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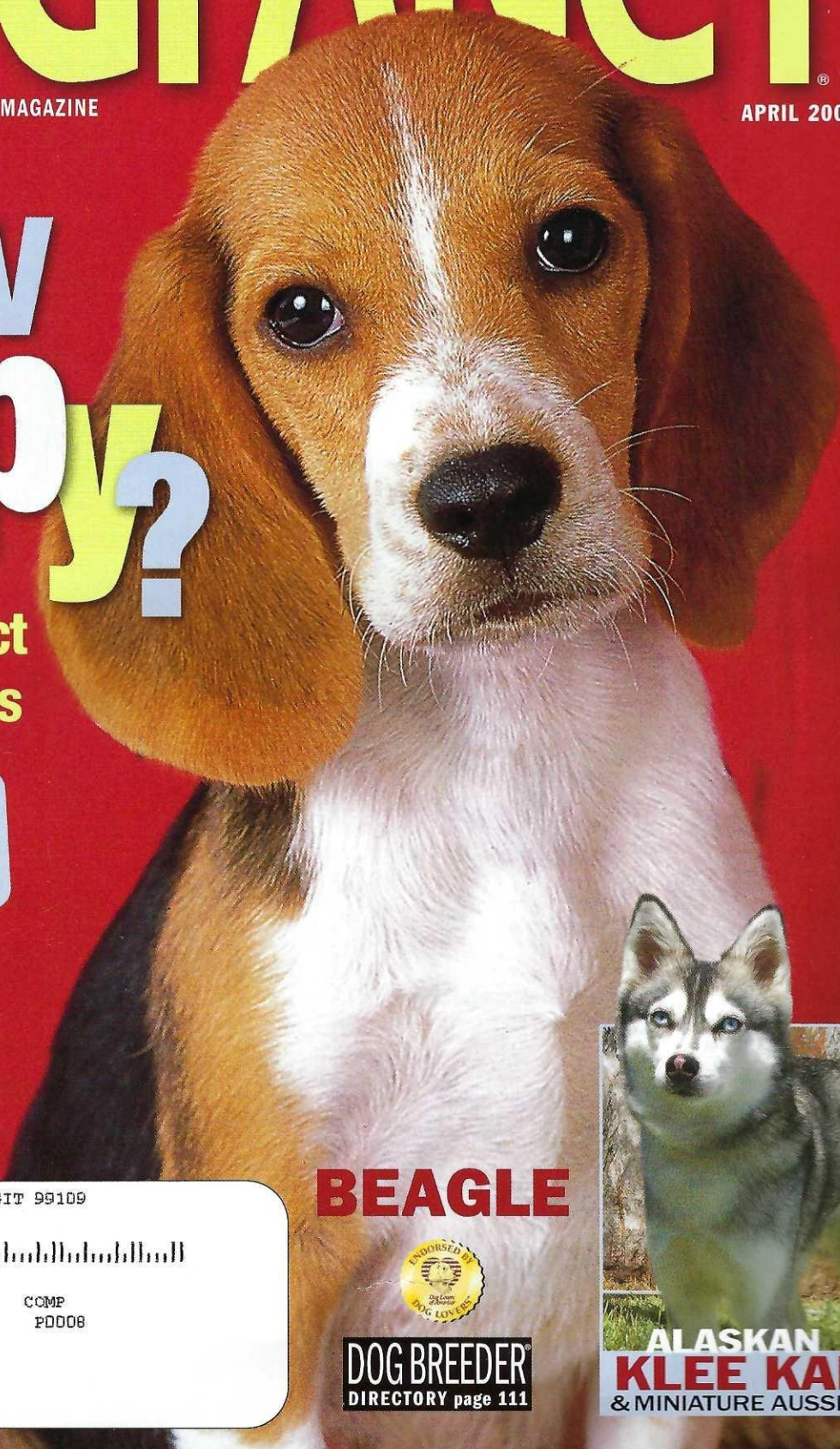
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ALASKAN KLEE KAI
& MINIATURE AUSSIE

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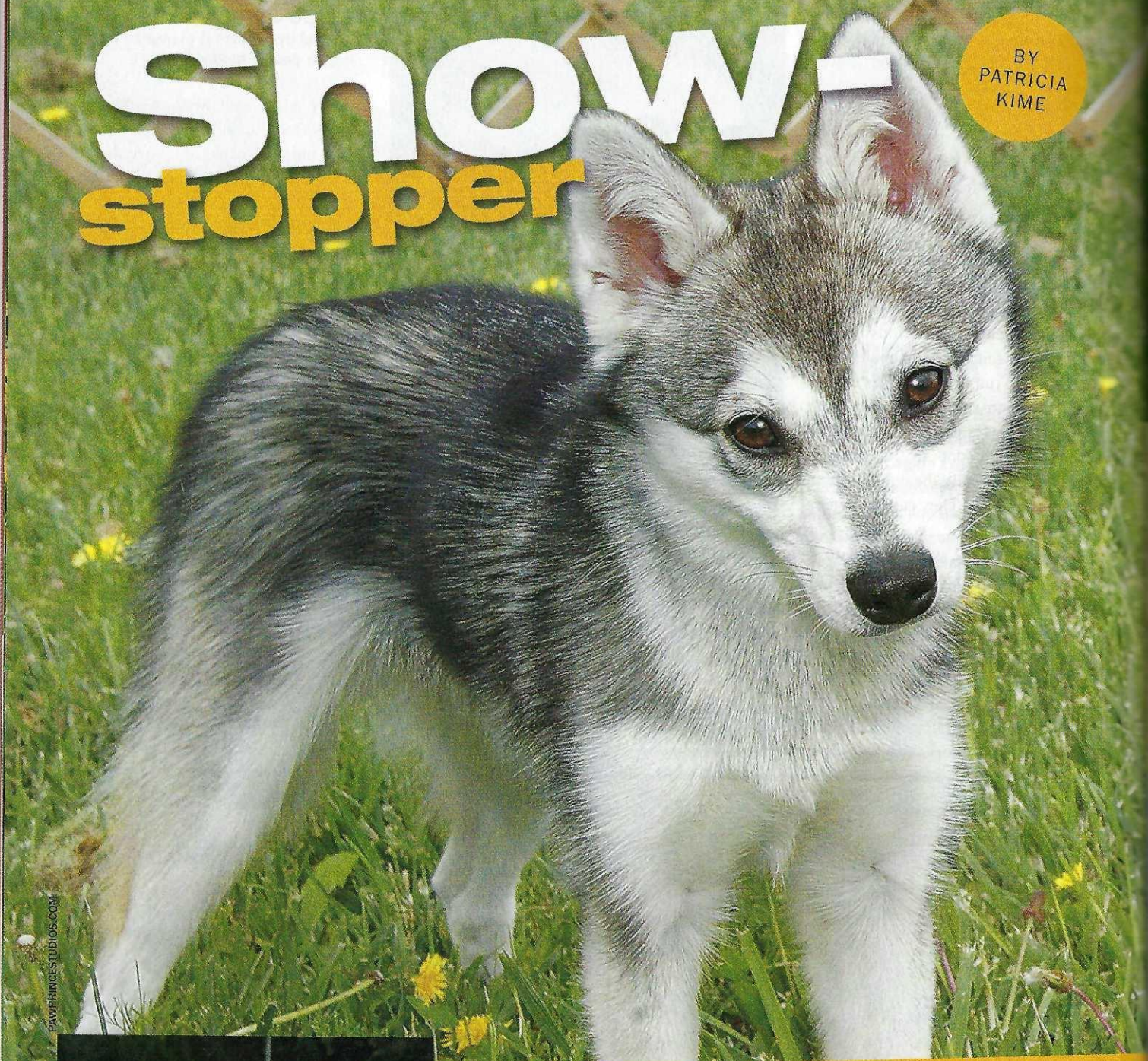


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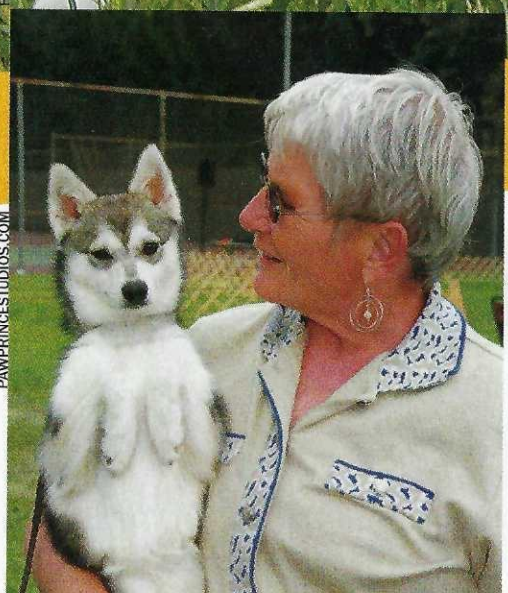
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Show- stopper

BY
PATRICIA
KIME



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Small in size yet big in personality, the **Alaskan Klee Kai** turns heads wherever he goes.

It's rarely quiet in Lo Binkley's Thousand Oaks, Calif., ranch house. With three Alaskan Klee Kai in the family, Binkley's home often resonates with a soft, persistent nattering. Her dogs like to make their presence known — to each other, their owner, the mail carrier, or anyone who will listen.

"When someone is coming down the road, I sometimes can tell who it is — the dogs have different vocalizations for different people," Binkley says of Mac, 7,

Mali, 4, and Ruby, 2.

Mac used his vocal skills a few years ago when Binkley forgot to turn the water off while filling her hot tub. Sensing something amiss, Mac stared at his owner and began a soliloquy of yips, murmurs, and barks. "He wanted to tell me something, and he did," she says.

Yet Alaskan Klee Kai, or AKKs, don't need to vocalize to get noticed. With the appearance of a small Siberian or Alaskan Husky that looks puppyish even in old

BREEDPROFILE

Alaskan Klee Kai

Country of origin: United States.

Original use: Companion.

Group: Northern Breed (UKC); Spitz Group (ARBA).

Life span: 12 to 14 years.

Color: Black and white, gray and white, red and white. All have a distinct, symmetrical facial mask.

Coat: Double coat, with soft dense undercoat and thick, longer outer coat.

Grooming: Brush weekly, more often during twice-yearly shed.

Height/weight: Toy, up to 13 inches; Miniature, 13 to 15 inches; Standard, 15 to 17 inches. Weight, 8 to 22 pounds.

Personality: Perky, alert, curious, and active.

Trainability: Moderate.

Activity level: Moderate.

Known health problems: Luxating patellas (slipping kneecaps), cryptorchid (undescended testicle), liver disease, hypothyroidism, Factor VII deficiency (blood-clotting disorder).

Good with children? Yes, when properly socialized at a young age.

Good with other pets? Yes, when properly socialized at a young age.

National breed clubs:

■ Alaskan Klee Kai Association of America, Lo Binkley, president; 805-379-0770 or 805-279-0771;

lobink@roadrunner.com or Sharon Hari, membership secretary; 714-846-6886; kayron111@aol.com; <http://akkaoa.org>

■ United Alaskan Klee Kai Association, Barbara Williams, president; 210-391-1032; barbara@uakka.com; www.uakka.com

Rescues:

■ Alaskan Klee Kai Association of America Rescue League, Lanie McWilliams; akkinks@aol.com; <http://akkaoa.org/rescue.html>

■ Precious Paws Alaskan Klee Kai Rescue; rescue@uakka.com

More info:

www.dogchannel.com/kleekai



COURTESY, JIM WRIGHT

ASK THE BREEDER

■ What types of medical tests do you do on the parents and the puppies? Have you checked for Factor VII clotting disorder in the puppies and hypothyroidism in their family lines?

■ Do you have your dogs' lineage? With such a rare breed, responsible breeders will know their animals' lineage and have a rough idea of their medical backgrounds.

■ What have you done to socialize the puppies?

■ Can you recommend ways to continue socializing my Alaskan Klee Kai and encourage him to be comfortable around new people?

■ What advice do you have for integrating an Alaskan Klee Kai into the household?

The Alaskan Klee Kai is loved by those who admire his intelligence and delight in his cheerful disposition.

AKK attracts people who like the Husky look but can't handle the dog's size. AKKs also are favored by apartment-dwellers and those with smaller houses.

Binkley, a lifelong Husky devotee, adopted Mac after hearing about the AKK. "I knew I never wanted another dog besides a Husky, but I was getting old and needed something more trans-


portable," Binkley says.

Like their ancestors, AKKs are fast learners. "They train quickly, but I haven't figured out how to train the bad habits out of them," laughs Carol Din of Martinsburg, W. Va., who owns eight. "And when you tell them 'no,' they'll talk back. Oh, they sass you."

Still, they make up for their impertinence with devotion. AKKs often follow their human companions from room to room, shower them with unconditional love, and act as watchdogs. "They'll let you know when someone's coming, but then they'll stand behind you," Din says. "They're not exactly good protection dogs."

Because the breed is new, medical issues are just now emerging. "Medical testing is important to assure a better future for the breed," says Spurlin, who continues to advise the Klee Kai Association but no longer breeds.

Despite the breed's heavy shedding periods and desire to run, Din and other AKK owners like sharing their lives and conversations with this perky, chatty little breed.

"It's like living with toddlers," Din says. "They are perennially in their terrible twos, and it's delightful." 

Patricia Kime is a freelance writer who lives in Arlington, Va.

age, this rare breed's distinctive face markings, contrasting coloring, and petite stature make it a showstopper in and out of the show ring.

"People always ask me what type of dog this is," says Binkley, president of the Alaskan Klee Kai Association of America. "They delight everyone. At an expo or a show, you always know when the Klee Kai are there — it's the crowd in the corner."

The AKK, whose name is translated from an Alaskan phrase meaning "small dog," was developed in the 1970s and early '80s by hobbyist and current Chewelah, Wash., resident Linda Spurlin. While living in Wasilla, Alaska, she fell for Curious, a friend's pint-sized Alaskan Husky-mix. She adopted the Husky look-alike, then tried to duplicate her looks and spirited demeanor. "She was just perfect," Spurlin says.

Mating Curious with other dogs owned by family members, Spurlin combined the appearance of the Siberian and Alaskan Huskies with the petite stature of the Schipperke and American Eskimo Dog. When Eileen Gregory, an acquaintance in Peyton, Colo., saw the dogs, she convinced Spurlin to share her knowledge. Within a few years, Spurlin and Gregory developed a breed standard, and the AKK was born.

Recognized by the American Rare Breed Association and the United Kennel Club, the

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