

The Miniature Bull Terrier

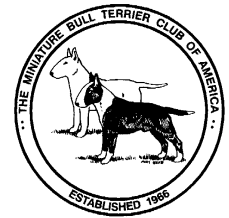


Photo by Tien Tran Photography

Introduction

The history of the Miniature Bull Terrier begins in the 18th and 19th centuries. A colorful, fierce, bold and, often time, sad collection of events combined to allow for the creation of the modern day Miniature Bull Terrier. The breed was recognized by the AKC in 1991. There are several trustworthy authors who have written about the Bull Terrier and Miniature Bull Terrier who have most of the same basic breed characteristics. These authors address historical accounts of origin, breeding/whelping and rearing recommendations, as well as training and events that you can enjoy with your dog. (See *Valuable Reading List*.)

Gentlemen and women, alike, grew to love the Bull Terrier and the smaller Bull Terriers, now known as Miniatures, during the latter part of the 19th century in England. The dog moved away from the fighting pits and into the households and show rings of the well-to-do. The attractive qualities of fierceness and boldness were matched with the endearing qualities of a big heart and devotion to the human caregiver that was unabashed.

Breed Characteristics

The Miniature Bull Terrier is not for everyone. Like their larger counterpart, each one is unique. In fact, if a buyer is not set on a show quality dog, but on temperament, the appropriate personality matches can more easily be made between buyer and dog. It has been said "...life with a Bull Terrier is sometimes trying, often chaotic, but **never** dull." We hope, at this point, you have researched this breed and know, intellectually, that this breed is for you. The dogs are active, stubborn (not stupid) and demanding of interaction. They need a firm, intelligent, consistent disciplinarian. You must train the dog from puppyhood to see you as the boss. If you are not able or desirous of working diligently to train your dog correctly (e.g., puppy classes, obedience, etc...), please, for the sake of yourself and the dog, find another breed to live with.

Mini Bulls love their people and need companionship as well as supervision. They are not to be left alone in the yard or home, as a rule. If unsupervised, the dogs should be crated or in a kennel run. Too much time alone may contribute to neurotic, destructive behaviors.

Two other situations requiring supervision/avoidance are children/people roughhousing and interaction with other dogs, particularly if one or both are unaltered.

Identification

Identify your Miniature Bull Terrier with collar tags in case it is lost. AKC Companion Animal Recovery (CAR) offers a free dog tag with recovery information and a 24-hour toll-free hotline to help locate owners 7 days a week. For further protection, register your dog's permanent tattoo or microchip with AKC CAR. Call 800-252-7894 or go to www.akccar.org for more information.

Health

The life span for healthy Mini Bulls is 10-12 years. The most recent health surveys identify the 5 major health problems for the breed as:

- Lens luxation/glaucoma—which most commonly exhibits between the ages of 3-8 years
- Heart—subaortic stenosis, mitral valve dysplasia, etc.—which exhibits clinical signs after the age of 4-5 yrs, most commonly
- Kidney failure—which may occur at any age
- Tail chasing—which *may* be a sign of neurological disorders that may/may not respond to behavioral modifications
- Deafness—which is usually present from birth

The latter three are less commonly occurring in the Miniature than in the Standard Bull Terrier, however there are signs of increasing numbers of affected Minis. If any of these conditions affect your dog, we strongly suggest you contact your dog's breeder.

Reputable, trustworthy breeders should be able to provide testing results (e.g., a yearly eye exam performed by a Veterinary Ophthalmologist; a Doppler EKG by a Veterinary Cardiologist) from the sire/dam to potential buyers. This will, at the very least, alert buyers to what kind of problems, if any, may be expected for their new puppy. Certainly the older the age of the sire/dam at the time of testing the more valid and predictive of the progeny's health this will be.

Many MBTCA members support health research for the Mini Bull through the AKC Canine Health Foundation—a nonprofit charitable organization whose mission is to help dogs live longer, healthier lives. For more information about health research benefiting Miniature Bull Terriers, see www.akcchf.org or call toll free 888-682-9696.



Breeding

Breeding Miniature Bull Terriers requires unremitting commitment of time, money, and emotion. It is a responsibility not only to one or two particular dogs and their offspring and a couple of buyers, but it is a responsibility to make decisions that will

improve the breed for future generations. Knowledge required for breeding is gained over years of experience, communication with other breeders, and an awareness of health and genetics. Knowingly breeding dogs with faulty genetics or disqualifying faults (conformation or temperament) is irresponsible.

Neutering male dogs dramatically reduces the chance of prostate cancer and eliminates testicular cancer. Uterine cancer in spayed females will be eliminated, and the incidence of breast cancer will also be markedly reduced. Altered dogs may compete in all AKC events except in the conformation ring.

Performance and Showing for Conformation

Most Miniature Bull Terriers are bright, very busy, strong in body and mind, yet emotionally sensitive and noted for being the comedian of the dog world. They, like all Terriers, are independent and must be convinced positively that working with you is worth their while.

Training is best begun early and it is highly recommended that you enroll your young pup in a puppy kindergarten program that emphasizes reward-based training and heavy socialization. (Look for an Association of Pet Dog Trainers member's class in your area.) Minis respond well to food and toy rewards, great consistency, and firm guidelines, but not to heavy-handed correction. It is difficult if not impossible to force them to do anything. They tend to have short attention spans at any age but are easily engaged with short, upbeat training sessions.

Training is made easier by adequately exercising your Mini and employing good basic dog management, which would include the wise use of baby gates, exercise pens and crates until your dog is mature and educated. Socialization, or exposure to new people, animals, and experiences should continue throughout your dog's life, and formal manners training should continue at least through adolescence, so that your Mini should be able to one day pass the AKC's Canine Good Citizen certification. (This is a great goal for every companion dog owner.)

While there are Miniature Bull Terriers who are titled in obedience and tracking, many more are today excelling on agility courses, in earthdog tunnels, and as therapy dogs. The Miniature Bull Terrier Club of America has an awards program to honor Minis and their owners who achieve titles in performance sports and to encourage the deep owner/dog relationship that develops with training.

When you own a Bull and Terrier breed, your dog's behavior will, fairly or not, be closely critiqued by the public. Your Miniature Bull Terrier will be acting as an ambassador for the breed; its good manners will reflect well not only on you as a responsible dog owner but on the breed as a whole. To make the most of this wonderful dog, please train your little clown!

Should you decide to show your dog in conformation, the breed standard can be found on the Web site: www.mbtca.org



The Breed Club

The Miniature Bull Terrier Club of America is an organization through which you can find support as you learn about your new companion. It is also your most complete source of health information. This information (possibilities of new genetic tests, incidence of and signs/symptoms for disease processes, and suggestions on how you can help the breed by participating in surveys and upcoming research projects) will be shared with club members and those interested in topics on health. The breed club is entering the future with many plans to coordinate with the AKC, researchers, and other breed clubs whose purebred animals are suffering from the same genetic problems. We need your help. We invite you to join the Miniature Bull Terrier Club of America.

You may contact us via the Web site: www.mbtca.org where you will find a membership application.

Coupon to contact MBTCA for health information:

Yes, I would like to be contacted to find out how my Miniature Bull Terrier and I can help end the genetic problems existing in our breed.

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Address _____

Mail to Lisa Byrd, health committee chairman: 10074 CR # 357 Terrell, Texas or e-mail directly: lbyrd@earthlink.net

Valuable Reading

All About the Bull Terrier and the Miniature Bull Terrier by Marilyn Drewes (Alpine Press)

Before & After Getting Your Puppy: The Positive Approach to Raising a Happy, Healthy & Well-Behaved Dog by Dr. Ian Dunbar

Control of Canine Genetic Diseases (Howell Reference Books) by George A. Padgett

How to Raise a Puppy You Can Live With by Clarice Rutherford, David H. Neal

The Complete Book of Dog Breeding by Dan Rice

The New Bull Terrier by John H. Remer, Jr.