Dachshund Colors & Patterns

Color

The color of a dog is determined by their genetic makeup of what pigments are expressed. There are only two basic pigments that determine color—black & red. White hair is when no pigment is produced. All the variations of color are created by genes that can modify them and change the depth of color.

The base (self) colors that are mentioned in the Dachshund Club of America (DCA) "Standard" are: Red, Cream, Black & tan, Chocolate & tan, Wild Boar, Gray (Blue) and Fawn (Isabella).

The following is a simplified chart of how the base colors of Red and Black & Tan are carried in dachshunds. These are the most common colors in Smooth & Longhair Dachshunds. Some Red dogs can only produce the color Red (homozygous) and some Red dogs carry the recessive Black & Tan gene (heterozygous). These are the color possibilities when bred together:

Parent	Red - Homozygous (RR)	Red – Carries B&T (Rb)	Black & Tan (bb)
Red – Homozygous (RR)	**Red** (RR)	**Red** (RR or Rb)	**Red** (Rb)
Red – Carries B&T (Rb)	**Red** (RR or Rb)	**Red** or **Black & Tan** (RR, Rb or bb)	**Red** or **Black & Tan** (Rb or bb)
Black & Tan (bb)	**Red** (Rb)	**Red** or **Black & Tan** (Rb or bb)	**Black & Tan** (bb)

Note: The colors Gray (Blue) & Fawn (Isabella) mentioned in the Standard are both dilutes of Black & Chocolate, respectively. These dilutes may also be associated with health issues, such as thin coats, skin sensitivity, vaccine failures and reduced lifespan.

Red Standard Longhair

Black & Tan Standard Smooth

Red Miniature Wirehair

Chocolate & Tan Miniature Smooth

Dachshund Colors & Patterns, continued

Patterns

Black & Tan Dapple
Miniature Longhair

Chocolate & Tan Dapple
Miniature Smooth

Dapple – As with other patterns, the base color is listed first. Often a Black & Tan Dapple is mistakenly referred to as a 'Silver' Dapple. Red Dapples exist but can be difficult to identify- sometimes you may only tell at birth whether a Red carries the Dapple gene as the dappling on a Red may quickly fade visually.

This is extremely important for those breeders who breed Dachshunds with the Dapple gene, as breeding two dogs that both carry Dapples can result in *"Double Dapples"* which:

- *Are more likely to have health issues such as deafness, reduced eye size, or missing eyes*
- *Are usually marked asymmetrically*
- *Have large areas of white (esp. feet, belly & sides)*
- *Never have ticking*

Most breeders only breed dapples to Black & Tan (or Chocolate & Tan) to avoid the possibility of misidentifying a Red Dapple that may be doubled up on accidentally. Dapples may have whole or partially blue eyes and a large area of white on the chest is acceptable.

Piebald – This pattern is white spotting over the dog's base(self) color and:

- Never have blue eye(s) or eye ticking
- Typically have symmetrical markings on the head (with or without a white blaze)
- Have a white tipped tail
- May have ticking (freckling)

Piebald Miniature
Smooth and
Longhair

Disqualifications in the Piebald pattern:

- *Blue eye(s)*
- *More than 50% white on head*
- *White on any part of the ears/around the eyes*
- *A pure white body (with no color anywhere else on body except the head)*

Piebald showing
symmetrical markings

Dachshund Colors & Patterns, continued

Wild Boar - Although Wild Boar is referred to as a color in the DCA breed standard, it's more likely a pattern in Dachshunds, seen most typically in Wirehaired Dachshunds (and sometimes in Smooths). It appears as a banding of individual hairs with the base (self) color closest to the skin. The banding gives the impression of an overall grizzled effect.

Wild Boar
Standard Wirehairs

Sable Miniature Longhair

Sable – Like Wild Boar, Sables have banded color hairs with the base color (self) closest to the skin. Sables are thought to share the same gene as the Wild Boars. Red Longhairs with a dark overlay are often mistaken as Sable. Sables can look similar to a black & tan and usually have a "widow's peak" on their head. A true Sable must have a Sable parent and the individual hairs will be banded with two colors.

Brindle – The pattern appears as darker stripes over the base color. At least one parent must be Brindle to produce this pattern.

Brindle Miniature Smooth

DNA testing can be helpful in identifying a dog's color or pattern, especially when being used for breeding purposes.

Sources:

- ***An Explanation of Colors and Patterns in Dachshunds*** *by Sandy Russell*
- ***Genetics Basics – Coat Color Genetics in Dogs*** *by Lynne Buzhardt, DVM*
- ***Inheritance of Coat Color in Dogs*** *by Clarence C. Little, Sc.D. (1988)*