

AfriCanis

The remarkable dog of subequatorial Africa

AfriCanis is the umbrella name for all Southern African native dogs. It refers to Africa (the continent) and Canis (dog). Over the centuries they have been shaped by Africa for Africa. They are part of biodiversity and the cultural heritage of humankind.

Their African heritage goes back 7000 years, to the dogs which came with Neolithic herdsman from the Middle East into the then dog virgin continent of Africa . Today, AfriCanis is found in the tribal areas all over the Southern African subcontinent. They should not be confused with the multitude of dogs roaming free in informal settlements and townships.

But is it a mongrel or a dog of no definable type or breed?

The beauty of this dog is embodied in the simplicity and functionality of its build.

The AfriCanis is medium sized, slender built and well muscled. It is agile and supple, moves in a very natural and easy manner, and can run at great speed.

The dog is found in a wide range of colours, with or without markings. A ridge of varying form can exceptionally be seen on the back. It has sadly been established that this mutation can be associated with a dermoïd sinus. Therefore 'ridged' individuals are not recommended for breeding.

The ears may be erect, half erect or drooping. The carriage of ears and tail is linked to the dog's awareness of its environment.

The carriage of ears and tail is linked to the dog's awareness of its environment. These variable physical features are of no direct influence on the physical and mental well-being of the dog.

When in good condition, the ribs are just visible. The short double coat adapts to the seasons, and can be kept shiny with the minimum of care.

Characteristics

Because the AfriCanis has for centuries roamed freely in and around rural settlements, it combines attachment to humans with a need for space. Traditionally it is always close to humans, other dogs, livestock and domestic animals. It has a natural tendency to guard and protect livestock.

AfriCanis is well disposed without being obtrusive: a friendly dog, showing watchful territorial behaviour.

The dog displays unspoiled social canine behaviour with a high level of facial expressions and body language. Its nervous constitution is steady but the dog is always cautious in approaching new situations. In other words: it displays a high survival instinct.

Where does AfriCanis hail from?

Even before the time of the Egyptian dynasties, domestic dogs spread quickly along the Nile river. At the same time seasonal migrations and trade took them deep into the Sahara and Sahel. Iron-using Bantu speaking people brought their domestic dogs along when, from about 200 CE, they left the grasslands of Cameroon in a massive migration which eventually led to their settlement in Southern Africa .

The earliest record of a domestic dog in South Africa is dated 570 CE, on the farm Diamant in the Ellisras district, near the Botswana border

At the same time, domestic dogs lived south-west of Francistown, Botswana. By 650 CE the dog is found in the lower Tugela valley, and by 800 CE in a Khoisan settlement at Cape St Francis.

Is the AfriCanis a dog for you?

From the moment we take the AfriCanis away from its natural habitat we are interfering with its future. On the other hand, its historic rural habitat is changing and shrinking at an alarming rate.

To conserve the AfriCanis, we must look for a different but still suitable environment. If you can provide some space and freedom, and contact with other animals and people, the AfriCanis will thrive at your side.

It is a dog which needs neither pampering nor special food. It is consistently healthy and has, over the years, developed a natural resistance against internal and external parasites.

The AfriCanis simply needs your company. As a primitive hound it is guided by the instinct of subservience, the very drive that made its distant ancestors prime candidates for domestication. It is bound to its human partners and its territory. It will follow you for hours without being on a lead.

From a health care point of view, the routine vaccinations are needed. But you won't need to open an account at a veterinary clinic. The AfriCanis is a cost effective dog.

The AfriCanis Society of Southern Africa

Its purpose is to research the AfriCanis and to conserve it as an aboriginal land race. To maintain how natural selection has shaped it over hundreds of years. It has NOT the intention to "develop" this aboriginal dog population into a strictly standardised breed. Variation stands for health and cunning.