

The Why of Breed Club Membership

Courtney Goddard, Region Director (1)

I have been involved in the breed for a little over three years now. I joined the American Beauceron Club (ABC) before bringing a Beauceron into my home. You might be asking why I joined before even owning a Beauceron. I wanted to get my foot in the door and show the community that I was serious about adding one of these amazing dogs into my life. Although I owned purebred dogs, I had never been part of a breed club and wondered what it would be like to join.

Being part of a breed community is so much more than just joining a club of like-minded people. It's getting involved on a deeper, more meaningful level. A breed-specific club is not just a camaraderie based on ownership of a specific breed, but a "celebration of the breed" by enthusiasts, as Beauceron owner and breeder Craig McCracken said (*The Beauceron Bulletin*, Volume VI, Issue 2 [2004]).



2019 Westminster Meet the Breed (back row l-r): Courtney Goddard, Bubba Staroski, Eric Hensley, Jen Westrate, Elaine Giannelli, Karla Davis, Kara Staroski; (front row l-r) Sara Reid and Justin Bradley.

There are numerous
benefits to joining the ABC, or any breed club:

1. You are accepting and understanding the breed standard toward which all Beaucerons should be bred, exhibited, and judged;
2. You are encouraging ethical breeding of purebred Beaucerons who exemplify that standard and bring the natural qualities and abilities of the breed to the forefront;
3. You are an active participant in protecting and advancing the breed's best interests;
4. You are encouraging and participating in the events and promoting the abilities of the Beauceron through participation

- and sportsmanlike conduct;
5. You are supporting the ABC's Code of Ethics (COE);
 6. You are contributing to OFA, CERF, genetic research, breed rescue, and the health of the breed;
 7. And, perhaps most importantly, you have a voice, and, if you choose, an active role in protecting and promoting the Beauceron breed.

I wanted to be able to participate and contribute by going to ABC events, joining committees, etc. In my short time in the ABC, I have been to numerous events to represent the breed and club, such as Westminster's Meet the Breeds, assisted with the rescue raffle at the 2018 National Specialty, and I helped run an ABC sponsored herding trial. Wanting to get even more involved, I volunteered to chair the Ways and Means committee. In doing so, I gained hands-on experience with the 2019 and 2020 National Specialty events by creating welcome bags and finding souvenirs. As the chair, I also oversaw the creation and production of the 2020 ABC calendar. While that was a very involved and tedious project, I learned SO much! I got to know a lot of dogs and learn about their breeders, pedigrees, owners, and the great things they accomplished. I took my club involvement a step further and ran for the Region 1 Director to the ABC Board of Directors (BOD). Since joining the ABC, I have had more opportunities to work one-on-one with other club members and have gained a lot of new friendships. You open your world to new people and gain new friendships with whom you truly learn to appreciate the Beauceron breed.



2020 ABC Herding Trial Banner

By joining the ABC, you also gain the ability to advocate for the breed. Claire Roybal (Poissonnierz) wrote:

The ABC is the voice and representation of our breed in this country. In arranging Meet the Breed events and Judges Education seminars, this club determines how our breed is known and perceived in the United States. As ABC members, we are the guardians of our breed's reputation in a nation where some breeds have struggled with wrong perceptions. In our club, we have the ability to agree upon a code of ethics for owners and breeders. How shall we protect the health, temperament, and type of our breed? It's easy to talk about these things in online forums, but in the club we have the power to take these lofty ideas and make them so.

Claire Roybal Poissonnierz, The Beauceron Bulletin, Volume XVIII, Issue 1 (2015)

A breed club does so much more for the breed than non-members may realize. We have the ability to educate not only people interested in the breed or new owners, but judges too. From long-time Beauceron owner and ABC member, Elaine Giannelli, 'The club is responsible for writing and making any changes to the breed standard by which all AKC judges judge the breed. The ABC is responsible for the training of AKC judges through the club's judge's education program. They put on seminars and present the breed at judges' institutes.



Brenda Trojanowski at the 2018 National Specialty surrounded by rescue raffle items.

Additionally, ABC members get some tangible benefits too! The ability to submit photos for the annual club calendar, discounts on entries in the National Specialty and other supported events and gear, the bi-monthly club publication *The Beauceron Bulletin* (including all archived copies on the website), access to the club's website and all content. ABC members are also eligible to receive the club's Register of Merit and Versatility awards.



2020 ABC Member Calendar.

Keeping all of this in mind, why wouldn't you join the parent club for the Beauceron? We have the power to continue to encourage the responsible breeding of purebred dogs and preserve, and better, the Beauceron breed. When considering joining don't ask yourself, "What can the club do for me?" ask, "What can I do for the club." Although intangible, for the most part, being a member of the ABC provides so many benefits. It connects you with others who care about preserving the authentic Beauceron as well as bettering the breed through better health testing or genetic research. It allows you to contribute in minor such as participating in elections or voting on revisions to the COE, or in more significant ways such as volunteering your time, skills, knowledge, or expertise to assist the club. You should want to join because you want to do your part in bettering the breed. What begins as self-education about the Beauceron will evolve into public education. You start as a newcomer, and over time,

you become the elder who helps guide and mentors the next generation. It is through the power of the breed club's collective membership that we ensure the preservation of our beloved Beauceron.
