

lived with, bred, and successfully shown Brussels Griffons for many years. The essence of the breed cannot be experienced by meeting only one or two specimens, as each are unique individuals with very different personalities that figure into but cannot define the essence of the Brussels Griffon. Variations exist as well between rough- and smooth-coat, generally (or jokingly) explained by those of us who've lived with both in saying the smooth is *more*—more sensitive, more observant, more vindictive, and more self-important.

And there are misconceptions. Just because they have a terrierlike coat does not mean they have a terrierlike personality. Just because they are a small breed does not mean they are “yappy.” To be able to articulate the essence of a breed takes a concerted effort to talk to breeders, meet their dogs, and ask the right questions.

—Anne K. Catterson,
annecatt@gmail.com

American Brussels Griffon
Association, brussels-griffon.info

Cavalier King Charles Spaniels

Size, Substance, and Proportion in the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

While watching breed judging the other day with several friends, the subject arose of the size of the specimens being shown. Questions concerned the disparity in size as well as a statement that “Some Cavaliers seem to be getting a little big.” I thought it worthwhile to address the breed standard as it pertains to size, proportion, and substance.

The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel is a toy dog whose height is measured at the withers; the point at the base of the neck and between the shoulders is 12 to 13 inches. A dog of this height should weigh

between 13 and 18 pounds to be well proportioned.

The standard also states that “a small, well balanced dog within these weights is desirable” but that “these are ideal heights and weights, and slight variations are permissible.”

Important operating terms are *ideal* and *slight*, and while the standard addresses a smaller dog, no mention is made of larger specimens. The 12 to 13 inches and 13 to 18 pounds is a pretty large variation in a toy dog.

One can't discuss size without also addressing substance and proportion. The sizes and weights specified in the standard require a specimen of good bone and substance. Good bone is a very important characteristic for the Cavalier. Cavaliers are not to be weedy, frail, or slight in structure. We strive for good bone. Yet in saying this, it would suggest that dogs at the upper end or above the stated height might weigh in excess of the standard, perhaps 20 pounds; that's a big Cavalier.

Even at that, the standard allows variations in height and weight in order that correct type should prevail over adherence to precise measurements. A small dog of good substance and bone should “feel” large to the examiner.

The body approaches squareness, but that doesn't mean we desire a square or cobby dog. When measured from point of shoulder to point of buttock, a Cavalier is slightly longer than the height at the withers, and height from the withers to the elbow is approximately equal to the height from the elbow to the ground. It is important to keep these height and length proportions in context with the withers-to-elbow/elbow-to-ground proportions, as ignoring this can lead to all forms of imbalance.

As breeders we strive for the ideal and do our best to achieve this goal.

As judges we should strive to reward breeding stock that best exemplifies this ideal.

—Dr. John V. Ioia, MD, Ph.D.,
bonefixr@gmail.com

American Cavalier King Charles
Spaniel Club, ackcsc.org

Chihuahuas

Choosing a Performance Chihuahua

Conformation, obedience, agility, and rally are wonderful events for participation with the Chihuahua. These dogs are trainable and driven to please their owners, making them fun teammates in the ring.

What makes them such good candidates for performance? First, they don't even know they are the smallest of all dogs. There is no obstacle they won't attempt when lovingly exposed to it by the one they adore. They are extremely intelligent and use their large brains to “reason,” making them easily trainable. Second, these little dogs are extremely agile and healthy. Quality breeders have done all the hard work in breeding a mentally and physically healthy dog with a strong, sound body. When bred well, these little dogs can perform as well as any big dog.

The fabulous “Iron Dog Izzy” is just such a dog. WynJyn Isadora (Izzy) and her owner Kelley Trombley competed in the Vermont Iron Dog Challenge along with the Rottweilers from the Working Group, German Shepherds from the Herding Group, and many other large-breed dogs. This little five-pound dog didn't blink an eye when she was asked to go through some of the toughest challenges for any dog. She is the first Iron Dog Chihuahua.

Izzy continues to perform and is currently competing in agility competition and will attend the AKC National Agility trials in the future.

When choosing your performance

dog, make sure you do your homework. Be sure you are getting a *quality* dog. There are many people out there boasting about their dogs, so beware. Go to events and look at the dogs. Talk to their handlers and ask where they got their dog and if they are happy with their choice.

Look for certain attributes when choosing your puppy. Watch them move and play. Do they gait well, do they seem to want to “problem-solve,” and are they happy with new places and things? I personally look for the explorer of the litter. Do they take off to explore their surrounding without fear? How quickly do they bounce back after a scare? Are they curious and confident? These are all things to consider when choosing a performance dog.

Let’s not forget about those cute little trick dogs we see in the movies. These little dogs are quite happy to “play” tricks. They love dancing, jumping, playing dead, and any other thing their beloved owner wants to try with them. They are so happy to give you what you want just because they love you. I’ve never seen any other breed that is so devoted to their owner and so willing to please them.

So if you have the desire to bond with your dog more, the performance ring is something to consider. Both dog and owner will benefit from the devotion and dedication required between both man and animal.

—Virginia (Jenny) Hauber,
wynjynchis@yahoo.com

Chihuahua Club of America, chihuahuaclubofamerica.com

Chinese Cresteds

Questions to Ask

A lot has been written lately about what potential puppy-buyers should expect from a breeder and what questions they should ask before they buy. This is certainly a

good thing, and informed buyers are more likely to be happier dog owners. However, there are also things that a breeder should expect from potential owners, and questions that they should ask, too.

It’s important to know about the puppy’s (or even older dog’s) prospective living environment. How many people live in the house? How many are under the age of three? Are there any people in the household with special needs? This could include elderly people or people with health issues or mental illness. Not that all of these things would mean not placing a dog there, but not every dog can cope with every issue.

How many hours a day is the house empty? Do work schedules mean that the dog will be alone for long hours? How much time do the humans have for socializing, training, and just playing?

Are there other dogs in the house? If so, what are their ages? Size? Breed? Placing a Crested puppy in a home with a very large, dominant dog could easily spell disaster. Likewise, a very old, infirm dog would probably not appreciate a lively puppy invading his space.

How about other pets? Cats? These are probably OK with Cresteds. Birds? Maybe not. We had one disaster with a Crested who “played too hard” with a beloved parrot, and the result was heart-breaking for the owners. Common sense goes a long way here.

What about a fenced yard? It’s maybe not a necessity, but how will the new owners handle “going outside”? It is essential that a Crested be a housedog; he simply cannot be an “outside dog.” Letting him go out on his own using a doggie-door can be dangerous, since predators are everywhere and an unsupervised dog is just a snack. Coyotes are in the cities. Owls and hawks are common. Even bears can be found in

populated areas, often attracted by garbage cans. As civilization encroaches on the wilderness, the animals that used to find their food there must now forage in cities and suburban areas in order to survive. This means that pet owners must be ever vigilant in order to keep their animals safe.

While it is a sensitive issue, it is important to be sure that a prospective owner will be able to afford to care for their dog. High-quality food is expensive. Routine health care costs are high. What if the dog gets sick? A red flag goes up for me anytime someone asks me to lower the price that I’m asking for a dog. The initial price of a dog is insignificant compared to what is spent over the lifetime for its care.

A contract with someone who buys a dog is essential, but in truth, once they go out the door, the conditions are very difficult to enforce. There must be trust on both sides. If I can’t feel confident that my dog will get the same quality of care with a new owner as he would with me, then I just can’t sell him.

And, of course, there are those who ask whether I make a lot of money selling puppies. (These folks would *never* get an intact dog from me. Probably not any dog.) As we all know, this is such a funny joke. Nobody who does it right can even break even, right?

—Sue Klinckhardt-Gardner,
Tamoshire@Qnet.com

American Chinese Crested Club,
acc.chinesecrestedclub.info

Havanese

The following was written by
Joan Ambrose.

Havanese Coat

At judges’ education presentations, there are often questions about Havanese coat. Some want to know, “What type of coat is preferred?”