

## Breed History

The American Staffordshire Terrier is not a new breed. Although it gained American Kennel Club registration and recognition in 1936, it has been developed since the early 1800's as a result of crosses between the bulldogs of that time and game terriers. One of the early and very famous AKC registered Staffs was Pete the Pup, (real name Lucenay's Peter), dog star of the original Our Gang comedies of the 1930's.

Although the early ancestors of this breed came from England, the development of the American Staffordshire Terrier is the story of a truly American breed. This type of dog was instrumental in the success of farmers and settlers who developed this country. They were used for general farm work, hunting wild pigs, bears, and other large game, guarding the homestead, and general companionship.

A number of the early ancestors were also developed for the "sport" of dog fighting. The extraordinary vitality of this breed is a direct result of breeding for successful fighting dogs. This now illegal activity is, unfortunately, more often cited as the early purpose of the dogs rather than the general farm work.

Although ancestors of the American Staffordshire were fighting dogs, the selective breeding since the 1930's has been away from the fighting heritage. The American Staffordshire Terrier of today is a companion and showdog, rather than a gladiator. Although more rarely used on the farm now, the talents that made him a good all purpose dog are still to be found in the breed.



## The Official AKC Breed Standard

**General Impression:** The American Staffordshire Terrier should give the impression of great strength for his size, a well put-together dog, muscular, but agile and graceful, keenly alive to his surroundings. He should be stocky, not long-legged or racy in outline. His courage is proverbial..

**Head:** Medium length, deep through, broad skull, very pronounced cheek muscles, distinct stop; and ears are set high.

**Ears –** Cropped or uncropped, the latter preferred. Uncropped ears should be short and held half prick or rose. Full drop to be penalized..

**Eyes –** Dark and round, low down in skull and set far apart. No pink eyelids.

**Muzzle –** Medium length, rounded on upper side to fall away abruptly below eyes. Jaws well defined. Underjaw to be strong and have biting power. Lips close and even, no looseness. Upper teeth to meet tightly outside lower teeth in front. Nose definitely black..

**Neck:** Heavy, slightly arched, tapering from shoulders to back of skull. No looseness of skin. Medium length. **Shoulders –** Strong and muscular with blades wide and sloping. **Back –** Fairly short. Slight sloping from withers to rump with gentle short slope at rump to base of tail. Loins slightly tucked..

**Body:** Well-sprung ribs, deep in rear. All ribs close together. Forelegs set rather wide apart to permit of chest development. Chest deep and broad.

**Tail:** Short in comparison to size, low set, tapering to a fine point; not curled or held over back. Not docked..

**Legs –** the front legs should be straight, large or round bones, pastern upright. No resemblance of bend in front. Hindquarters well muscled, let down at hocks turning neither in nor out. Feet of moderate size, well-arched and compact. Gait must be springy but without roll or pace.

**Coat:** Short, close, stiff to the touch and glossy. **Color –** Any color, solid, parti, or patched is permissible, but all white, more than 80 per cent white, black and tan and liver not to be encouraged..

**Size:** Height and weight should be in proportion. A height of about 18 to 19 inches at the shoulders for the male and 17 to 18 inches for the female is to be considered preferable.

**Faults:** Faults to be penalized are Dudley nose, light or pink eyes, tail too long or badly carried, undershot or overshot mouths.

*Adopted and approved June 10, 1936*

## Staffordshire Terrier Club of America



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The American Staffordshire Terrier is a medium sized short coated dog of great strength and agility. His determination and indomitable spirit are part of his terrier ancestry. His love of family and reliability with children are part of his considerable charm. The working character of this breed, combined with his high intelligence and moderate powerful athletic structure, makes him ideally suited for many dog sports.

Typically, he is not a nervous dog, but is quite active, always ready for a bit of fun, or a job to do. His size and clean habits make him an excellent house dog, as long as his need for a physical challenge is regularly met.

The Am Staff comes in all colors - brindles, parti, patched or any combination of colors. In this breed, it is easy to find a color that suits you. His appearance is flashy, and he will immediately win the admiration of observers. His well developed musculature shows off his unusual strength. His short coat requires little grooming and is easy to keep clean.

This is a very people oriented dog, who delights in contact with his family. He has a finely developed sense of humor. He needs a very interactive owner, who wants to spend time with his pet; a firm and loving owner who will give him the training required to bring his great abilities to their full potential.

Although not the best choice for a watch dog because of his generally friendly nature, the Am Staff will protect his family. His courage is proverbial. His loyalty is unwavering.

## *Choosing This Breed*

This breed will make a great companion for an owner who plans to spend a lot of time with his dog and wants a close companion. He is not a good choice for a pet who will receive little or no attention. He is a strong, determined and intelligent animal. If left to his own amusement and untrained, a bored Am Staff can do great damage to house or yard and can be hard to keep fenced. He may not be allowed to run loose because he will get into much trouble. Be sure that you are ready to devote the time and energy to this dog that it requires. This dog demands and thrives on a great deal of attention. Your relationship will benefit greatly from obedience training your dog.

Due to his inquisitive intelligence and great strength for his size, this breed may require a more secure environment than some other breeds. If in doubt ask your breeder for advice. Do not keep this dog on a chain or tether.

Because of anti-dog legislation in recent years, it would be wise to check the county or municipality in which you will live with this dog to make sure there are no laws or ordinances prohibiting ownership or limiting the maintenance of this breed.

The life expectancy of this breed may be 12 - 16 years with good care. Take this into consideration when purchasing a dog. Generally, health of an Am Staff is good, and the dogs have exceptionally strong constitutions.

Never purchase an Am Staff from a pet retailer. Buy from a breeder. Contact reputable breeders by attending dog shows, asking at your local dog clubs, reading breed or all-breed dog magazines. Visit more than one breeder if possible and compare their dogs rather than buying the first puppy you find. The right dog will be with you for a long time. Consider an adult or rescued dog - they may make a fine pet and are often available.

Some possible problems to watch for would be hip dysplasia, skin allergies, thyroid dysfunction, heart murmurs, and cancers. Ask your breeder what health screening they do on their breeding stock, and the results of that screening.



The Staffordshire Terrier Club of America is a sincere and active organization promoting and protecting the interests of this breed. The SICA was formed in 1936 and is a member club of the American Kennel Club.

SICA membership is open to fanciers who are interested in establishing a more uniform breed type, exhibiting at AKC dog shows, obedience and agility trials, developing the desirable traits of our breed, protecting the interests of the breed, and who would like to have a part in promoting interest for the breed in general. It is also open to those who merely love the breed for what it is and seek friendship with fellow fanciers.

We publish a quarterly breed magazine, sponsor various awards, support American Staffordshire Terrier breed rescue efforts, fight anti-dog legislation, sponsor specialty shows, provide educational materials and opportunities and promote responsible dog ownership and breeding.

If you are interested in a magazine subscription to the Staffordshire Terrier Club of America Magazine, you may contact the club secretary at the address below.

If you are interested in membership in our club, you may send for an application form by contacting the club secretary at the address below:

**[www.amstaff.org](http://www.amstaff.org)**

**Staffordshire Terrier Club of America**

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