

GERMAN VS. AMERICAN

What is the Difference Between the German Rottweiler and the American Rottweiler?

By Steve Wolfson

While walking my Rottweiler Bronco, a gentleman approached the two of us and said, "Oh, he's very nice, he must be a German Rottweiler!" I replied, "How did you know that?" He then replied, "I can tell by the size of his head. His head is much bigger than my Rottie's head. German Rottweilers have much bigger heads than the American ones." I told him that he was in error since Bronco was born and raised right here on Long Island, NY. He descends from German stock, but they all do. Looking still puzzled by my explanation he asked, "Then why all the Rottweilers I see have such small heads and potato stick legs?" That characterization made me laugh. I then replied, "More likely, the ones you are seeing result from a poorly planned breeding program using inferior breeding stock." He told me he had paid a great deal of money for his dog and was disappointed in the way it eventually turned out. I understood his disillusionment and further explained that spending a large sum of money (I was afraid to ask the exact price he paid) was not the correct criterion to procure a quality Rottweiler.

"The German Rottweilers are better", "The American Rottweilers have no bone substance, Are the American Rottweilers from the same breeding stock?" I am asked these questions continually, so I thought it would be a good idea to answer them, perhaps settling this colloquial notion. What is the difference between the German Rottweiler and the American Rottweiler?

There is only one Rottweiler; correct in *type** and construction according to the standard. No doubt, untypical and poorly constructed specimens are everywhere. Often, I have encountered Rottweilers purchased as pets (even represented as a show dog) I would consider completely lacking *breed type**, yet I know they are pure bred Rottweilers. Why the difference? Variations of size, shape, and head type etc, encountered in the breed happen for two reasons:

- A. Normal variance that occurs in the progeny when breeding Sire to Dam
- B. Poor planning / Little Concern for the Rottweiler breed (some breedings take place with no motive at all, but for a monetary one).
- C. Even when a litter is carefully planned, a percentage within the progeny is observed that varies in type and construction. This is normal. Not every pup in the litter will be uniform. This divergence is a matter of genetic inheritance which all competent and concerned breeders must deal with each time they decide to plan a litter.

When searching for a stud dog to utilize, the experienced breeder does their homework:

1. Researching the pedigrees of Sire and Dam.
2. Ascertaining whether the stud dog and brood bitch will compliment each other.
3. What improvements can be realized in the upcoming litter?
4. What undesirable construction / type faults will possibly surface?

By doing homework, the concerned breeder reduces the occurrence of undesirable flaws and increases their chances of producing desirable traits and a uniformity in the litter. Predicting results and having goals are the hallmark of a concerned, experienced, responsible breeder.

Undesirable traits which many people not deeply involved with the Rottweiler question are the Doberman-like heads, long bodies, thin, spindle-like bones, general poor construction. These traits are repeatedly observed when the Sire and Dam used in the breeding are not uniform in *breed type**, poor planning (perhaps no planning at all) and little concern for the Rottweiler breed. A breeding of this sort, for all concerned, should not occur.

Those are reasons why great variations are seen in Rottweilers. Top quality specimens are produced by thoughtful, selective, hard working breeders. It does not matter what the country of origin is. Germany produces some of the finest Rottweilers. Also included in this list are all of Europe, Russia, Canada and certainly the US. Quality is where you find it; not exclusive to one particular place. Conversely, there are plenty of pin headed, potato, stick legged, grossly overweight, giant sized Rottweilers available here and outside the US.

However, there are differences when we compare breeding practices. Here are some highlights of the ADRK breeding procedures.

1. The ADRK has strict controls on which are bred.
2. The ADRK requires all dogs for breeding must pass a minimum qualification test called the Ztp (Zuchttauglichkeitsprüfung). A dog cannot be bred unless it has passed.
3. The ADRK standard does not allow any missing teeth.
4. Any dog/bitch which is over, or under the height range will not pass the Ztp.
5. All Rottweilers born after 1999 cannot have their tails docked. The practice of docking tails has been stopped.

Does this translate into breeding better dogs? One must make a comparative analysis of this and come to a final decision.

At the American Rottweiler Club national held in Orlando, Florida in March of 2002, I observed some outstanding specimens. I would not be able to determine their country of origin merely by looking at them and would be happy to compete with these outstanding US Rottweilers in the Klub Sieger show in Germany.

Beware of sales pitches, unethical breeders, claims which cannot be documented. Read, learn, ask detailed questions, go to the shows, become a student of the breed. Do not be fooled by the "Grass is Greener" logic. By virtue of the dog's country of origin does not make it better. This is a premise based in mythology and snob appeal.

***Breed type:**

Breed type for the Rottweiler is the essence of characteristics* that distinguishes it from others.

*Essence of characteristics: One must carefully read the breed standard to discover and comprehend the essence of characteristics.