

Cane Corso

The **Cane Corso**(pronounced kah-neh kor-so) from Italian cane (dog) and "corso" from the Latin "Cohors" meaning "protector", also known as the **Italian Mastiff**, is a large Italian **breed** of **dog**, for years valued highly in **Italy** as a companion and **guard dog**.^[2]

Description



Black Cane Corso



Formentino Cane Corso puppy



Black Cane Corso puppy

Appearance

The Cane Corso is a large Italian **Molosser**, which is closely related to the **Neapolitan Mastiff**. In name and form the Cane Corso predates its cousin the Neapolitan Mastiff. It is well muscled^[3] and less bulky than most other Mastiff breeds. The breed is known as a true and quite possibly the last of the **coursing** Mastiffs. The official **Fédération Cynologique Internationale**(FCI) standard expects ideal dogs to stand 58–70 cm (23–28 in) at the **withers**, with females in the lower range (58–66 cm (23–26 in)) and males in the higher (62–70 cm (24–28 in)). Weight should be in keeping with the size and stature of these dogs, ranging from 45–50 kilograms (99–110 lb) for males and from 40–45 kilograms (88–99 lb) for females.^[1] The overall impression should be of power, balanced with athleticism. A Corso should be moderately tight skinned; however, some **dewlap** on the neck is normal, and the bottom of the jawline should be defined by the hanging lip.

The head of the Cane Corso is arguably its most important feature. It is large and imposing. The forehead should be flat and convergent to the muzzle. The muzzle is flat, rectangular (when viewed from above), and generally as wide as it is long; approximately 33% the total length of the skull (a ratio of 2:1). The eyes are almond in shape, set straight and when viewed from the front, set slightly above the line of the muzzle. Darker eyes are preferred, however, the color of the eyes tends to emulate the shade of brindling in the coat.^[4] Traditionally the ears

are [cropped](#) short in equilateral triangles that stand erect. However, as cropping is no longer legal in many jurisdictions, Cane Corso with ears are becoming more common, and should hang smoothly against the head, coming to at or slightly below the level of the eyes.

The tail of the Corso is traditionally [docked](#) fairly long, at the 4th [vertebra](#). Again, with trends in cosmetic surgeries for dogs changing, many Corsos now have full tails, which should be carried erect, but never curled over the back.

Cane Corso appear in two basic coat colours: black and fawn. This is further modified by genetic pigment [dilution](#) to create "blue" (grey, from black) and frumentino or formentino (from fawn, where the mask is blue/grey) colours. [Brindling](#) of varying intensity is common on both basic coat colours as well, creating Tigrato (black brindle), and Grigio Tigrato (blue brindle). White markings are common on the chest, tips of toes, the chin, and the bridge of the nose. Large white patches are not desirable.

A 2017 study of 232 Cane Corso dogs across 25 countries found an average life span of 9.3 years, varying with different coat colours. The longest living were black brindle dogs (10.3 years) followed by brindle dogs (10.1 years), grey brindle dogs (9.8 years), fawn dogs (9.0 years), black dogs (9.0 years), grey dogs (9.0 years) and other colour dogs (8.1 years).[5]

Behavior

These dogs are docile and affectionate to their owners, loving with children and family, and easily trained. They are an unequalled protector of the owners and their property.[6]

Birth and Reproduction

The average litter size of Cane Corso is 4 to 6 puppies.[7]

History

The Cane Corso is a descendant of the old Roman [molosser](#).^[1] Its name derives from cane da corso, an old term for those [catch dogs](#) used in rural activities for cattle and swine, as distinct from cane da camera which indicates the catch dog kept as a bodyguard. In the recent past, its distribution was limited to some regions of Southern Italy, especially in [Basilicata](#), [Campania](#), and [Apulia](#).^[4]

Cane Corso were used to guard property, livestock, and families, and some continue to be used for this purpose today. Historically it has also been used by night watchmen, keepers, and, in the past, by [carters](#) and [drovers](#). In the more distant past this breed was common all over Italy, as an ample iconography and historiography testify.

As life changed in the southern Italian rural farms in the 20th century, the Corso began to become rare. A group of enthusiasts began recovery activities designed to bring the dog back from near extinction in the late 1970s. By 1994, the breed was fully accepted by the Italian Kennel Club ([ENCI](#)) as the 14th Italian breed of dog. The [FCI](#) provisionally accepted the Corso in 1997, and ten years later was fully recognised internationally. In the US, the [American Kennel Club](#) first recognized the Cane Corso in 2010.^[3] The popularity of the breed continues to grow, ranking in 40th place in the United States in 2016, a jump from 50th place in 2013 and 60th in 2012 ^[8] Today the breed is used as a guardian, protection, tracking and police dog.^[2]



The head of the Cane Corso is arguably its most important feature



Cane Corso, blue coat, cropped ears



Cane Corso portrait, formentino coat, ears uncropped



Cane Corso, formentino coat, cropped ears



Cane Corso, blue coat,



Cane Corso, blue/brindle coat



Cane Corso with ears and tail, brown/brindle coat

Popularity

The dog is most popular breed in Europe according to [Protectivity Insurance](#).^{[9][10]} It is the 37th most popular in the United States according to the [American Kennel Club](#).^[11]

References

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6. "[AKC Official Standard of the Cane Corso](#)" (PDF). Retrieved 4 February 2019.
7. "[Cane Corso Italiano Dog Breed Information and Pictures](#)". [www.dogbreedinfo.com](#). Retrieved 4 February 2019.
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10. Claire, Marie (4 May 2018). "[These Are The Most Popular Dog Breeds In Europe](#)". *Marie Claire*. Retrieved 4 February 2019.
11. "[The Labrador Retriever Isn't One of Europe's Most Popular Dog](#)

[Breeds — See the List](#)". American Kennel Club. Retrieved 4 February 2019.

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- [Cane Corso](#) at [Curlie](#)

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