

Tan Point Markings - aka Black and Tan by Sian Hammond



As you will no doubt be aware, black and tan is one of only 2 coat colours that are mentioned in our breed standard as incorrect.

Unfortunately, the very fact that it is listed as a colour is one of the reasons there are so many myths and mistakes surrounding the issue.

Despite popular belief, you do not get black and tan by mating red to black! Black and tan is not actually a colour, it is a pattern. The gene which creates the black and tan coat determines the pattern that the colours take up, not the actual colours themselves. Whatever colour ,or combination of colours, a dog inherits from its parents, it can still have the "black and tan" pattern.

I find it simpler to refer to this type of coat as having tan point markings, to distinguish it from a colour to a pattern. The fact that it is a pattern, and not a colour, makes it similar to the brindle coat as that too is governed by a patterning gene. The brindle gene arranges the coat colours into a background of red or fawn, with darker coloured stripes on top, the intensity of the stripes governs whether the dog appears anything from almost red with just a few odd stripes (tiger brindle) up to having so very many stripes that the coloured base coat is completely extinguished by black stripes (black brindle) The tan point markings gene arranges the colours into the same pattern as that which vou would see on a Rottweiler ,or a Manchester Terrier, for example.

The fact that this gene only governs pattern, and not colour, means that a dog can have ANY colour coat, and still be tan point marked. The dogs colour is irrelevant, if he is blue, with fawn points, or black with brindle points, or red with fawn points, he carries, and is affected by, the exact same gene which has created the coat on a dog standard black and tan.

The tan point pattern gene is a recessive gene, this means that, in order for a pup to be born with a tan point patterned coat, it needs to receive a copy of the gene from both of its parents. If you breed a litter and one or more pups have this coat pattern, you can be assured that both the sire and dam of your litter carry the tan point gene. It is also likely, in this case, that a number of your tan point pups litter mates will be carriers of the gene.





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Those carrier pups will have received the gene from one of the parents, but not the other, therefore they do not possess a tan point coat themselves, but carry the gene and are capable of passing it on to any offspring they may go on to produce. If such a carrier is mated to another carrier, then, naturally, further tan point marked pups will appear in the next generation. If it is mated to a non carrier, then the gene will simply be passed along, un-noticed, within its carrier offspring, until it meets up with another carrier and is then able to affect the coat pattern of future puppies.

As a pup can inherit more than one type of pattern gene, it is possible for there to be more than one pattern on the coat. For example, if a pup were to inherit both tan point markings, and, piebald markings, it could be born looking like a tri-colour, ie black and tan with white markings, or even almost entirely white with just a few bits of give away markings.

I have actually seen a Stafford who looked, to all intents and purposes,



This bitch above appears to be a pied but notice the red on her cheek. She is a black and tan Stafford, with the majority of her colour covered over by the white spotting gene.

To the left is a black and tan Stafford dog where the brindle pattern covers the tan points. He has inherited both the tan point and the brindle genes.

like a pied, but the patch of black on his face contained a red eye brow and a bit of red on the cheek. This was a black and tan Stafford, with the majority of its colour covered over with white, by the white spotting gene. You can also find a Stafford who may appear almost entirely black, but who has brindle markings at the locations where you would expect to find tan markings on a black and tan; this Stafford would have inherited the tan point gene and also the brindle gene. As an aside, there is no actual black coat in our breed, the gene which creates a black coat has never been



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found in a Stafford, despite extensive studies. A Stafford who appears to have a black coat, will in fact be a very densely marked black brindle. To prove this point, mate a black to a red....you get brindles. Brindle is a dominant gene, therefore, if an animal does not have a brindle coat, it does NOT carry the brindle gene, so if black to red produces brindle pups, the black is a black brindle!

In short, any 2 parents COULD produce black and tan, or tan point marked, puppies. It matters not one iota what colour their coats are, they simply have to be carrying the right gene, and be mated to another animal carrying that right gene. An adult with a tan pattern coat, regardless of colour, will pass on that tan pattern gene to every single pup it produces. It may well never produce a single tan pattern puppy, simply due to the fact that it may well never be mated to another carrier of the the gene (remember that with recessives it takes 2 to tango) but its offspring will all be carrying that gene into the next generation, and it will eventually raise its head again!



By - Sian Hammond (Hammystaff)