

# The German Shepherd Dog in Germany

## VARIETIES

Until the end of 2010 the German Shepherd Club (SV) accepted only short-haired dogs (called double coated). Now and then long-haired GSDs are born from two short-haired parents. They received registration papers but they were neither allowed to be shown in conformation nor to breed. But now the breed standard of the GSDs has been changed and since January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 there are two varieties of the GSD.

Both varieties are double coated and have short guard hair on the head, including the inside of the ears, on the front side of the legs, paws and toes. The hair is somewhat longer and more abundant on the neck. On the back side of the legs the hair extends to the carpal joint or the hock. It forms 'trousers' on the back side of the haunches.

These are the differences in the outer coat:

short-haired: guard hair harsh and close fitting, moderate 'trousers'

long-haired: guard hair long, soft and not close fitting, tufts on ears and legs, bushy tail with downward formation of tuft, neck strongly covered in hair, almost forming a mane, bushy 'trousers'

The two varieties show in separate classes and it is not allowed to breed a short-haired dog to a long-haired dog.

## SHOW LINE vs. WORKING LINE

### Show Line

This is the typical show dog with arched back and declining topline - emphasized by the way of presenting the dog. They are bred to be beautiful and showy, and many of them show the desired trot at a very young age. A lot of breeders neglect the importance of the working abilities of their breeding dogs and many show line GSDs are sold as family pets because they are not able to pass the Schutzhund 1 test - which is one of the requirements of a breeding dog. Black and tan (basically tan with a black saddle and black mask) is the color of the show line GSD. There are a few grey show line dogs but the breeders prefer the classic black and tan.

### Working Line

This is the typical working dog. Beauty is irrelevant as long as the dog is healthy and eager to work. These dogs are bred to be workaholics - sometimes comparable to the Belgian Malinois - and need a job to do. They make great police or sport dogs (Schutzhund, French Ring Sport, Agility, Obedience) but not the perfect family pet. Most working line GSDs are dark-colored. Grey (preferably dark grey to almost black), black with tan markings and solid black are the most common colors. The black and tan of the show line GSDs is very rare in the working line GSDs.

While recently some breeders start breeding show line dogs to working line dogs most breeders stick to the line they prefer. And the buyers do so, too.

## COLORS

### Black and Tan

ranging from basically tan with just a black saddle and mask to black with tan markings like a Doberman



show line bitch (short)



show line dog (long)



working line bitch (short)



working line dog (long)

All black and tan dogs are born mostly black with small tan markings. Model dog puppies colored basically tan with a black saddle and mask like an adult dog are unrealistic.

Pictures to the right show the same short-haired show line bitch at the age of about 4 weeks and at the age of about 6 months (ears came up later).



### **Solid Black**

The MHeDC has a separate class for black GSDs. In the real dog world all colors show in the same class.

Generally black GSDs are working line dogs.

Pictures to the right show two black working line bitches from the same litter (left picture: short-haired; right picture: long-haired).



### **Grey**

ranging from medium grey to dark grey to almost black, with a black mask and often with lots of shading and greyish tan or reddish brown markings (the grey color of the GSD is completely different from the grey color of the Husky)

Grey GSDs are rather dark when they are born. Most of them fade to a greyish tan when they are approximately four month old and darken again when losing their baby coat.

Pictures to the right show the same short-haired grey working line dog at the age of 12½ weeks and at the age of 5½ months.



### **Solid White or White Markings**

The color white is not allowed. There are white shepherds in Germany but they are considered a different breed called “Berger Blanc Suisse” (White Swiss Shepherd) which is in the process of being recognized by the FCI. The UKC calls this breed “White Shepherd”).

Small white marks on the chest are permissible, but not desirable. Other white markings as well as any other lack in pigmentation are faults.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR A BROOD BITCH OR A STUD DOG**

Before GSDs are allowed to breed they need to pass the Companion Dog test as well as the Schutzhund 1 test, and they have to be shown at least once and must have received at least a “good”. Hips and elbows have to be x-rayed and the dog must be DNA tested. If all of these requirements are met the dog still needs to pass the breeding certification test (called “Körung”). The “Körung” is a combination of conformation evaluation and a protection work test. Dogs which show no interest in the helper or run away from him do not pass the test.

## **JOBS**

### **Show Dogs**

Every weekend there are several GSD shows. International All Breed Shows are not popular among GSD breeders so you might not see a single GSD when visiting such a show in Germany. The handling of a GSD is different from the handling of other breeds. They do not show inside the ring but trot outside around the ring. The dog is pulling hard on a 8-to-10-foot-leash, and the handler is walking or - when the dog is shown at a trot - running behind the dog. 2-year-old or older dogs must also be shown off leash in heeling position. The dogs’ owners or friends of the handler are running outside of the ring crying the dogs’ names, whistling or making all kind of noises, trying to get their attention and make them trot faster and stronger with head up and croup down.

The prestigious “Bundessiegerzuchtschau” takes place in September, and last year more than 1,700 GSDs from 49 countries were entered. The owners of the top dogs of the adult dog class can easily make a living from the stud fees. Or they can make a fortune selling their dogs. Prices can be as high as 600.000 Euro (almost \$ 800.000).



### **Working Dogs**

While the Belgian Malinois gets more popular every year the GSD is still one of the most favorite police dogs and military dogs. They also work as search and rescue dogs and service dogs. And a few GSDs are still working as herding dogs.

### **Sport Dogs**

Schutzhund/VPG trials are the most popular sport for GSDs in Germany. Especially the working line GSDs can also excel in Fench Ring Sport. Some of them also compete in Agility or Obedience. The latter is still a very young sport in Germany and only offered by a few clubs yet.