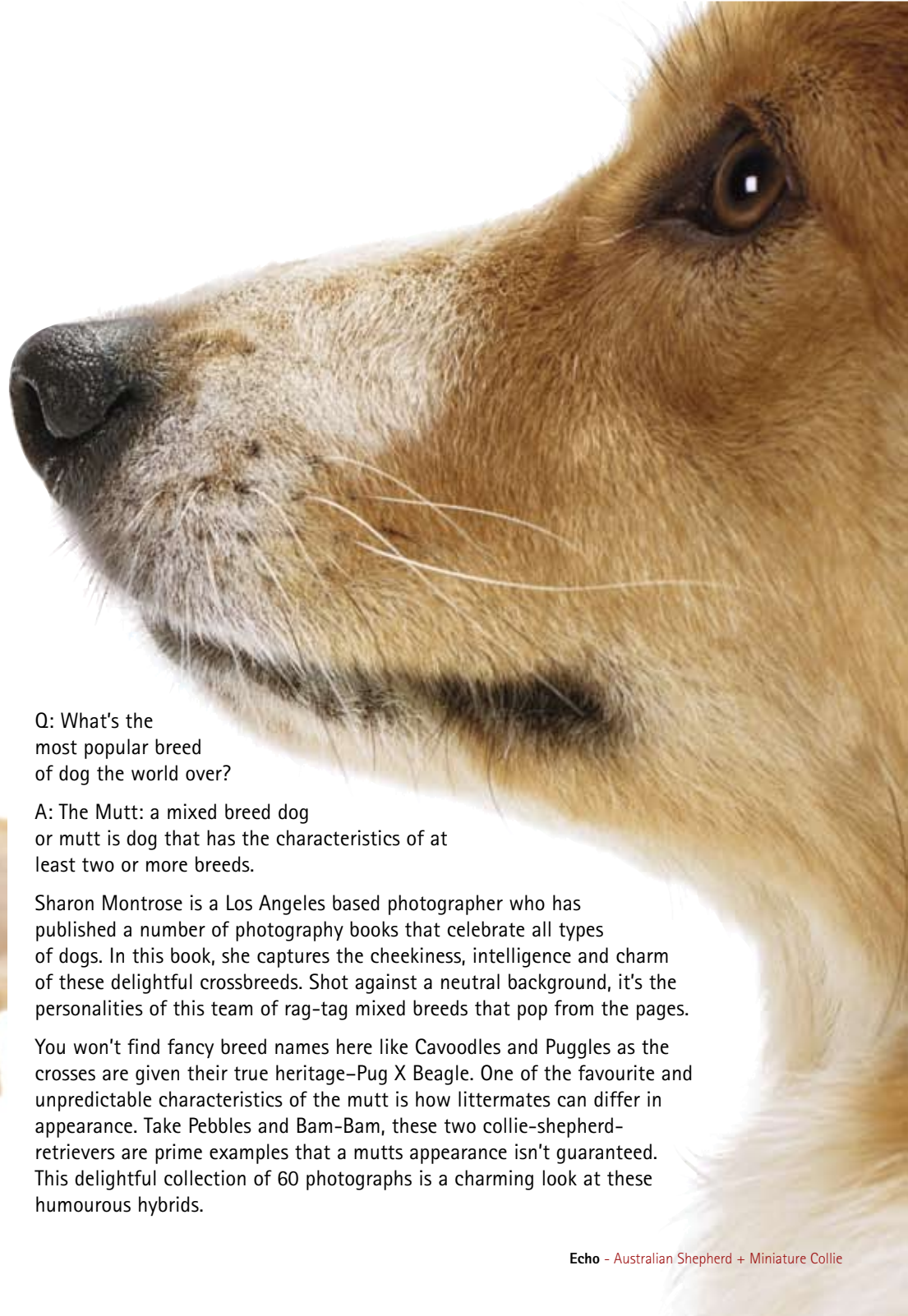


Mutts!

Photographer Sharon Montrose



Bailey - Labradore + Collie



Echo - Australian Shepherd + Miniature Collie

Q: What's the most popular breed of dog the world over?

A: The Mutt: a mixed breed dog or mutt is dog that has the characteristics of at least two or more breeds.

Sharon Montrose is a Los Angeles based photographer who has published a number of photography books that celebrate all types of dogs. In this book, she captures the cheekiness, intelligence and charm of these delightful crossbreeds. Shot against a neutral background, it's the personalities of this team of rag-tag mixed breeds that pop from the pages.

You won't find fancy breed names here like Cavoodles and Puggles as the crosses are given their true heritage—Pug X Beagle. One of the favourite and unpredictable characteristics of the mutt is how littermates can differ in appearance. Take Pebbles and Bam-Bam, these two collie-shepherd-retrievers are prime examples that a mutts appearance isn't guaranteed. This delightful collection of 60 photographs is a charming look at these humorous hybrids.

I'm often asked: why dogs? – Artist Statement

Dogs don't have any hang-ups. They don't feel fat; they don't hold grudges. In fact, most dogs are content to drink water from a muddy puddle and get their requisite fourteen hours of sleep a day. Though I think I'd find it hard to adjust to grit in my water, I could definitely get used to that much sleep.

It's not so much that I can think like a dog, or imagine what it's like to be a dog; it's more that I can see what makes each dog unique. Whether it's the way a lab/husky mix tilts his head and lolls his tongue, or how a boxer mix curls her lip and shows me her underbite and snaggletooth, dogs have a knack for revealing their hidden charms to me when I'm framing up a shot.

So, why mutts?

Of course, I love my own mutt, Avery, but to say that she was the inspiration for Mutts wouldn't be entirely accurate. Several years ago I had a commercial job that required not just purebred, but champion pedigrees. It was really a sight to behold: each dog arrived with one or two handlers and a groomer. At times, you'd have thought I was taking photos of supermodels and couture fashion lines. These dogs are beautiful—literally best of the best: the silkiest coats, perfect body to leg ratios, and the stack poses! These noble beasts stand as if they're posing for a sculptor—in fact, at a glance you might think the dogs themselves were the sculptures.

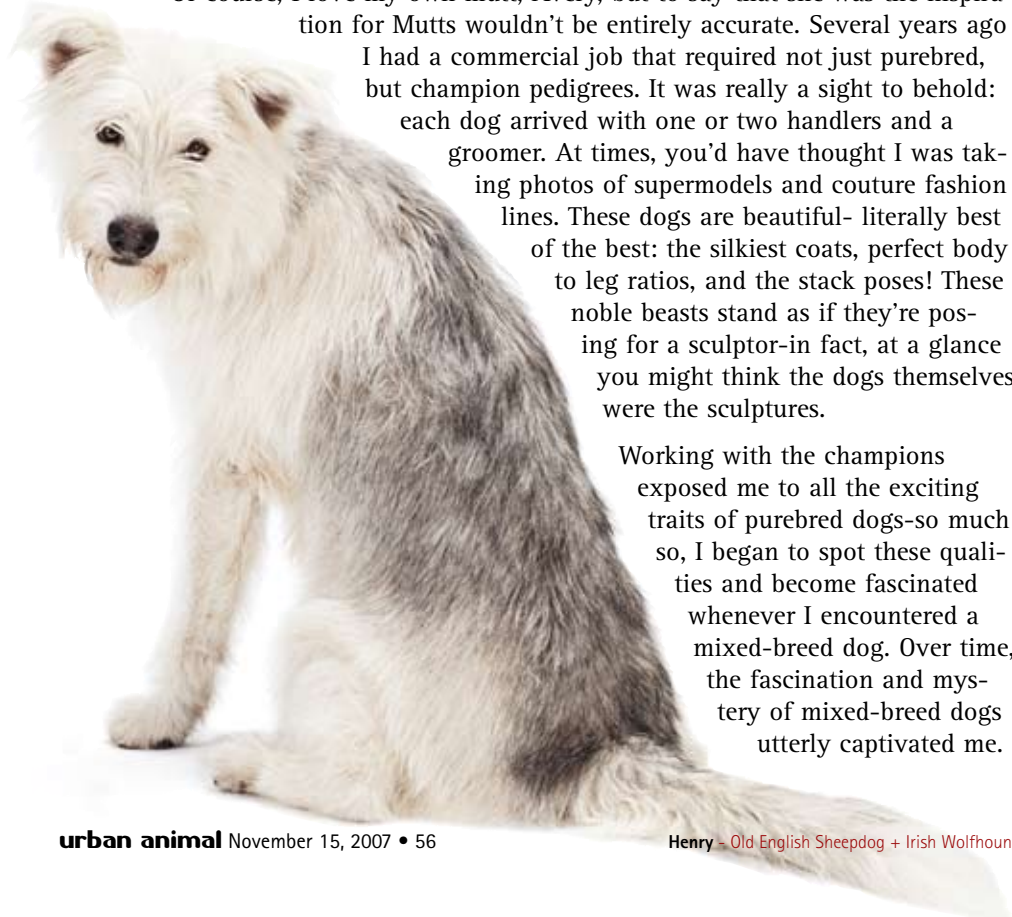
Working with the champions exposed me to all the exciting traits of purebred dogs—so much so, I began to spot these qualities and become fascinated whenever I encountered a mixed-breed dog. Over time, the fascination and mystery of mixed-breed dogs utterly captivated me.

As I began to document and take photos of these genetic wonders it dawned on me that no two mutts are identical, even siblings from the same litter.

And it became clear that the mystery of the mix is half the fun. A majority of the mutts featured in Mutts are rescue dogs, and as such many of their owners don't know the exact combination of breeds that resulted in their special mutt. A smile inevitably creeps across the face of a mutt owner when you ask him what kind of dog it is. I can't say how many times I've heard, "Well, we've been told that Rascal is a border collie/whippet, but we think...." Even me, if I was asked, "What kind of dog is Avery?" I'd be smiling ear-to-ear when I answered she's an Italian Greyhound/Shar-pei/English Bulldog!

As this collection of images grew, I began to understand my enthrallment with mutts: they are the best teachers. Often abandoned, their spirits remain high; they are boundlessly loyal, and they live entirely in the moment. When I look at these images I can't help but feel that the face looking back at me is inspiring me to be a better human being.

For me, mutts represent the pinnacle of individualism, and dogs embody everything to which I aspire—that is the spirit of Mutts.



Henry - Old English Sheepdog + Irish Wolfhound



Bugz - Bearded Collie + Terrier



Hailey - Poodle + Labrador



Rupert - Poodle + Labrador



For more information about Sharon Montrose, please visit www.sharonmontrose.com



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Jasper - Briard + Siberian Husky