

Thisa and Thata

Beauty Marks
by Norma Hansburg

Believe it or not, German Shepherds have Beauty Marks. Over the years, I have discovered three of them: one black, one white, and one gray. That in itself is interesting enough, but many legends have grown from them.

The first one I became aware of was during the 60s. It was a black spot on the tongue. Some people claimed that it was a mark of good luck. My personal belief was that it meant the dog carried the black recessive. It was very common among the progeny of CH Bernd V Kallengarten and his sons. Bernd did carry the black recessive as did many of his progeny.

The second mark of Beauty also came along in the 60s, but later. It was a diamond shape on the chest. It was called a Fortune mark since it came from CH Fortune of Arbywood. Fortune was a sable and that's why I call it a grey mark. Once again it was thought to be a sign of good fortune and was present on Lance of Fran Jo and many of his progeny. Once again, it appeared to indicate a certain color pattern.

The third and final mark I discovered much later, although it was probably around for years. It is a white spot under the chin. I believe that dogs with this mark do not carry the black recessive. It does seem to appear on the best dogs in a litter. Very often only one puppy will carry this mark. Once again, it is thought to be a sign of good luck. It appears on many of the west coast dogs. I have never been able to track it back to one particular dog.

So there we have them. The black spot on the tongue, common in the east. The fortune mark on the chest, common in the Midwest; and the white spot under the chin, common on the west coast. Three marks of Beauty for us to think about. Some dogs actually carry two of them but I have yet to see a dog with all three.

What do you think?