



Australian Cobberdog History

The wonderful breed that we now know as the Australian Cobberdog was carefully developed over several decades by its founders Rutland Manor and Tegan Park Breeding and Research Centers in Australia. It cannot be emphasized enough that this is not a designer dog as some would call it; a “doodle” or even an “australian labradoodle”, a name that has been so mis-used and imitated by those who wish to capitalize on its success, nor is it a random combination of certain breeds chosen for their “looks”. Rather it was an investment of many years of several infusions carefully selected to achieve the characteristics of the dog that are so sought after today.

Beverley Manners, Founder of Rutland Manor Breeding Facility, herself has provided an informative insight into the early days of the Australian labradoodle and its development, all of which led to the creation of the Australian Cobberdog, a pure breed in development. By giving the reader a better understanding of the breed’s history, the hope is that many of the common misconceptions and confusion surrounding the name “Australian Labradoodle” till the creation of the Australian Cobberdog and its authenticity will be cleared up and the truth will be told.

Following is a brief synopsis of developments that took place and the reasons certain infusions were done, to create the breed that is so loved today. In the beginning, the original crossing of a Labrador Retriever and Standard Poodle carried out by the Guide Dog Center in Melbourne Australia produced inconsistent litter, with one puppy that was allergy friendly with a shedding flat coat. To continue breeding Lab to Poodle, or to breed with offspring derived from two breeds would soon result in a restricted gene pool and unavoidable health problems, so the idea to infuse another pure breed into the breeding program came to light as a way to both solve some of these health issues as well as expand the lines and thus the gene pool. The first infusion was a non shedding Irish Water Spaniel, a very carefully selected, imported field champion Irish Water Spaniel sire. Subsequently, a female of a different bloodline was added into the lines for additional line diversity. The popularity of the Australian Labradoodle has suffered as previous breeds have before it, by indiscriminate breeding carried out by people whose sole interest is cashing in on its popularity and not to remain true to the integrity of the breed according to the Founders’ vision.

Unfortunately there are many breeders who routinely advertise ‘Australian Labradoodles’ or “Multi Gen labradoodles” yet they are often no more than a poodle mix or their lines can be termed at best, questionable with none or very little of the original Rutland Manor/Tegan Park lineage. This led to all sorts of problems; labradoodles that have massive shedding issues; inconsistency in temperaments and conformation, and the worst, health issues.

Breeding for soundness (form to function), temperament and coat were important goals, not to be taken lightly. Each infusion was carefully selected to contribute to the soundness of the breed and produce the characteristics they are known for today, which is why the lineage is so important. Starting with a lab/poodle mix, then adding the Irish Water Spaniel, miniature Poodle, American Cocker Spaniel, pure bred English Cocker Spaniel, and finally the Soft Coated Wheaten from Champion lines, were all done over decades to pursue the ideal soundness, conformation, temperament and coat so sought after. These were not fly by night decisions made with the only thought of catering to the demands of a public that wanted a “cute” dog; but rather decisions made with the uppermost goal of perfecting the breed and maintaining breed integrity. Any claims that Rutland Manor infused other breeds, including cross breeds such as the Cockapoo are without foundation and completely untrue.

Today, the Australian Cobberdog is the culmination of many, many years of careful breeding and development of a dog that is so cherished around the world, yet so imitated. Please visit the Australian and International Australian Cobberdog Club and MDBA websites for further details, history and more on what is being done to promote and protect this incredible breed that is here to stay!

