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The Appenzeller Sennenhund - a rarity

The Appenzeller Sennenhund with his Ringelschwanz (bushy tail that goes full circle) is one of the oldest breeds - yet his existence is now threatened.

For the last 500 years the Bläss (so called after his facial markings) has herded cows in the Appenzell hill country, but pure bred animals have become quite rare. The breed was first described in 1853, as "medium sized, short hair, multicoloured farmer's dog with a high pitched bark". 1898 the Appenzeller Sennenhund was registered as an independent breed, and the first breed standard was formulated, but shortly afterwards the breed went into decline and became endangered. A Club was formed with the aim to keep the breed alive; the Ringelschwanz became the official mark. In the 21st century, the breed is threatened again. The Appenzeller Sennenhund has lost his job: Farmers don't need him anymore, with electrified fences, and many cows living "indoors", in cow sheds .The highly intelligent Appenzeller Sennenhund can be trained as avalanche and tracking dog after earthquakes and other disasters. He can be a family dog and a watchdog. Typical for the breed is his highly developed ability to interpret the body language of his master. He is definitely an outdoors dog and loves to work. If he gets bored, he invents his own jobs, not always to the joy of his owners. He needs a strong hand..

The Foundation Pro Specie Rara tried to intervene and save the breed, but has given up. They tried to give away ten pure bred breeding dogs, but found only homes for two.

The Appenzeller Sennenhund is unknown in New Zealand. The huntaways and border collies are much gentler breeds and just as intelligent. And while I remember taking a detour of one hour to avoid an especially vicious Appenzeller Sennenhund in the Fricktal I know a New Zealand huntaway and two border collies not even I am afraid of.

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Mulled Wine

(Trudi's Wellington Swiss Club recipe)

9 l water and 25 teabags
5 happy (organic) lemons, finely sliced
50 cloves
20 cinnamon sticks
2 teaspoons ground nutmeg
1½ kg brown sugar

Bring to the boil and simmer for about 10 minutes, add sugar and stir to make sure it dissolves. Let the mix mature. About 1 hour before you want to serve the mulled wine, add 9 l sweet red wine and heat gently, do not boil, taste and taste again to find out whether it needs more sugar, lemon, cloves, taste again.

Should serve about 90; if you see that you might run out, add more water and/or wine, preferably without being seen.

Save the cinnamon sticks, not for your next mulled wine, but for a woven wall-hanging.

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