

The Stafford Knot Questions & Answers

Each month TSK will take questions from our readers and present them to breed specialists, experienced breeders, veterinarians, geneticists or experts in the field of the particular questions being asked.

ASK TSK - Q & A

Question:

Dear Stafford Knot,

I have been enjoying your publication since I stumbled upon it on FaceBook and I was wondering if you had covered anything explaining 'Line and Family' breeding? I have a vague understanding of it, but not how it pertains to the Staffordshire Bull Terrier, especially the 'Lines' and what dogs originally represented each line. I keep hearing breeders refer to 'their lines' and I dont think the modern day breeder has knowledge of what the term signifies. Can you please explain this?

Thank you. Keep up the good work!

Answer:

Very good question, and no, not one we have yet covered on TSK. If there is someone out there who would like to address this topic in a future article please contact TSK at editor@thestaffordknot.com.

For now the simplest explanation to answer your question, which explains 'Line and Family' breeding and further goes into detail as to how it pertains to the Stafford, is to quote from John F. Gordon's book (1952)

"The Staffordshire Bull Terrier Handbook".

Leading Lines

The work of recording Staffordshire Bull terrier strains and pedigrees based on the 'Line and Family' method has been exhaustively covered by Mr. H.N. Beilby, of Bromsgrove, whose outstanding services to our breed I have referred to in Chapter II. His findings are published in great detail in the second (1948) edition of The Staffordshire Bull Terrier.

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Briefly, the sire's male ancestors (that is the sire's sire's sire, etc.) are termed the 'Line', and the dams female ancestry (that is the dam's dam's dam, etc.) the 'Family'. For reasons of space, I can only give a brief survey of the various lines, the main ones being:

J. Line. "Fearless Joe" and his male descendants

M. Line. "Brindle Mick" and his male descendants

L. Line. "Game Lad" and his male descendants

R. Line. "Ribchester Bob" and his male descendants

B. Line. "Rum Bottle" and his male descendants ('Westall' strain)

C. Line. "Cinderbank Beauty" and his male descendants

J. Line - "The success of this line can be traced through "Jim the Dandy" and "Vindictive Monty" (the two sons of "Fearless Joe") to such dogs as "The Great Bomber", "Boy Dan", "Bomber Command", "Vindictive Montyson" and "Red Turk". All these dogs are now dead but they passed their blood on to the modern winners "Sans Cooper", "Red Chalmondley", Ch. "Peter the Bomber", Ch. "Sandra's Boy", Ch. "Brindle Mac" and many other good ones.

M. Line - This line stands pre-eminent to-day, and commences modern records with 'Brindle Mick' who sired "Brindle Bill", "Furnace Jake", "Red Ruin", "The Bandit", and Ch. "Gentleman Jim". The latter's great stud prowess produced countless winners including "Son O' Jim", Ch "Jim's Double of Wychbury", Ch. "Fearless Red of Bandits" and Ch. "Widneyland Kim", who in turn are passing these qualities onto their progeny. "Brindle Bill" sired "Nuneatonion Boy", "Old Cross guns Showboy", "Tenacious Pete", "Chestonion Nib's Pal", "Elnirb Saint", "Bucks Mick" and the tiger brindle dog Ch. "Brigands Bos'un" who is responsible for Ch. "Thornhill Pride", "Widneyland Brutus" and "Bos'un Again".

An outstanding son of "Son O' Jim" is "Jolley Roger", who has produced "Son O' Roger", "Peerless Pirate", Ch. "Quiz of Wyncroft" and my late Ch. "Brigands Red Rogerson". From "Kim" comes such dogs as Ch. "Wychbury Kimbo", Ch. "Wychbury Kimson", "Tessa's Beauty" and "Godfrey's Pride". "Fearless Red"'s progeny includes some big winners in the dogs "Goth of Bandits" (now owned by Mrs. Marion Forester [formerly Lewis], New Zealand). "Castlebanks Bomber" and "Brindie's Pride". Other noted winners in this great line are "Brindle Crescendo of Wychbury", "Widneyland Little Patch of Pynedale", "Granger's Lane Rex" and "Goldwyn's Leading Lad" to mention only a few.

L. Line - This line comes through "Game Lad" to his son Ch. "Game Laddie", "Our Ben" and "Billy", all of them dead now, but whose blood is represented in the modern dogs "Brigand's Bash'em", "Brinstock Democrat", "Thonock Lad", "Prince St. John", "Dynamite Jim" and others.

R. Line - Through "Ribchester Max", the grandson of "Ribchester Bob" to "Max"'s son "Vindictive Monty of Wyncroft", the sire of Ch. "Head Lad of Villmar" who got "Milkern Guardsman".

B. Line - The 'Westall' strain. This line comes through "Rum Bottle" from "Rascal" and "Game Cock". "Rum Bottle" got "Tough Guy" and "Eager Lad", the latter being the sire of "Tornado" (who is the sire of "Bomber of Roundcroft" and grandsire of "Idol Bruce")

C. Line - Founded by "Cinderbank Beauty" passing through to his son "Togo" the sire of "Pike Lane Spitfire", "Rambling Prince" and "The Varmint", sire of the winning white dog "Rambling Knight".

Only time will show how these lines will tend to affect the future fancy. At the present time the 'J' and 'M' lines unquestionably lead the field, and the others will need to develop fast to challenge them.