

The Breed of the Month is...

Boston Terrier



Overview

The Boston Terrier is a breed of dog originating in the United States of America. This "American Gentleman" was accepted in 1893 by the American Kennel Club as a non-sporting breed. Color and markings are important when distinguishing this breed to the AKC standard. They should be either black, brindle or seal with white markings. Bostons are small and compact with a short tail and erect ears. The AKC says they are highly intelligent and very easily trained. They are friendly but can be stubborn at times. The average life span of a Boston is around 11 to 13 years, though some can live well into their teens. The breed is commonly referred to as the "American Gentleman."

History

The Boston Terrier breed originated around 1870, when Robert C. Hooper of Boston, purchased a dog, "Judge", from Edward Burnett known later as "Hooper's Judge", who was of a Bull and Terrier type lineage. "Hooper's Judge" is either directly related to the original Bull and Terrier breeds of the 18th and early 19th centuries, or "Judge" is the result of modern English Bulldogs being crossed into terriers



created in the 1860s for show purposes, like the White English Terrier.

Originally the “Judges” Bostons were weighted up to 44 pounds. The offspring interbred with one or more French Bulldogs, providing the foundation for the Boston Terrier. The breed was first shown in Boston in 1870. By 1889 the breed had become sufficiently popular in Boston that fanciers formed the American Bull Terrier Club, the breed's nickname, "roundheads". Shortly after, at the suggestion of James Watson (a noted writer and authority), the club changed its name to the Boston Terrier Club and in 1893 it was admitted to membership in the American Kennel Club, thus making it the first US breed to be recognized. It is one of a small number of breeds to have originated in the United States. The Boston Terrier was the first non-sporting dog bred in the US.

In the early years, the color and markings were not very important, but by the 20th century the breed's distinctive markings and color were written into the standard, becoming an essential feature. Terrier only in name, the Boston Terrier has lost most of its ruthless desire for mayhem, preferring the company of humans, although some males will still challenge other dogs if they feel their territory is being invaded. Boston University's mascot is Rhett the Boston Terrier. The Boston Terrier is also the mascot of Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C.



Personality

The Boston Terrier is a gentle breed that typically has a happy-go-lucky and friendly personality. Bostons are generally eager to please their owner and can easily be trained given a patient owner. They are also very protective of their owners which can result in aggressive and territorial behavior toward other pets and strangers.

While originally bred for fighting as well as hunting rats in garment factories, they were later down bred for companionship. The modern Boston Terrier can be gentle, alert, expressive, creative, and well-mannered. However, they are not considered terriers by the American Kennel Club, but are part of the non-sporting group.

Both females and males are generally quiet and bark only when necessary. Their usually sensible attitude towards barking makes them excellent choices for apartment dwellers. Having been bred as a companion dog, they enjoy being around people, and if properly socialized, get along well with children, the elderly, other canines, and non-canine pets.



Traits

Boston Terriers are compactly built, well-proportioned with erect ears, short tails and a short muzzle that is generally free of wrinkles. According to international breed standard, the dog should weigh no less than 10 pounds and no more than 25 pounds. Boston Terriers usually stand 15-17 inches at the withers. The Boston Terrier is characteristically marked with white in proportion to either black, brindle, seal, or a combination of the three. However, there are also liver, brown, cream or red and white Boston Terriers, although these colors are not considered desirable by the American Kennel Club.

Health Concerns



Health issues are of concern in the Boston Terrier: cataracts (both juvenile and adult type), luxating patellas, deafness, heart murmur, mast cell tumors, and allergies. Many Bostons cannot tolerate excessive heat and also extremely cold weather, due to the shortened muzzle. A sensitive digestive system is also typical of Boston Terriers. In the absence of proper diet, flatulence is associated with the breed. In some cases, even a proper diet cannot abate flatulence.

Bostons, along with Pug, Shih Tzu and other short-snouted breeds are brachycephalic breeds. The word comes from Greek roots "Brachy," meaning short and "cephalic," meaning head. This anatomy can cause tiny nostrils, long palates and a narrow trachea. Because of this, Bostons may be prone to snoring, gagging and reverse sneeze. Brachycephalic dogs may be prone to complications with general anesthesia. To decrease this risk, the owner should seek an experienced and knowledgeable vet to perform any necessary surgeries.

Bostons frequently require caesarean section to give birth, with over 90% of litters in a UK Kennel Club survey delivered this way.