

COLOUR

in the

Kennel and the Ring

It is some years since I first wrote, for Dog World, an article with a very similar title to this.

Collies, as you all know, come in three different colours, four if you include the permitted 'white', as in America. We have the sables, tricolours and blue merles.

To my mind it is quite as important that the basic colour of each dog be correct, as is any other point in the standard. The tricolour should be a really rich black, with no signs of a fawn undercoat intruding. One frequently sees such an animal with what look almost like '*wings*' either side and just in front of its tail. Here the undercoat grows so long that it outdoes the top coat, and so the unsightly fawn coloured '*wings*' appear. A gorgeous black, with white markings, and deep rich tan is a beautiful sight.

The word 'sable' covers an enormous field. From pale gold right through to rich mahogany. Each one a lovely specimen in its own right. It is only when the colour begins to have a tinge of green, rather like a bale of hay, that one takes exception, or when the colour is so very pale as to be almost cream. This latter colour is rarely seen, fortunately.

Finally, there is the blue merle. Please don't forget the word 'blue'. One finds today many dogs in the ring which are merles, I agree, but by no stretch of imagination can they be called blue. This is the one colour where, I am certain, the breeder must first assess the new born puppy for colour, then for the other points of the standard. No matter how perfect your puppy may be it means nothing if it is not blue. So often, unfortunately, the judge does not seem to pay any attention to the blueness of your Collie. Muddy coloured ones, dirty gray ones, ones with too much black on them seem to be excused. If you have decided to try to breed blue merles, this is something you must accept. You must add the difficulty of obtaining perfection in colour to all the other hazards of breeding.

To judges I do beg of you, please, please, remember the word **BLUE**.

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