

I am not going to repeat the history and science behind the Backcross Project here. A lot has already been written about that and I encourage people to read and re-read all the information at www.luadalmatians.com

I just want to share some thoughts about what lead me to get involved in the breeding of LUA Dals and what I see for the future.

In 1988 when I got my first show Dalmatian, Madurahason's Aberdeen, (Zeke) I had no idea how much he would change my life. That dog was a joy to live with and a joy to show. Through him I fell in love with the breed and started down the path that lead me to where I am today.

I got Zeke from Anne Flemming and Anne became my mentor. She drummed into me the importance of breeding for good health and good temperament. Over the years I continued to learn all I could and am proud of my Aberdeen line of Dalmatians. I am not just proud of the ones that made a splash in the show ring - Best in Futurity, Best of Winners and Best of Opposite Sex, Awards of Merit at the National, and many top honors at regional specialties, I am proud of the many Aberdeen Dals that have been the light of their owner's lives. I cherish the many notes and phone calls from people who have gotten dogs from me saying how wonderful the dogs are.

My reason for getting involved in the breeding of LUA Dalmatians is very simple. In 2005, when I learned how few intact LUA Dalmatians there were in existence, I decided to get to work to keep LUA Dalmatians from becoming extinct. I figured there were plenty of people breeding Dalmatians for the AKC show ring. I wanted to do something to prevent Bob Schaible's noble effort to improve the health of the breed from becoming just a footnote in breed history. My decision to begin breeding LUA Dals was reinforced by Suzy Hughes' ultrasound study and by Danika Bannasch's work on identifying the gene responsible for the metabolic defect.

From the beginning one of my goals has been to get more people involved in the breeding of LUA Dalmatians so that the project will not come to a halt if any one person or any one dogs is lost. But I do not

want or expect a whole lot of breeders to jump on the LUA bandwagon any more than I would want to see bunches of breeders all breeding their bitches to a "popular sire".

If I could predict the future, I would say that even if LUA Dalmatians could be registered with the AKC tomorrow, it will take decades for LUA Dalmatians to become commonplace. I don't think anyone wants to see any sudden, dramatic changes in the breed. It is going to take dedicated breeders years to carefully incorporate LUA Dals into many different lines of Dalmatians.

But I don't need a crystal ball to know that LUA Dalmatians are no longer at risk of extinction. In the past three years, their numbers have increased and measures have been taken to insure that the numbers will continue to increase. AKC or no AKC - LUA Dalmatians are here to stay. DCA members need to decide if they want the club to have any role in the continued development of LUA Dalmatians.

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