

Dapples – as old as the Dachshund itself

HH Prince Rasso of Bavaria

Translated by Eve Marso



The Dapple Dachshund is as old as the breed itself. From historical information it is gleaned that the dapple Dachshund has existed since the ancient Egyptians. In the hunting history, dapple Dachshunds, which were bred mainly for groundhunts, were mentioned during Napoleon's time. According to the oldest literature I have been able to unearth, there existed two large dapple Dachshund kennels in Saxony as early as 1848. Breeding managers were employed to breed pure dapples only. One kennel emphasised the breeding of silver dapples with relatively few white marking. The other kennel produced a large number of dapple and whites, so that they were forced to outcross with black blood.

Long before Dachshund pedigree registers ever existed in Germany, breeders bred dapple Dachshunds in the south-west of Germany, and these were used specifically for hunting.

My father purchased his first dapple Dachshund early in the century, and it proved to be an excellent hunter. Only after World War I in 1918 did he start his own breeding line in Hungary. He built his dapple bloodline from predominantly German lines.

The end of World War II caused the disintegration of his breeding programme. Most of the relevant documents of all our dogs were destroyed during the confusions of war in Hungary.

We arrived in Bavaria after the war with only two dapple bitches, and started our new lines with these two foundation bitches. After the death of my father in 1956, I inherited his kennel, 'von der Karlsruhe', and continued breeding according to his wishes and breeding programmes. Since then we have bred over 150 puppies, the majority of which were dapple.

We endeavoured, wherever possible, to mate dapple to dapple. Only when no suitable stud was available was a black and tan used.

In all those years we had only two blind dapple and white puppies in a litter which contained a silver dapple and a chocolate dapple, (who proved himself to be an

excellent hunter) – out of the dapple and white dam, Harfe von der Karlsruhe, from the chocolate dapple stud, Eddy von der Golg.

And now to focus on the genetic inheritance of the dapple Dachshund. Quoting Winge 1950 and Burns and Fraser 1968, the 'wild boar' (pepper and salt) colour is the wild inheritance of the dog. It is therefore dominant over any other colour of the Dachshund. One can presume that the 'wild boar' and dapple coat pattern are equally dominant. They can, however, alternate in their dominance.

It is especially noticeable with Wire-haired Dachshund that 'wild boar' lines will suddenly throw dapples; in a proven case recently it happened after eight generations. The reverse is also true, that the dapples will suddenly throw 'wild boars'. This indicates that the gene responsible for dapping is equal in dominance to the 'wild boar'.

The hereditary component of the dapple is called the merle factor, designated as M. M is dominant over the allele m, which does not control colour. Scientific literature stipulates generally that if MM meet, the result will be dapple and white. Therefore, as the dapple proves itself dominant over all colours except 'wild boar', dapple and white can be inherited solely through a double dapple.

That is incorrect! We have had black and tan puppies from our bitch, Hexe von der Karlsruhe, herself registered as black and tan, de factor dapple and white, as well as from a dapple ad white bitch, Harfe von der Karlsruhe. Our bitch, meta won Wolfachstal, also a dapple and white, threw a red puppy.

It is therefore incorrect that dapple and white dogs always carry MM, but it is correct to say that the dapple and white is part albino.

The lethal factor such as blindness and deafness, which the dominant dapple is blamed for, is, in my opinion, not part of the dapple pattern but of albinism.

The famous animal behaviourist, Eberhardt Trummler, related to me in conversation that the dingos which he breeds for continuous colour-paling have blue eyes. They can hardly open their eyes during daylight hours, yet have perfect vision by night. The factor responsible for the eye-defect is proven to be the paling of colour, ergo pigmentation weakness.

I wish to add the following to the phenomenon of colour-paling: 'Wild boar' colour is a mixture of dark pepper and salt and fawn, where the second is a colour-paling of the first. The next strongest colour is red. However, this is rare in the dapple pattern. Red is dominant over black, recessive over 'wild boar'. The second weakest colour is black. Black is mixed with grey or blue in the silver dapple, which is a colour-paling of black.

The colour component with chocolate dapples is brown, where the lighter shade of this colour produces cream of fawn, ie colour-paling of chocolate. Chocolate-brown is the weakest colour pigmentation; only weaker still is white – ergo albinism.

The dapple and white has light coloured patterns between white slabs, and interspersed with darker spots. When a white skin pattern appears on the nose, it will become red. If it appears over the eye, it will become light blue. If it appears on the nails they become pink. If a grey component appears over the eye it will become a darker blue. It is the light blue of the part-albino that harbours the danger of blindness. The same applies to the ears and the hearing defects.

The denotation of dapple and white is an unfortunately chosen description as the inherent colour carried by each individual is thereby not evident. There are dapple and whites with brown, black, grey, red and 'wild boar', and one never knows how these colour components assert themselves.

The afore-mentioned bitch, Meta vom Wolfachstal, was dapple and white, presumably 'wild boar' with white. Harfe von der Karlsruhe, registered as dapple and white, had a white breast-patch and white forepaws, yet was 'wild boar' on her rear. Hexe von der Karlsruhe, registered as silver dapple, was actually dapple and white, with grey background colour and black spots.

The dapple and white bitch, Harfe, who had perfect eyesight during her youth, had a closure of the pupils and the iris burst in three places in her later years. I presume that she had triple vision, yet she had no problem with her eyesight, and has been worked as a hunter all her life. She recognised game from quite a distance by sight, and in old age had no difficulty avoiding obstacles, not the case with a blind dog.

For these reasons I warn against the use of dapples with predominantly white patches. However, Dachshunds with only small white spots (ie, small breast-patch or single white claws), otherwise will marked dapples, may still be used successfully for breeding.

Caution should be exercised, however, with chocolate dapples with weak pigmentation, as their albinism will come through strongly, which brings forth the lethal factor.

I will continue breeding dapples to dapples. My silver dapple bitch is presently in whelp to a sire of the same colour. When both sire and dam have one parent each of a solid black and tan colour, there will be a lower rate of dapples and more black and tans in the litter.

With older breeding experiments where there were only one or two solid-coloured dogs as far back as the third or fourth generation, there were no disaster in the dapple breeding.

I hope that the dapple breeding will continue to flourish. It would be a pity for these good utility dogs to disappear. They have always proven themselves as good hunting dogs, and I hope they will continue to be used as such.

However, one must always follow the correct breeding rules. According to the motto of the German Dachshund Club: "The best performance in the nicest mould."

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his article is the first part of a study to be further developed in more detail. Translated by Eve Marso, it is published with the permission of the author, His Highness Prince Rasso of Bavaria.

LIFE ON THE FARM AS IT WAS NEVER MEANT TO BE....

Angela Watson

Ceilidh's is my Miniature Longhaired Dachshund puppy. Like most Dachies, she's a right rascal at times. She loves teasing the chooks - the old ones don't run away, they just peck her. But last week we got a new trio of very rare, very expensive Golden Campine bantams. And OH JOY (from Ceilidh's point of view), they run away! She can chase! Yippee, yippee!

So - I let them out on Friday, and she chased the first one, which flew down into the creek. I'm screaming at Ceilidh, she's having a ball, and totally ignoring me. I waded across the waist high, freezing cold creek, grabbed my mudball, waded back, put her on the chain, and waded back into freezing cold creek to rescue expensive chook floating around in the middle of it.

Climbed back out cradling sopping wet, flapping squawking bundle of feathers, slipped in mud, tripped on branches left everywhere from last flood, and stomped grumpily back to chookhouse with said sopping squawking bundle - just as mudball slipped her chain and raced past me after the other chook, which flew off somewhere....

Shoved sopping bundle into chookhouse, grabbed mudball and dumped into dog-pen, and went to strip off wet muddy clothes & boots. Got cough lolly for stripped-raw-from-screaming-throat, changed into dry clothes & boots, and went tromping around looking for other rare and expensive chook. Heard furious screaming and found exclusive Campine rooster being attacked by bigger, stronger and even more expensive Welsummer rooster. Rescued bleeding little thing from furious big thing and dumped in chookhouse with sopping bundle. Continued stomping through knee-high grass, poking suspicious looking lumps with long stick and hoping not to meet a newly-awakened snake.

Finally, 2 hours later, spied lost chook - 10 feet up a gum-tree on the other side of the creek (naturally). Waded back across waist deep and freezing creek, climbed steep and slippery bank, climbed up tree and grabbed chook by ankles, somehow managed to get it under the arm without breaking it's wildly flapping wings, and climb back down tree without falling out and breaking my arm. Twisted ankle in rabbit hole while scrambling back down minor cliff, waded back across creek, and dumped indignant squawker in chookhouse with sopping bundle and injured exclusive rooster.

Crawled slowly to dog-run, scooped up rascally puppy, gave her a big hug and said "I love you Ceilidh" (NOT!)

Tasmanian Mail 1906 (Kennel notes)

The low-g geared dog

The American talent for graphic description is well illustrated by the following remark by a Yankee who was endeavouring to indicate to his hearer the kind of dog known as the Dachshund.

"Wall! I don't just rightly know what it's called, but it was about a dog and a half long, and about half a dog high. "Looked a bit like it wanted another little pair of wheels between the bogeys! What I should describe as a real low-g geared dog!"