

ITALIAN CANE CORSO

A Breed Standard is the guideline that describes the ideal characteristics, temperament, and appearance of a breed, and ensures that the breed is fit for function, with soundness essential. Breeders and Judges should, at all times, be mindful of features that could be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare, or soundness of this breed.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01/01/2024

ORIGIN

Italy.

UTILISATION

Utility dog, polyvalent [ed. having a number of purposes].

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Its direct ancestor is the old Roman Molossian. Formerly scattered all over Italy. In the recent past, the breed was only prevalent in the province of Apulia and in the adjacent regions of Southern Italy. His name derives from the Latin "cohors", which means "protector, guardian of the farmyard".



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Medium- to large-sized. Robust and sturdy dog, nevertheless with some elegance. Lean and powerful muscles.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- The dog is rectangular in outline and is slightly longer than tall. (The length of the dog is 11% greater than the height of the dog).
- The length of the head reaches 36% of the height at the withers.

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Guardian of property, family, and livestock; extremely agile and responsive. In the past, it has been used for herding cattle and hunting big game.

HEAD

Large and typically molossoïd. The upper longitudinal axes of the skull and the muzzle are slightly convergent, without evident wrinkles.

Cranial Region:

Skull: Broad at the zygomatic arches, the width is equal to the length. Convex in front, it becomes flat behind the forehead as far as the occiput. The medio-frontal furrow is visible, beginning at the stop and ending at about the middle of the skull.

Stop: Well-defined, with prominent frontal sinuses.

Facial Region:

Nose: Black. A grey mask may have a nose colour of the same nuance. Large nose with ample open nostrils. Nose placed on the same line as the nasal bridge.

Muzzle: Strong, square, noticeably shorter than the skull, ratio muzzle to skull approximately 1 : 2. The front part of the muzzle is flat; the lateral surfaces are parallel; the muzzle is as broad as it is long. Seen from the side it is deep. The profile of the nasal bridge is straight.

Lips: The upper lips; seen from the front, form an inverted "U" at their meeting point; seen from the side, the lips hang moderately. They cover the lower jaw and determine the profile of the lower part of the muzzle.

Cheeks: The masseter [ed. chewing] region is fully evident, but not bulging.

Jaws and teeth: Jaws are very large, thick, and curved. Slightly undershot, but by no more than 5mm. Level bite tolerable but not sought after.

Eyes:

Medium-sized, slightly protruding, but never exaggerated. Close to ovoid in shape, set well apart in an almost sub-frontal position [*ed. facing forwards, slightly oblique*]. Eyelids close-fitting. The colour of the iris is as dark as possible, but according to the coat colour. Expression is keen and attentive.

Ears:

Triangular, drooping, of medium size. With a wide set-on that is much above the zygomatic arches. Ears are un-cropped.

NECK

Strong, muscular, as long as the head.

BODY

The body is somewhat longer than the height at the withers. Sturdily built, but not square.

Withers: Pronounced, rising above the level of the croup.

Back: Straight, very muscular, and firm.

Loin: Short and strong.

Croup: Long and wide, slightly inclined.

Chest: Well-developed all through reaches to the elbow.

TAIL

[*ed. Previously customarily docked.*]

Natural. Set on fairly high; very broad at the root. In action carried high, but never erect or curled.

[*refer note below]

LIMBS

Forequarters:

Shoulder: Long, oblique, very muscular.

Upper arm: Strong.

Forearm: Straight, very strong.

Carpus (wrist): Elastic.

Metacarpus (pastern): Elastic and just slightly sloping.

Hindquarters:

Upper thigh: Long, broad, back line of thigh convex.

Stifle (knee): Solid, moderately angulated.

Lower thigh: Strong, not fleshy.

Hock joint: Moderately angulated.

Metatarsus (rear pastern): Thick and dry.

FEET

Forefeet:

Cat-feet.

Hind feet:

Slightly less compact than the forefeet.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Long stride, extended trot; the preferred gait is the trot.

SKIN

Fairly thick, rather close-fitting.

COAT

Hair short, shiny, very dense, with a slight undercoat of vitreous texture [*ed. a light undercoat that becomes thicker in cold weather*].

COLOUR

- Black, lead-grey (blue), slate-grey (blue), light grey (blue)
- Light fawn; dark fawn, and stag red; dark wheat colour
- Brindle: black brindle, grey (blue) brindle, in brindle dogs fawn stripes can be of different shades.

* In fawn and brindle dogs the black or grey (blue) mask on the muzzle should not go beyond the line of the eyes.

* A small white patch on the chest, on the tip of the toes and on the bridge of the nose is acceptable.

SIZE

Height at withers:

Males: 64cm – 68cm (approx. 25" – 27").

Females: 60cm – 64cm (approx. 23½" – 25").

With a tolerance of 2cm more or less taller.

Weight:

Males: 45kg – 50kg

Females: 40kg – 45kg

Weight according to the size of dog.

N.B. Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.

* Regardless of the provisions of the current KUSA-adopted standard, docked or formerly docked breeds may be shown at all FCI- and KUSA-licensed shows in South Africa, whether their tails are docked or natural with the exception of the World Dog Show (WDS) and FCI Section Shows, the latter restriction applying to all dogs born after 1 January 2025. At shows where this restriction does not apply, i.e. shows other than the WDS or FCI Section Shows, under no circumstances are Judges permitted to discriminate against exhibits on the grounds of docked or natural tails, and equal consideration for awards must be given to either.

Note: Cropped ears – KUSA Schedule 2 Regulation 7:

"Any dog with cropped ears born within the jurisdiction of the KUSA, imported into it and cropped within it, shall not be registered or recorded by the Kennel Union, and if any such dog is registered or recorded in contravention of this Regulation, upon discovery, its registration or recording shall be cancelled."

7.1. Any dog with ears cropped before importation into the KUSA area of jurisdiction is not eligible for competition at any Kennel Union event."

FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

Severe faults:

- Axes of muzzle and skull parallel or very marked converging; lateral surfaces of the muzzle converging.
- Partial depigmentation of the nose.
- Scissor bite; undershot bite more than 5 mm.
- Ringed tail, tail in vertical position.
- Permanent amble when trotting.
- Over- or under size.
- Presence of dewclaws.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Axes of muzzle and skull diverging. Overshot mouth.
- Total depigmentation of the nose. Bridge of nose concave or convex (Roman nose).
- Partial or complete palpebral depigmentation [*ed. loss of pigment around the nose and/or eyes*].
- Wall eye (blue flecked); strabism (squinted).
- Tailless, too short tail.
- Semi-long, smooth, or fringed hair.
- Colours not indicated in the standard; large white patches.

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FCI Standard No 343: CANE CORSO ITALIANO

FCI Classification: Group 2: Pinscher and Schnauzer, Molossoid type dogs, and Swiss Mountain and Cattle dogs

Section 2.1. Molossian breeds; Mastiff type
With Working Trial