



# BREED FEATURE

## The Cocker Spaniel



**A.1.** My pet hate, as a Cocker breeder, would be loose eyes. The whole expression is spoilt, especially if unpigmented haws are showing.

**A.2.** The key hallmarks of the breed for me are:

- The merry temperament - Cockers are well known for their ever wagging tails & affectionate, devoted, gentle nature coupled with their joy of life in the company of their owners.
- The Cocker's head piece is such a recognised & adored feature of the breed - a square muzzle with a definite stop midway between the nose & occiput. Cheek bones cleanly chiselled, skull well developed & rounded. The dark nose sufficiently wide enough for scenting. Near parallel planes of the skull & muzzle. Trade mark lobular ears low set level with eyes. Eyes should be round, dark, not prominent, with tight rims, evoking a soft, gentle, bright & intelligent expression.

These above two traits of the Cocker are of great importance, without either, their identity would suffer.

Other important hallmarks are conformation as per the standard -

Moderate length muscular neck with clean throat set neatly into shoulders.



Short back with well sprung ribs & level top line.

Shoulders fine sloping, chest well developed, deep correct width brisket. Legs must be straight & well boned of adequate length to allow powerful reach-Not too short to impede such movement.

A well rounded muscular hindquarter. Well boned legs with good stifle bend on a short powerful hock.

Beautiful firm well-padded cat like feet with a strong pastern.

Tail carried reasonably level, set slightly lower than the back showing merry action on the move. Never carried high or too low.

The Cocker must move with powerful reach & drive allowing for great ground coverage without effort.

The coat is to be silky & straight seen in a variety of colours. Not too profuse.

Overall the Cocker Spaniel is a merry, compact, sporty gundog without exaggerations, with a total love of life.

## We asked breeders

**Q.1.** What is your pet hate as a breeder - that one thing that instantly makes a puppy a pet instead of a show or breeding prospect?

**Q.2.** What would you identify as the key hallmarks of the breed? Is the breed in danger of losing any of these?

**Q.3.** If you could change one thing in the current Breed Standard what would it be?

**Q.4.** Do you think registered ANKC Cocker Spaniel breeders are employing adequate health testing methods?

**Q.5.** What sets the Cocker apart as a companion dog?

**Q.6.** Which Cocker Spaniel, not owned or bred by you, do you think is the best example of the breed that you have seen? Why?

**Q.7.** If you wanted to encourage a puppy buyer to join the dog hobby what reasons would you give them to get involved?

I am concerned with the number of Cockers being shown in recent times which seem a little short in leg. The result being they appear long & low, losing their 'Cockery' appearance.

To quote the world renowned gundog judge Mr Frank Kane (UK)....

"Think SQUARE, SUBSTANTIAL, MODERATE, with a GENTLY ROUNDED outline."

**A.3.** I don't feel there is a need to make changes to the current Cocker Spaniel breed standard. Judges just need to keep in mind this standard when judging.

**A.4.** It is a shame a number of breeders are not using the health testing tools now available to us all. I think it is the responsible thing to do. Forewarned is forearmed.

**A.5.** No single factor makes the Cocker a stand out as the companion dog that they are. Cockers are the most affectionate loyal fun dogs to own. They are a perfect size- an ideal inside / outside dog who loves everybody they meet. They love the car, the beach, the park...anywhere & everywhere.

**A.6.** To pick the best example of a Cocker is not easy. There have been a few really good ones. My pick comes down to two - UK. Sh Ch Bitcon Troubador (UK). Only seen in pictures. This dog made a huge impact on the Cocker Spaniel breed. He is behind many great dogs. We were very fortunate to actually breed a pup by him using his remaining frozen semen - producing our exuberant Ch Cleemist Tiz The One (A.I.). In Australia I would consider Gr Ch Feenix Fair Star (owned by Sue McFadden), to be an excellent example of the breed. To watch this dog on the move was poetry in motion. He had such fantastic body & conformation. We used 'Max' at stud a few times & produced some top winners.

**A.7.** Good reasons to begin showing a Cocker - it can be very rewarding & a lot of fun! Showing takes you to all sorts of places where you meet like-minded people, often forming friendships you keep for life. The

dogs love all the attention too!

**Mick & Wendy Drekovic**  
**Cleemist Cockers**

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**A.1.** A Bad Mouth. I instantly take them out of my show/breeding program. It impedes the form and function of the breed and is an issue that I will not breed on with and having bad mouths fixed doesn't make it go away either. Our gene pool is not that small that we should breed from dogs with bad mouths.

**A.2.** The Cocker Spaniel should be COMPACT, MODERATE, MERRY with a Soft Melting Expression and LEVEL topline. Fashion has certainly played a part in our breed over the years.



It seems that the latest trend is long and low Cocker Spaniels that are getting too coarse and heavy, losing that lovely Soft Melting Expression which should melt the hardest of hearts. I see lots of photos of Cocker Spaniels in show stack with sloping toplines (and I have been guilty of doing this myself). This is one of the main differences between

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the Cocker Spaniel and the American Cocker Spaniel and I feel this is something as handlers we need to be very aware of. The other topline issue is rolled over croups...the tail set is SLIGHTLY lower, not straight off the back and not rolled over as either affect the structure of the hindquarters.

Our breed is Moderate....all parts should blend into each other with no one part standing out. Moderate length of neck and angulation and these must be equal to ensure balance. I see too many with straight fronts, lacking prosternum and over angulated hindquarters with exhibitors that speed around the ring.

And last but certainly not least...MERRY! This word is stated in our breed standard 6 times, and state 'Tail MUST be merry in action' so is extremely important to the breed. Nothing looks nicer than the ever wagging tail of a Cocker Spaniel, showing the true temperament of the breed. They should be confident and full of life and exuberance. It saddens me to see so many Cocker Spaniels being shown that have tails down, no confidence to the extent of looking like they are scared of their own shadows. This is becoming a major issue in the breed and under no circumstance should be rewarded by a judge.

Without these important Hallmarks the breed would not have the ability to achieve form and function.

A.3. I would prefer to see in the range of colours that it stays consistent with the main colours when it comes to the Bi-Colours, instead of Orange & White, it should be changed to Gold & White which would stay consistent with the solid colours that make up the 'and white' colouring of the breed.

A.4. As a general I believe most responsible breeders are taking advantage of the tests that are available for our breed and are open to learning about new issues in the breed that get identified and work at breeding the issues out of the breed along with being conscious not to lose breed type. It has been refreshing to be able to sit with other breeders and discuss issues that we are testing for and having the ability to utilise DNA testing as a tool for more informative breeding programs which can only be better for the breed. I believe those who do the tests truly have the breed at heart....we are the custodians of our breed and should do all we can to ensure its longevity. Sometimes we have not got the results we have wanted but would rather find out early and have on occasions had to change my own breeding plans to prevent producing progeny affected by major hereditary issues.

A.5. The Cocker Spaniel is a robust breed of good size, with an amazing temperament and medium energy level that suits many environments. Size, temperament and easy to train make them ideal for family pets.

A.6. There have been some beautiful Cockers world-wide that I have admired over the years but for me having seen her in the flesh, had my hands on her and had the privilege of an opportunity to handle her...I have to say Am Ch Dawnglow Legally Blonde (Tiffany) I



know many will roll their eyes that I have used an American Bred Cocker Spaniel as my best example...but to soften the blow to many, she is not what many perceive as 'American Style' and is a product of some beautiful UK breeding. Those fortunate enough to see her in the flesh will know... she was all Cocker. A beautiful gold bitch with so much work in her head,

beautiful bone, compact, sturdy, fabulous spring of rib, moderate and balanced in every way, rock solid level topline and a big backside with wide, well rounded hindquarters ensuring the great drive required in the breed.

She to me was the epitome of the saying that a Cocker Spaniel should have the head of a Duchess and the backside of a Washer Woman.

A.7. I would encourage them to join our dog hobby to learn more about their breed and to enjoy the company of people who love and adore the breed as they do. There are many aspects to our Dog Hobby, not just showing. Cocker Spaniels are a very adaptable and smart breed that just love life and love spending time with their owners.

**Toni Dennis  
Tarrendayle**

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A.1. Pet hate : Is a Cocker going round the ring tail between its legs, "Merry" is mentioned three times in the standard. I am also a stickler for good shoulders, and a "balanced dog" remembering a Cocker is approximately the same from withers to ground as from withers

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## GROOMING with Plush Puppy

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Show day for parti colored dogs - apply a quick dab of **Plush Puppy Cover Up Cream** with a barely damp sponge to the white areas such as the face, elbows and hocks to even out any discolouration and finish with an application of corn starch which not only helps make the coat appear whiter but assists in drying the Cover Up Cream faster. Both work for each other with the Cover Up Cream holding the starch/chalk.

Show day brushing/grooming, use **Plush Puppy OMG**, a revolutionary grooming spray that lives up to its name. OMG is the perfect product for this coat type. A light spray of OMG and brushing in allows this product to refresh the coat leaving it feeling wonderful, it separates the coat and leaves the most amazing finish. Using an approximate mixture of 1 part OMG to 20-40 parts water - using this break down from the OMG concentrate or OMG ready to use. The stronger the mix the stronger there effects. Different dogs at different coat stages means different mixtures. Higher the amount of OMG to greater effects. Using OMG can be a one off at shows or during the drying process after bathing. An amazing product for regular

brushing also as it hydrates the coat and reduces stress and coat loss. OMG and as its active ingredients smooth the cuticle and protect the coat.

**Plush Puppy Wonder Wash** is a great standby for a waterless/no rinse shampoo when dramas occur last minute. Spray lightly, lather with hands and towel dry - it's just brilliant. Add also a light mist of **Plush Puppy Shine & Comb** just to the topline. Hold approximately 30cm from the coat for a last minute sheen. Also a judicious dusting of **Plush Puppy Pixie Dust** applied onto a **Plush Puppy Powder Application Brush** and stroked through the bib, pants and lightly to the topline prior to the Shine & Comb. Don't go overboard as this is for a light bit of glamour and not intended for a Christmas pageant!

You do own a breed that is distinguished and one of a class of dogs from that old school of esteemed dogs - the Gundogs. For those of us with 'other' breeds, we admire the skill and usefulness of a dog who is not only man's best friend but has the ability to put food on the table. Shown today in the conformation ring, he has flash, dash and class. Well presented, he is breathtaking.



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to root of tail.

A.2. One of the hallmarks is temperament, a good temperament is so important, he/she should go round the ring "like he owns it" and loves to go, good humour, wanting to please his owner, and loves to be doing the job in front of him whether it be just running around the ring, or playing with the kids. If we look further into hallmarks, we could say a good body on a Cocker Spaniel is important, we are losing this together with shoulders. Sadly we do not have the breeders of yesteryear, that look at the pedigree of the dog and know what they are looking for in the bitch they are about to mate.

A.3. I think overall the standard as read is a good representation of our breed.

A.4. I am pleased to say that the C.S.S. of N.S.W. is in the process of looking into starting a Health Survey registrar for Cocker Spaniels.

A.5. One of the things that set a Cocker Spaniel as a "companion dog" would be his wanting to please his owner, his adoring eyes as he looks at you just wanting to please. Whether it be retrieving (and unfortunately the Cocker Spaniel is not used as a gundog retriever like he was years ago) or a companion family dog, his main aim in life is to please his owner, come what may.

I often say to people who say "dogs are stupid" my quick reply is: "No they are a dumb animal, and they are as stupid as their owner, who should firstly have the patience and time to train it".

A.6. I have been fortunate to have seen some really top Cocker Spaniels through the years of breeding and showing, and mentioned them at various times. I would however, like to mention, a dog that I recently judged in U.K. I saw some lovely dogs over there, and much is said, with the imports that Australia is obtaining from U.K. that our breed will continue to flourish in the coming years. I refer to English Show Champion Verateu Vincenzo at Cassaom J.W. (see photo page 72). Such a well balanced, lovely bodied dog, who moved around the ring, as though he owned it.

A.7. What other hobby could you have, where you can travel all over the world and meet people with a common interest. Who talks, laughs, and enjoys talking about our common interest the Cocker Spaniel.

**Karleen Bennett  
Royoni Kennels**

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A.1. Mismatched solid colours.

A.2. Dogs that are either under or over the breed standard in size; sloping toplines and movement without reach and drive. While ever judges reward dogs that are not within the breed standard for height, sloping

toplines instead of level toplines and incorrect movement the breed is in danger of losing what the standard calls for in these areas.

A.3. We would rather talk about the things that should not be changed - size; topline and movement.

A.4. We are not sure what other breeders do, but we DNA test for whatever hereditary diseases and conditions are available and do not breed with specimens that are not clear of those genetic problems.

A.5. The Cocker Spaniel's loyalty, devotion and wonderful personality.

A.6. S. Afr. Ch. Braganza Mr Phelps, owned by Fran and Jackie Browning. He was an outstanding type and was a true merry little sporting dog - a real showman and was a multi Best In Show winner.

**Carol & Don Mahoney  
Occuli Cocker Spaniels**

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A.1. A puppy that lacks correct head shape or balance ie length of leg compared to depth of body.

A.2. Merry, Compact, Sporting, Balanced, intelligent gentle yet merry expression. The temperament of the Cocker is still very much an important aspect of the breed we are seeing some loosing this merry outlook. Balance is also being lost with some examples becoming too heavy in body and short on leg, a Cocker should never look long and low. We must remember that the Cocker is a sporting dog, therefore must be able to cover the ground carrying game. The expression of intelligence and gentleness is being lost because of incorrect eye shape and harsh light eyes.

A.3. Nothing, I love the breed as it and our forefathers described the breed very well.

A.4. Some are very diligent others not. The National Council should be pushing for mandatory testing before registration as in some breeds.

A.5. It's merry outlook on life. Happy to sit with you on the couch or go racing across the fields. A great alround dog very easy to live with. Not too large or too small, a great family dog.

A.6. I must say Gr Ch Ryangaye Rhythm N Time - the beautiful Tully and alongside him is Gr Ch Feenix Fair Star 'Max' two lovely Cockers. My favourite bitch I saw in the flesh at Crufts Ch Quettadene Mystique.

A.7. A chance to make great friends with like minded people.

**Elaine Job  
Doulton Kennels (partner)**

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A.1. Overall balance, puppy must make the correct shape front and rear angles not overdone - A personal must - tight eyes ide-

ally with pigment in both!

A.2. Well balanced, compact, sturdy, merry dog full of exuberance - we need to monitor length of back & lack of leg to ensure balance remains correct.

A.3. Bring more attention to the correct wording & its meaning - Characteristics: Merry nature with ever-wagging tail shows a typical BUSTLING MOVEMENT "PARTICULARLY WHEN FOLLOWING SCENT!!"

A.4. Yes and with the worldwide Cocker Spaniel Data Base <https://www.Cockerspaniel-database.com> results are easy to reference & open to breeders worldwide.

A.5. It is basically a healthy dog that has stood the test of time, is a lovable pet that has appealed to many generations of devoted Spaniel lovers past and present.

A.6. Australian Champion Brightleaf Bewinged sire of 58 champions - my all time favourite from the 70's. A most beautiful



example of our breed TYPE!!! TYPE!! TYPE!!

A.. We need young new people that is for sure, we need to encourage them for the love of our breed and our hobby to continue



but they need to be very strong with a good mentor!!

**Ann & Dennis O'keefe  
Glenayden Cockers**

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# The Parti Coloured Cocker Spaniel Club Breed Championship Show (UK)

*A special report from  
the judge*  
**Karleen Bennett**

Pictured on the left Sh Ch Veratey Vincenzo At Cassom JW, who won Dog CC & Best in Show on the day. He also went on after this to win the breed at Crufts.



On the 9th February, 2019 I was honoured with the invitation to judge the "Parti coloured cocker spaniel club Breed Championship show. For those that don't know me I have had cocker spaniels since 1950 having imported and owned around 16 dogs from the U.K. I have had my cocker spaniel judges license also for several years, having chosen not to qualify for the gundog group but to remain a cocker spaniel specialist. Having judged all over Australia, and overseas, including once prior to this appointment in U.K. and Africa. This to me was the pinnacle of my judging, and further reward, was the cocker spaniels, that were shown under me, quality was high, as I expected from this country, I judged 124 male cockers, fabulous entry with good sportsmanship shown, by

the owners, on my decisions.

My C.C. WINNER who went on to win BEST IN SHOW was Amos-Jones dog, SH.CH. VERATEY VINCENZO AT CASSOM JW. My critique of this dog says it all, on seeing him enter the ring, he was all dog, his owner and he moved as one, "This dog was a joy to judge, he was presented beautifully, well balanced, lovely head, neck and shoulders, nice short hocks and tail placement, Best in Show richly deserved"

My Puppy in Show was another to really impress, his critique as follows "This dog was well presented with lovely feet, short well bodied, and good head. Topping it all off he had great movement. He won in a wonderful class of puppies and finished Puppy in Show"



Left to right, Puppy in Show, Opposite sex in Show, Best in Show & Veteran in Show.

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- A.1. My pet hate is bad temperaments. Merry is mentioned six 6 times in our standard so anything but a happy Cocker is unacceptable
- A.2. Big rib, big bum and soft expression. Too many lack rib and forechest and have a narrow pelvis.
- A.3. I would put an explanation in about what makes a bustle. Big bum, drive from behind and that never ceasing wagging tail.



- A.4. The majority of breeders DNA test for AON, PRA & FN
- A.5. Their wonderful temperament and loving nature
- A.6. Sup Ch Royoni He's True Blue owned



and Bred by Karleen Bennett and handled by Linda Kanteck. An amazing example of the breed. **Nikki Lane**

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- A.1. There are a few things I dislike. Shyness, lack of body and bone, length in coupling, upright shoulder, steep croup, short in leg, untypical head, unsound movement.
- A.2. Merry temperament, moderate, soft expression, level back, sturdy with good length of leg. Cobby body, short coupling and well sprung rib.

For me the shape of the dog is of the Dog News Australia page 74

## We asked breeders

- Q.1. What is your pet hate as a breeder – that one thing that instantly makes a puppy a pet instead of a show or breeding prospect?**
- Q.2. What would you identify as the key hallmarks of the breed? Is the breed in danger of losing any of these?**
- Q.3. If you could change one thing in the current Breed Standard what would it be?**
- Q.4. Do you think registered ANKC Cocker Spaniel breeders are employing adequate health testing methods?**
- Q.5. What sets the Cocker apart as a companion dog?**
- Q.6. Which Cocker Spaniel, not owned or bred by you, do you think is the best example of the breed that you have seen? Why?**
- Q.7. If you wanted to encourage a puppy buyer to join the dog hobby what reasons would you give them to get involved?**

most importance because if it is not the right proportions and structure it is not the correct silhouette for the breed. I believe the Cocker Spaniel breed is losing correct body proportions in many of the dogs in Australia today. Some are lacking length of leg making them look long this can also effect the back line. The Cocker should be firm and level in back not hollow. This weakness in structure effects the gait, which should be true through action covering the ground well not short stepping. Unsound dogs are not capable of doing the job they were originally bred for. Soundness is part of breed type in a sporting dog.

A.3. The word *bustling*. Judges and exhibitors seem confused by this word thinking it relates to movement of the Cocker Spaniel in the ring, the phrase is "*Merry nature with ever-wagging tail shows a typical bustling movement, particularly when following scent, fearless of heavy cover.*"

You will see the Cocker bustle with his bouncing, rounded hindquarters as he becomes absorbed by the smells when hunting, his tail wags furiously the closer he comes to a scent he likes.

The movement you see in the show ring is in the standard under the heading for gait and is *True through action with great drive covering ground well*. This is a dog who can work all day.

A.4. Yes most ANKC breeders are doing the DNA testing available and we are working towards putting these tests into a data base. Reputable breeders stand by their puppies and when selling puppies give new owners guarantees that their puppy is healthy.

When looking for puppies please contact the Cocker Spaniel Clubs to find out who has puppies for sale.

A.5. The Cocker loves to be part of the family. I call the Cocker a Velcro dog meaning he is happiest when he is with his owner, wanting to be at your feet when you work on the computer even accompanying you to the toilet. The Cocker enjoys going for walks playing ball, so long he is part of what the family is doing.

Cockers also do well in obedience because they love to please and are fast learners.

A.6. In 2015 I went to Crufts for the first

time to see the Cocker Spaniels, I was blown away by the breed they were consistently what I believed the breed to be. The overwhelming majority of the Cockers were sturdy, with good bone and well sprung ribs, compact, level backed, sound and merry without exaggeration. Pictured is one of my favourites Sh. Ch Glowhill Silver Spur



Why?

This dog had a pleasing head and expression, with the correct cobby body proportions, substance and good bone right down to tight cat like feet. He displayed a very merry temperament and correct ground covering gait.

A.7. I have encouraged quite a few people to be part of our sport my enthusiasm for the breed and the interest in improving the breed are what I promote. The friendships I have



made over the years though our sport is what makes it all worthwhile.

**Megan Markotany  
Bolwarra**