

MALTESE

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance including the correct colour of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However, if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as unacceptable, it must not be rewarded in the show ring.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 31/03/2016

ORIGIN

Central Mediterranean Area. (Patronage: Italy)

UTILISATION

Companion and Toy.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

[ed. from FCI Breed Standard No. 65]

The name Maltese does not signify that the breed originates from the island of Malta, because the adjective "Maltese" comes from the Semitic word "màlat", which means 'refuge' or 'harbour'. This Semitic root comes up again in a whole series of names of maritime places; i.e. in the name Adriatic island of Méléda, the Sicilian town of Melita and also in that of the island Malta. The ancestors of this little dog lived in the ports and maritime cities of the central Mediterranean, where they hunted mice and rats that were found in profusion in the harbour warehouses and in the holds of ships. In a list of dogs existing at the time of Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) is mentioned a breed of little dogs to which is attributed the Latin name "canes melitenses". That dog was known in Ancient Rome as the "favourite companion of the matrons", and praised by Strabon, Latin poet of the first century A.D. Representations of the Maltese by numerous Renaissance painters show this little dog in the salons of the period at the side of beautiful ladies of the time.



Illustration courtesy of NKU Picture Library

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Smart, white-coated dog, with proud head carriage.

CHARACTERISTICS

Lively, intelligent, alert.

TEMPERAMENT

Sweet-tempered.

HEAD

The skull is gently rounded, viewed from the front and sides, but never domed or apple headed. Stop well-defined. Muzzle broad, not snipey. Slightly shorter from nose to stop than from stop to occiput. Muzzle is never shorter than in the ratio of 1 : 2. Nose black.

Eyes:

Oval, not bulging, dark brown, black eye rims, with dark haloes.

Ears:

Long, well-feathered, hanging close to head; hair to mingle with coat at shoulders.

Mouth:

Jaws strong, with perfect, regular, and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws. Teeth even.

NECK

Medium length.

FOREQUARTERS

Legs short and straight. Shoulders well-sloped.

BODY

Well-balanced, essentially short and cobby. Good spring of rib, back level from withers to tail.

HINDQUARTERS

Legs short, well-angulated.

FEET

Round, pads black.

TAIL

Feathered, carried well-arched over back.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

Straight and free flowing, without weaving. Viewed from behind, legs should neither be too close nor too wide apart.

COAT

Reasonable length, never impeding action, straight, of silky texture, never woolly. Never crimped and without woolly undercoat.

COLOUR

- Pure white.
- * Slight lemon markings permissible.

SIZE

Height:

Not exceeding 25cm (approx. 10") from ground to withers.

N.B. Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.

FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

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When judging this breed at FCI International Shows, use:

FCI Standard No. 65: MALTESE

FCI Classification: Group 9 – Companion and Toy Dogs.

Section 1.1. Bichons and related breeds.

Without working trial.