

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



The "Berner" breed was developed by Swiss farmers. The dogs were originally kept for their ability to serve the farmers' need for a reliable, multipurpose farm dog. Historical photographs of the breed show us the 'roots' of present day Bernese. Throughout the breed's history and in present day, owners and breeders have appreciated the gentle nature and working capabilities of Berners. Bernese have been the subject of paintings and have been written about in books. Some Berner art from the mid 20th century depicts the environment in which the ancestors of today's Bernese lived and the kinds of work the dogs were expected to do.

Experiencing the exceptional human understanding that is typically seen in Bernese has drawn devoted individuals to the breed. Owners' and breeders' understanding of the Breed Standard can serve the task of preserving the breed's finest qualities and protecting the best interests of Bernese Mountain Dogs.

The breed standard identifies traits of the BMD. This commentary on the official Standard of the BMD is written to identify the traits of the BMD which distinguish it from other breeds. In order to preserve the distinguishing traits of the BMD, it is necessary to identify what they are.

Each Bernese Mountain Dog is completely unique; yet each bears similar traits to all others. It is important for each dog to not only be valued by its people, but to feel this value. With all their variations, many Berners fulfill the breed's most important function, and that is bringing joy to people's lives. Perhaps the breed's development as an all purpose working farm dog and companion explains why Bernese can serve different owners well. Owners have about as many ideas about desirable traits of the companion dog as Bernese have traits to meet owners' expectations. By filling the various roles of the companion animal, many members of the breed represent the 'perfect' Bernese for their owners.

Please enjoy exploring the Bernese Mountain Dog.

*The Official AKC Standard for the Bernese Mountain Dog is shown in *italicized underlined* text on the Illustrated Commentary pages.