

Manchester Terrier Breed History

The Breed History



Black and Tan Terriers have existed in Great Britain for hundreds of years and are cited as one of the oldest of the terriers. A breeder from Manchester, John Hulme, is credited with crossing the rough Black and Tan Terrier with the Whippet in the 1800s to produce the sleek, agile and powerful Manchester Terrier we see today. Some have suggested that Italian Greyhounds and Dachshunds may have also played a role in the creation of the Manchester Terrier. The Manchester Terrier in turn is credited as a foundation dog used in the development of other dog breeds, including the Doberman Pinscher, the Australian Terrier, the German Hunting Terrier and the Lancaster Heeler.

Manchester Terriers were initially bred to be vermin hunters, a task they excelled at. In addition to being a companion animal, they were used to rid both homes and ships of rats and mice.

Eventually a sport developed in England involving the killing of rats. Dogs were put into pits and bets were placed as to which dog could kill the greatest number of rats in a given period of time. A 5 pound Toy Manchester Terrier named "Tiny" was reported to have killed 300 rats in 54 minutes and 50 seconds. This "sport" eventually fell out of favor and is no longer practiced.



The Manchester Terrier reached the height of its popularity in the Victorian era. During this time it was prized both for its ridding ability and its good looks. The standard Manchester Terrier was thought to be a suitable companion for the discerning gentleman. Victorian women, on the other hand, desired a smaller version of the Manchester and a toy was developed by repeatedly breeding the smallest of the standard

Manchester's. Unfortunately this practice was carried to an extreme and the result was very small, very unhealthy animals. The modern day Toy Manchester Terrier is a much healthier, sounder and larger animal than its ancestors from this earlier period.

Now only one color combination is acceptable for the Manchester Terrier, namely black and tan. However, in the mid-1800s there was some interest in different color variations including whites, blues, and reds and these color variants began appearing at competitions. The English White, in particular, often displayed a number of health problems. These color variations eventually fell out of favor and are no longer bred for or acceptable.



In 1895 ear cropping was outlawed in England and this greatly decreased the Manchester Terrier's popularity. As the Manchester Terrier's ears had traditionally been cropped, it was largely unnecessary for breeders to consider ear type when selecting breeding stock. Once ear cropping was outlawed many did not like the look of the

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Manchester's uncropped ears. It took quite a while for English breeders to develop nice looking button ears, which are now required in the English standard

Brief History

The Manchester Terrier: How do you describe a dog that wraps itself around your heart in a way that no breed you've ever owned has done; who greets each day so full of joy that you'd think he'd invented it; who entertains, outwits, and totally charms you; who has enough courage for a pride of lions and possesses such pristine beauty that you can't stop admiring him; who reaches as far back as legends? Two words describe such a dog: Manchester Terrier A Bit of History As old, perhaps, as the British Isles to which it is indigenous, the Manchester Terrier possesses a unique and distinctive beauty characterized by a clean and gracious outline, which is enhanced by rich mahogany markings. Well muscled, yet sleek, the Manchester's physical appearance attests to its ability to perform the work for which it was bred.



Frequently depicted in British art, the Manchester was used to exterminate many kinds of vermin but was famed as a ratter and was a favored competitor in the once fashionable gambling activity of rat killing contests which took place in British pubs. The prowess of the Manchester made him popular among the gentry and he became known as the "Gentleman's Terrier". Tiny dogs of the toy variety (2-3 lbs.) served not only as pampered ladies companions but were efficient flea catchers as well. Unlike many breeds, the Manchester retains a keen hunting instinct and has the strength, speed, stamina, and courage to excel.

The sports- minded will find him an enthusiastic and dauntless hunting companion, beautiful to see. The breed is eligible to compete at various terrier trials. Intelligent and curious and energetic, the Manchester is a charming and a good humored companion. He will entertain and outwit you; he is always responsive to praise and affection. Quick to learn, the Manchester responds well to obedience training. Unmatched in courage and alertness, he makes an excellent watch dog. His compact size is well adapted to urban, suburban and rural living. Loyal and loving, the Manchester is capable of exceptional devotion to his master and enjoys physical closeness.