

The Country Gentleman (AKC Gazette)

For many past and present, to Beauceron authorities and fanciers, the words "Country Gentleman" have summed up the essence of the breed. Many have indeed noticed the strong and noble carriage of the Beauceron. Many have experienced the qualities, which earned him this epithet – his dignity, loyalty, work ethic and stoicism.

Today, I want to focus on a trait that may be disconcerting to some. I am alluding to the gentlemanly aloofness Beucerons can display. It has nothing to do with being timid and insecure, yet, it is often thought of as such.

A Beauceron is primarily a working dog. Being a shepherd, he focuses on his surroundings with an alert and watchful attitude. He will respond with great seriousness and dedication to what needs to be done out there. Drive, courage, steadiness and intelligence will come into play when a task is at hand. However, the same Beauceron can display a reserved demeanor and manifest a total lack of interest in being a social, outgoing dog. He will be polite, acknowledge the presence of a stranger with calm. He will accept with detachment or indifference the attention that comes from unknown parties, but it does not necessarily mean he enjoys the spotlight. In his mind, he has better things to do than to respond to the fuss lavished on him.

I have witnessed a visiting stranger jump out of a jeep, bend over a large Beauceron male that had come over to greet him, and slap him hard on both sides of his chest. This dog did not respond in an aggressive way, he simply took one hard look at the man, walked away a few steps and never let his eyes off this "rude human." The dog followed his every move closely, ever so watchful. Was he timid? No! He was vigilant, at the

ready, and he clearly showed he was not interested in such familiarity.

Beauceron owners are encouraged to socialize their dogs extensively. However, their dogs may still embarrass them by being aloof and seemingly antisocial. Some Beaucerons have been labeled timid because they object to being touched by strangers; some may get tense; others may recoil or turn their heads away. Who says that one has to pet dogs that you meet? There are many ways to interact with strange dogs of any breed without having to touch them and push yourself onto them.

The serious minded Beauceron is perfectly content to be a polite, civilized companion, accepting of total strangers, as long as he is treated like the gentleman he is.

The above was originally published in the AKC GAZETTE, June 2009, and is reprinted with permission. The author, Claudia Batson, is the AKC Gazette columnist for the American Beauceron Club.