

The Bernese Mountain Dog ~ An Illustrated Commentary on the Breed Standard

Coat

The coat is thick, moderately long and wavy or straight. It has a bright natural sheen. The

Bernese has a double coat. The breed was developed to work in the alpine meadows and snowy mountainous regions of Switzerland. The Bernese required a coat that would protect them from the cold and snow. The coat color is mainly black, so it absorbs the sun's warmth. Many Berners choose to rest in shady areas even on cold days. Because of their heavy, black coats the breed is not well suited to live in climates that are hot (over 70°) most of the time. It requires a conscientious management effort to keep a Bernese in a hot climate.

Coats vary, not only from dog to dog, but depending on diet, age, the dog's environment, and general health. Some Bernese carry extremely dense, long coats and some sport shorter, more open coats. Some Berner coats are wooly, and some almost curly. The correct Bernese coat should not hold on to dirt or trap moisture. Extremely curly or dull looking coats are undesirable.

Bernese Mountain Dog's shed. They also cast (molt) their coats once or twice a year. It usually takes about 3-6 weeks for a molt. When dogs cast their coats, the hair may become coarse and patchy. In some Berners, 'old' coats (just prior to a shed) may have a reddish or sunburned cast.



Puppy coats are soft. Usually between 4 and 8 months of age the puppy coat sheds out and is replaced with the sleeker looking adult coat. Sometimes young dogs have a moderately curly coat. Future coats may have more relaxed waves.

Realize that if you plan to own a Bernese, caring for the coat will be a necessary part of caring for the dog.



"Berner fur" isn't confined to being only on the dog. Hair finds its way onto furniture, floors, and clothing. Regular vacuuming to remove "Berner fur" from the home is part of keeping a Bernese.

If allergies are an issue, a Bernese Mountain Dog may not make an ideal companion.



The Bernese Mountain Dog is shown in AKC conformation events in natural coat; and undue trimming is to be discouraged. Trimming of excess hair on feet, and either trimming or hand stripping long hair around ears is a generally accepted practice.