



Visit The Wildside!

Dalmatians Are Natives of Croatia

The Dalmatian dog is a breed whose roots are often said to trace back to Dalmatia, a region of Croatia where the first illustrations of the dog have been found. The role of ancient dalmatians was as a “dog of war” guarding the borders in Dalmatia. To this day, Dalmatians retain a high guarding instinct.

The Dalmatian is noted for its unique black- or brown - spotted coat and was mainly used as a carriage dog in its early days in Europe. Today, this dog remains a well loved family pet and many dog enthusiasts enter their pets into competitions of the many kennel clubs.

Dalmatians are a mid-sized, muscular dog with lots of endurance and stamina. They weigh full grown 35 to 70 pounds. The males are slightly larger than the females. They stand up to 24 inches high. Their ears are thin and taper towards the tip and set high close to the head. Dalmatians eye color varies from brown, amber or blue. Some dogs have one blue eye and one brown eye or other combinations.

When Dalmatians are born, their coats are plain and white. Spots appear within a week after their birth. One month later, they usually have most of their spots, although they continue to develop some at a much slower rate throughout their life.

These dogs have a strong hunting instinct. In sports, Dalmatians are used as bird dogs, trail hounds, retrievers or in packs for boar or stag hunting.

But they are best known for their role as firefighting escorts and firehouse mascots. They

are good watchdogs and it is believed that they may have been useful to fire brigades as guard dogs to protect a firehouse and its equipment. When fire engines were drawn by fast and powerful horses, the horses were a tempting target for thieves, so Dalmatians guarded them.

In recent times, the Dalmatian is also associated in the United States with Budweiser Beer and the Busch Garden theme parks. Their team of Clydesdale horses is always accompanied by a Dalmatian carriage dog. Historically, Dalmatians were used by brewers to guard the wagon while the drivers were making deliveries.

In 1956, English author Dodie Smith wrote *The One Hundred and One Dalmatians*, which, in 1961, was adapted as the Disney film *One Hundred and One Dalmatians*. In 1996, the film was re-made as *101 Dalmatians* and the following year developed into a Disney TV series titled *101 Dalmatians: The Series*.

