

Oorang and "Working/Hunting" Airedales

During the 1920's, Airedales were among the most popular breeds of dog. Anytime a breed goes through a popularity fad, people trying to make a buck are attracted to the breed and the general quality of the breed suffers. During that popularity swing the largest Airedale kennel in the country was the Oorang Kennel. They advertised nationally with the slogan "A dog of any size for any purpose". This slogan, combined with the general Airedale brag of "my dog can do anything your dog can do, then lick your dog!", stimulated the breed to popularity. The Oorang Kennel even used the famous American-Indian athlete, Jim Thorpe, to advertise. Their operation was so large that they farmed out brood bitches, bringing pups back for sale. At their peak, the kennel produced thousands of dogs every year. In today's terminology, they were similar to a large scale, one breed puppy mill. The dogs varied greatly in quality and size. They did produce some (traditionally) respectable dogs that won AKC championships and some extraordinary hunting stories exist about their dogs' exploits. The kennel faded from existence as the breed popularity fell in the 1930's. However, since they were so heavily advertised, demand for Oorang and "Oorang-type" Airedales exists to this day, and some kennels still produce this type of Airedale. They are not a separate breed, just a variation in type within the breed. Typically they are over the standard size for Airedales (often 25 to 28 inches and 70 to 100 pounds), and are advertised as "working/hunting" Airedales or "mountain" Airedales. Some of these large-type Airedales are descendants from the Oorang dogs and some are not. (The Airedale standard calls for a 23 inch dog, which usually weighs from 50 to 65 pounds.) The large type dogs do have typical Airedale personalities and are very suitable pets for some. They do not conform to several aspects of the AKC standard and their breeders are excluded from the Airedale Terrier Club of America (the national breed club). Members of the national breed club most frequently come in contact with these Airedales through breed rescue activities and general quality of the oversized Airedales in rescue is poor.

There are a few other "variant" forms of "Airedales". There is a "redline" strain of short haired Airedales, "black Airedales", and even red Airedales. Most of these variations have only one or two significant advocates and are of minor significance in the breed. Occasionally, a different pup will appear in a litter even of well bred dogs. It will grow bigger than average or have

less coat or have more black or less black than average. (It would be genetically extraordinary for a whole litter to have some unique trait that had not been previously selected for.) If you select those different pups to continue breeding, you will see more of those traits in subsequent litters. However, if you continue to pick atypical traits, at some point you have very large, short coated, black dogs and they are not Airedales. They are a new breed. In the case of "black Airedales", they are not eligible for AKC registration. The national breed club has a standard that describes what an Airedale is and quality breeders tend to try to select for traits consistent with that description and de-emphasize dogs that fail to adhere to the standard.

Like most Airedale breeders, Texter Kennel breeds to the national standard for the breed. The national club has a very active and successful working/hunting group that trains and competes with these activities with standard Airedales. A number of current AKC (conformation) champions Airedales also have working/hunting titles.