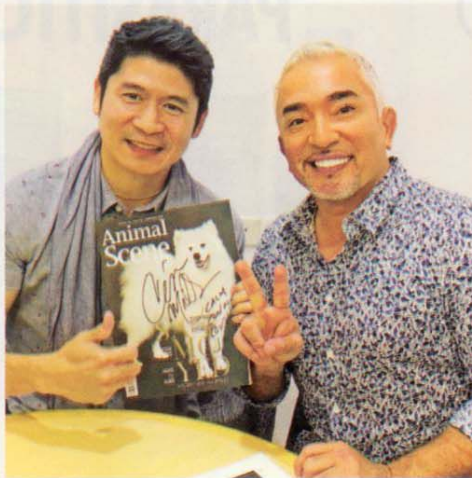
MAY 2019
MANILA
BULLETIN
PUBLISHING



P 120

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BREED STANDARDS

Classification: Terrier

Height: 14-16 inches

Weight: 28-40 pounds
(male), 24-35 pounds
(female)

Size: Medium

Life Expectancy: 12-14 years

Temperament: Clever, Brave, Tenacious

Exercise Requirements: Average

Good with Children: Excellent

Training: Easy to train

Colors: Red, fawn, black, white, blue, brindle
with or without white

Overall Grooming Needs: Medium to low

Shedding: Low

Tolerates Being Alone: No



Staffordshire BULL TERRIER

Cute and cuddly family dog

By YVETTE TAN
Photos by JEFFREY C. LIM

3 TIPS FOR A HAPPY STAFFIE

Make sure your canine companion stays happy – here are a few tips from Dante.

1. Spend quality time together. You're everything to him so plan playtime with him and help him socialize well, especially while he is still young.

2. Improvise new games or tricks to satisfy his curiosity. He is eager to learn.

3. Give him a compliment! Even your simple touch or approving tone is as good as a cuddle.



HISTORY: FROM FIGHTING DOG TO FAMILY MEMBER

The Staffordshire Bull Terrier (SBT), or Staffie, has been known by many names, such as the Patched Fighting Terrier, the Staffordshire Pit Dog, the Bull-and-Terrier, and the Brindle Bull. The breed is classified by the American Kennel Club as a "bull type" terrier, which includes the American Staffordshire Terrier and the Bull Terrier.

The Staffie, like most bull types, can trace its heritage to ancient Greek war dogs called Molossians, who were the ancestors of the Mastiffs, who in turn gave rise to the bull breed.

They date back to 1835, when dog-oriented bloodsports were outlawed in England but thrived underground. The fighting dog of choice was the Bulldog, which gamblers crossed with terriers, hoping for a breed that would have the Bulldog's jaw power and the Terrier's tenacity. The Staffie is one of the breeds remaining from that era. It was first bred by James

Hinks of Birmingham, England in the mid-19th century and got its name from the English county of Staffordshire, where the breed was popular.

"Though the breed was originally bred to bait bulls, Staffies are the most gentle and loving of dogs to humans (in my opinion), and is totally opposite to aggressive muscle monsters as some people take them for," says Fr. Dante Villanueva Daylusan of the AC-Daystaff Team, breeders of Australian Cattle Dogs and Staffordshire Bull Terriers. "They are devoted and [are] very affectionate family [pets]. Staffordshire Bull Terriers are so eager to please [humans], highly trainable, and love learning more commands, especially when treats are involved. There is a need of course [for] the lessons [to] be repeated regularly to obtain effective results."

The Staffordshire Bull Terrier is different from the American Staffordshire Terrier, or AmStaff, developed in the 1880s after the breed was introduced to the US. The Staffie was included in the English Kennel Club in 1935 and the American Kennel Club in 1974. By this time, what began as a fighting dog had developed a reputation as a loyal, lovable family pet.

APPEARANCE: STOCKY AND SWEET

The Staffie is a stocky, muscular, medium-sized dog with a broad wedge-shaped head, short snout, and wide mouth, with its top incisors overlapping the bottom ones. They come in different colors such as red, black, white, blue, brindle, fawn, and pied. Staffies may look fierce but are actually very docile.

"Staffordshire Bull Terriers have consistently been one of the most popular choices of terriers and for good reason. They are renowned for [their] kind nature when they are around people in a family environment, even though they were originally bred to be fighting dogs. Staffies have also become one of the most popular dogs in the show ring and, luckily, this has not affected their traditional strong, rugged, muscular and much-loved looks," Dante says. "As a tribute to their ancestry, Staffies are shown wearing broad leather collars with brass emblems on them which depict Staffordshire knots."

TEMPERAMENT: A SURPRISING SWEETHEART

Selective breeding has given the Staffie a new reputation far removed from its original one. "This breed is one of the only three breeds whose suitability for households with young children is mentioned in its breed characteristics by the Kennel Club because of its affectionate nature," Dante says. "Known as Nanny Dog, [the Staffie earned] this nickname over the years, as with any dog of any breed. As most if not all owners experience, Staffies are exceptionally gentle, affectionate and patient with little humans. Of course, [it] is important to supervise a dog's interaction with children."

Despite the Staffie's fondness for affection, its past as a fighter means that training and socialization are essential to the breed, especially if it's going to be around other canines. "Staffords are not aggressive [towards humans] at all but can be problematic with other animals in the wrong hands. [It's best to] have a clear idea about new owners having other pets at home, especially cats," Dante says.

The Staffordshire is a highly social dog and cannot stand being left alone. Anyone looking to give one a home should consider how much time they can devote to daily interaction.

"Staffies are fun to have around and although boisterous by nature . . . these small to medium sized dogs develop into lovely characters that boast big personalities. Staffies like nothing more than a warm lap to curl up on and [a human] they can look up to for all the direction and guidance they need with loyalty and devotion," Dante says. "Despite the breed's early origins, a Staffordshire Bull Terrier [is known] for being a lovely and loyal family pet as well as a trustworthy companion."

Anyone looking to welcome the Staffie to their homes should make sure they can commit to caring for one. "[The] Staffordshire Bull Terrier is a wonderful breed, but they are . . . not for everyone," Dante adds.



MORE ABOUT THE STAFFIE

Staffies are	But they're also
Confident, friendly, and good around children of all ages	Stressed when on their own
Very people-oriented	Prone to separation anxiety
High-spirited and energetic; love playing interactive games	In need of lots of mental stimulation and daily exercise
Low maintenance on the grooming front	In need of early socialization
Great choice for first-time owners, provided they have the time to socialize and train them	Prone to being destructive when bored, potentially aggressive towards other dogs, and stubborn at times

GROOMING: WASH AND WEAR

The Staffie is a good-looking breed that doesn't need much upkeep. "A Staffordshire Bull Terrier has a wonderfully easy-to-manage coat. An occasional once-over with a shorthaired bristle brush is all that's usually required," Dante says.

The breed does shed, usually limited to once or twice annually. "But compared with many longer-haired breeds, this is a minor event in a tropical country like the Philippines," Dante adds.

Like with other breeds, the Staffie's nails should be trimmed at least monthly, as overly long nails can be painful to the dog.

EXERCISE: ACTIVE FUN

The Staffie is a smart, energetic dog that requires daily exercise to stay in mental and physical shape.

"A brisk thirty-minute walk or ball game, morning and evening, will be adequate for most Staffies," Dante says. "Most will be happy to accompany you on longer walks but bear in mind that some Staffies have a tendency to overheat in warm weather. In the Philippines, better do it during nighttime or in parks where there are lots of shades."

That said, Staffies can be suitable as indoor dogs, as long as their exercise needs are met. "Remember that SBT is a highly energetic breed so they need regular exercises, although they are suitable to live in an apartment," Dante says.

They are fond of games and can make for a fun, playful canine companion. "Staffordshire Bull Terriers love playing, in particular tug-of-war, retrieving sticks, and chasing balls. They are a super energetic breed, so their ball-chasing comes in very handy when their humans feel less inclined to run about," Dante says. "They take longer to reach adulthood than some breeds and their lovable, exuberant puppyish behavior is never far from the surface."

HEALTH: FIT AND HAPPY

According to Dante, Staffies are normally healthy dogs suitable for a tropical country. However, their short snouts make them prone to overheating.

"In a tropical climate like [that of] the Philippines, the biggest danger of all is the warm weather. Dogs can suffer from heat stroke, just like people. Warmer climates present other challenges for canines, especially for short-nosed (brachycephalic) breeds, like shih tzus, bulldogs, boxers, and pugs. SBT is not a brachycephalic dog breed but they could also be susceptible to heat stroke, especially when temperature reach 30 degrees, because of their inability to effectively rid their bodies of excess heat by panting," Dante says.

"Generally speaking, most experts agree that, for many reasons, it's always best to keep your dog indoors – and . . . not to leave him or her outdoors unattended for extended periods of time. Most SBTs are healthy dogs and can tolerate the heat as long as they have shade. In warm or tropical climates like ours, dogs need an area that remains shady throughout the day, even as the sun shifts positions in the sky, along with a fresh supply of drinking water."

The Staffie can be prone to diseases like hereditary cataracts, the metabolic disorder L-2-hydroxyglutaric aciduria that can produce dementia-like symptoms, and persistent hyperplastic primary vitreous which causes hazy vision. A reputable breeder will be able to answer questions about the health and hereditary history of a puppy. Tests are also available to see if a puppy may suffer from certain diseases.



TRAINING: CANNOT DO WITHOUT

The Staffie cannot do without two things: regular exercise and constant human contact. "The SBT, although a very smart dog, is a breed that needs to be in close contact with his human pack member," Dante says.

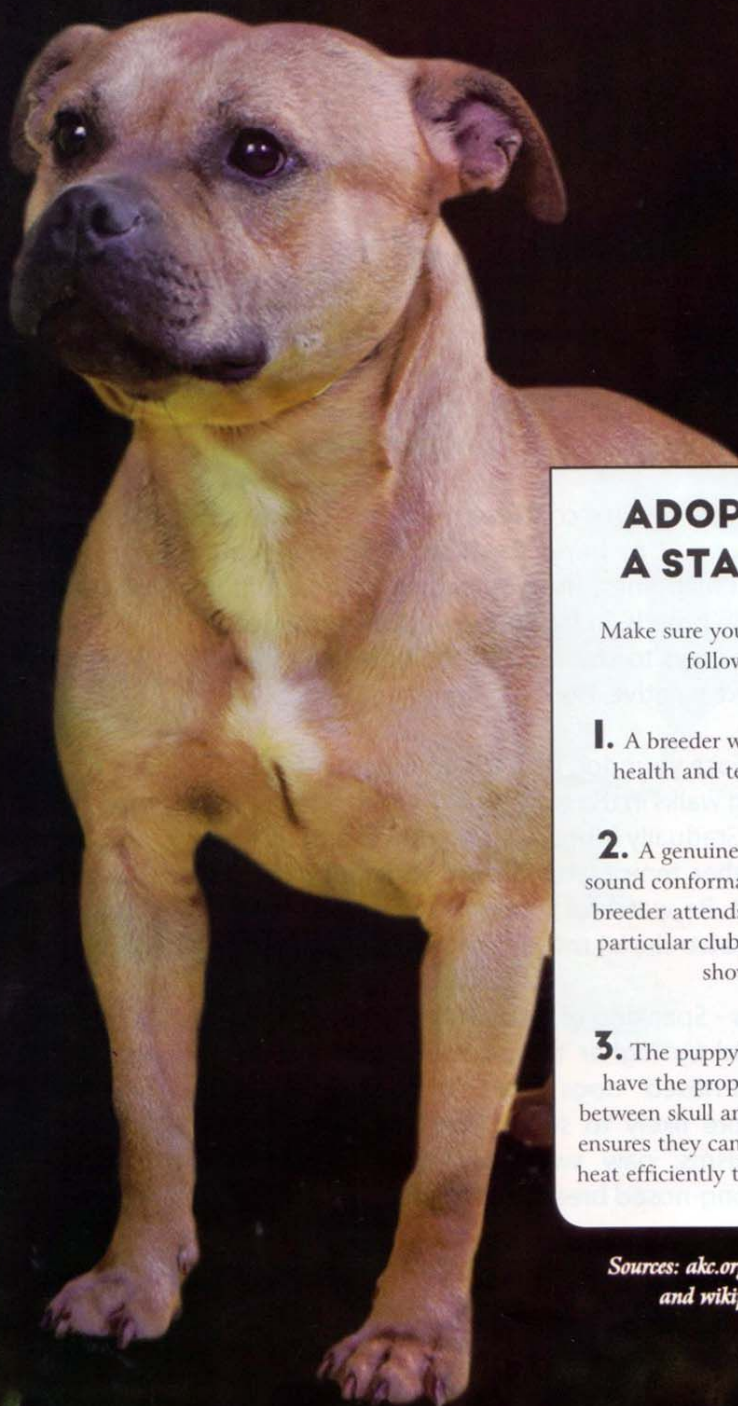
Staffies' intelligent nature means that training is an important part of keeping them happy, healthy, friendly, and socialized.

"The Staffordshire bull terrier is not a noisy barking dog, although they love to communicate by snorting, snoring, grumbling, snuffling, and almost purring to let their owners know how they feel," Dante says.

They must be taught from an early age to control their temperament and to follow rules. Staffies are fast learners and are always eager to please.

"The SBT is the breed that is recommended for a family with young children by many of the welfare and re-homing organizations. It is the only breed that has been described as 'totally loving to its family' and is the only dog to be 'totally reliable' in its breed description and standard," Dante says.

A Staffie may look fierce but, if well trained and socialized, can be a loyal, affectionate fur member of the family.



ADOPTING A STAFFIE?

Make sure you look for the following.

1. A breeder who focuses on health and temperament
2. A genuine evaluation of sound conformation (that is, a breeder attends dog shows in particular club and specialty shows)
3. The puppy's head should have the proper proportion between skull and muzzle – this ensures they can eliminate body heat efficiently through panting.

Sources: akc.org, hillspet.com,
and wikipedia.org