

The Breed of the Month is...

Cavalier King Charles Spaniel



Overview

Height: 12 - 13 inches (30 - 33 cm)

Weight: 10 - 18 pounds (5 - 8 kg)

Life Expectancy: About 9 - 14 years

Origin and History

Named for King Charles II, the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel is descended from the King Charles Spaniel. In the late 1600s the King Charles Spaniels were interbred with Pugs, which resulted in a smaller dog with flatter noses, upturned faces, rounded heads and protruding eyes. The consequence of this breeding is what we know today as the King Charles Spaniel (English Toy Spaniel). In the 1920s an American named Roswell Eldridge offered prize money during a Cruft's Dog Show in London to any person exhibiting King Charles Spaniels with long noses. He was looking for dogs similar to those appearing in Van Dyck's paintings of King Charles II and his spaniels, before the Pug was bred in. A dog called Ann's Son, owned by Miss Mostyn Walker, won the Eldridge prize, however Eldridge had died a month before the show opened and was not there to present the award. His ideas lived on in American

breeders. The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel breed, as we know it today, is the product of the American breeders of the late 1920s, though this 'modern' breed is the true heir of the royal spaniels of King Charles II. By the 1940s these dogs were classified as a separate breed and were given the prefix Cavalier to differentiate them from their forebears. The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel was shown in the Toy Group of the AKC beginning in 1996.

Description

The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel is a well-proportioned little dog. The head is slightly rounded, the muzzle full, tapering a little with a shallow stop. The nose is black. The teeth meet in a scissors bite. The dark brown eyes are round and set well apart with dark eye rims. The long ears are set high with abundant feathering. The topline is level. The tail is sometimes docked by 1/3, but is usually left natural. Dewclaws may be removed. The silky coat is medium in length with feathering on the ears, chest, legs and the tail. Colors include tricolor, black and tan, blenheim (red and white) and ruby (rich mahogany red).

Temperament

The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel is an eager, affectionate and happy dog, always seeming to be wagging its tail. Outgoing and sportive, these fearless lively little dogs are eager and willing to please. They are intelligent enough to understand what you want and therefore are usually easy to train and respond well to gentle obedience training. They are said to be naturally well behaved and get along well with other dogs and non-canine pets. Cavaliers love people, enjoy companionship, and need rules to follow and limits to what they are allowed to do. They are not suited to kennel life and should not be left alone all day. If you do need to leave them, be sure to take them for a pack walk before you leave to put them in a natural rest mode. Do to their hunting background they have an instinct to chase. Do not allow this sweet dog to develop Small Dog Syndrome, human-induced behaviors where the dog thinks he is pack leader to humans. This can cause a varying degree of behavior problems, which are not Cavalier traits, but are brought on by the way they are being treated. They are recommended with older considerate children, simply because most small dogs are treated in such a way they start to believe they rule the home. In addition to being the dog's leader, an owner should socialize their dog well to avoid them being reserved with strangers. The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel is a pleasant companion dog. They have remarkable eyesight and sense of smell and can be used in short hunts in open country. They do well in competitive obedience.



Care Requirements

- ✓ Living Conditions: Cavalier King Charles Spaniels are good for apartment life. They are moderately active indoors and a small yard will be sufficient. The Cavalier does not do well in very warm conditions.
- ✓ Grooming: Comb or brush with a firm bristle brush, and bathe or dry shampoo as necessary. The hair between the pads on the feet needs to be trimmed. Their fur is prone to tangling and matting on the ears, and should be brushed often. The insides of their ears should be cleaned

regularly. Always make sure the dog is thoroughly dry and warm after a bath. Check the eyes carefully for any signs of infection. This breed is an average shedder.

Health Problems

Cavalier King Charles Spaniels are prone to syringomyelia (the development of a fluid-filled cyst within the spinal cord), hereditary eye disease such as cherry eye, dislocating kneecaps (patella), back troubles, ear infections, early onset of deafness or hearing trouble. They are also prone to mitral valve disease, a serious genetic heart problem, which can cause early death. Cavalier King Charles Spaniels can sometimes develop hip dysplasia as well. Be careful to not overfeed them because this breed tends to gain weight easily. It is wise to check the medical history of several previous generations before choosing your puppy.

