

SOFT COATED **WHEATEN TERRIER**

BREED MAGAZINE

Let's Talk Breed Education!
SHOWSIGHT

THE SOFT COATED WHEATEN TERRIER IN AMERICA

by BETH VERNER & EMILY HOLDEN

DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier (SCWT) is a working, sporting terrier. The breed originated in Ireland as an all purpose farm dog that performed a variety of tasks: rid the farm of vermin, herd and guard sheep, hunt with his master, protect the family and farm. Sometimes referred to as the poor man's Wolfhound, the SCWT had to do it all because "early in Britain's history, 'Laws of the Forest' allowed only freemen and landowners to own hunting dogs. The poor tenant farmer and fisherman could not legally own any animal worth more than five pounds sterling."¹

The ability to meet this demand for versatility is still evident in today's SCWT. A continuum of temperaments and tendencies can be found among puppies from the same litter. This is not so astonishing, as children born of the same parents and raised in the same environment can be polar opposites in many characteristics. And as with humans, it is difficult with SCWTs to ascribe a characteristic tendency to a particular gender.

Consequently, a cookbook description does not apply for all SCWTs. They can be devoted companions or aloof co-inhabitants. Some are keenly interested in chasing squirrels and rabbits, while others could care less. During off-leash walks with their family, SCWTs have been known to circle their humans with apparent intent to keep the flock together. Others dart ahead tracking or hunting with no interest in checking back, let alone gathering the flock. There are SCWTs that enjoy nothing more than a brisk jog with their owner and some must be persuaded to leave the couch for a leisurely walk.

Their own agenda is paramount for many SCWTs. Others defer first to their master, then proceed with their own agenda. After all, SCWTs are terriers. Unlike the Golden or Labrador Retrievers that seem intent on pleasing their humans,



the tenacity of terriers renders them more inclined to march to their own drummer and attempt to convince their human to pursue that agenda as well.

Given this wide diversity in temperaments, it is important to work with a responsible breeder to select the right puppy. The responsible breeder spends lots of time with their puppies and the prospective owners in order to recommend the best match.

No matter the individual dog's innate tendencies, SCWTs are generally a happy-go-lucky, exuberant, fun loving dog. To help the SCWTs become model pets and companions, socialization and training should begin early and occur often throughout their lives.

Puppy Kindergarten or Socialization classes are highly recommended to expose young SCWTs to dogs and people of all shapes and sizes. It is important to frequently expose the SCWT youngster to all sorts of people, places, and pets, in and out of the home. As puppyhood turns to adulthood, many owners participate in performance classes to enhance socialization and discover what most interests their SCWT. There is a vast array of activities that family members can enjoy throughout life with their SCWT: agility, flyball, herding, obedience, therapy, tracking, tricks, to name only a few.

SCWTs are considerably easier to live with, especially as puppies and youngsters,

¹Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America Judges Education CD



Ch. Gleanngay Holliday ROM

“...IT IS IMPERATIVE TO BRUSH AND COMB THE SCWT EVERY WEEK, AND MORE FREQUENTLY WHEN THEY TRANSITION FROM PUPPY TO ADULT COAT.”

HISTORY

There have been some really great dogs and many devoted breeders since 1947 when Lydia Vogel imported the first Wheaten into the US. Ten years later the O’Connors imported a dog from Maureen Holmes, an Irish breeder who was one of those responsible for saving the breed from near extinction in Ireland. On March 17, 1962, the O’Connors, Ida Mallory, the Charles Arnolds and a few other devotees, including Patricia Adams founded the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America.

During the next ten years a handful of enthusiasts traveled to dog shows across the USA promoting the breed to the public and to the American Kennel Club until finally in 1973 the day arrived when the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier was eligible for championship points. A national specialty held on Montgomery County Weekend in October of 1973 marked the beginning of championships for this newly accepted Irish breed. CH Abby’s Postage Dhu of Waterford finished his title that first weekend surprising everyone since he was owner-handled by Marjorie Shoemaker, and was competing against some of the top terrier handlers of the time. Benmul Belma, an Irish Champion imported by Carol Carlson and Emily Holden, fought it out with Innisfree Annie Sullivan, owned by Gay Sherman (Dunlap). Belma was handled by Peter Green and Annie by Roberta Krohne. Belma finished first but Annie went on to make breed history by becoming the first Best in Show Wheaten. She also contributed significantly in the whelping box.

CH Stephen Dedalus of Andover, owned and bred by Jackie and Cindy Gottlieb, finished quickly and proved to be a stud dog who influenced the breed in a major way. He was the sire of CH Abby’s Postage Dhu of Waterford who, bred to Annie Sullivan, produced CH Gleanngay’s Goldilock dam of the watershed dog of the breed in the United States, CH Gleanngay Holliday. Before Doc (Holliday), type was undetermined in the breed. There had been a few imports from Ireland in the

early 1970s but CH Holmenock’s Halpha, imported from Maureen Holmes by Brian and Mary Lynn Reynolds, was the only one bred to produce a line of dogs. Before Doc, the breed looked like one breed in the East, another in the Midwest, and yet another in the West. Doc’s extensive use as well as the relocation of Andover, Jackie and Cindy Gottlieb, now Cindy Vogels, to Colorado, began the solidification of an American type that allowed the breed to look more alike in the Montgomery County Wheaten Specialty Ring.

The late 1970s were dominated by CH Gleanngay Holliday and CH Briarlynn Dandelion, owned by Lynn Penniman (Carothers). A Doc son, CH Andover Song ’N Dance Man, walked away with the SCWTCA national specialty four times, once from the veteran’s class. He is also the only Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier to win the group at Westminster Kennel Club and that took place on Valentine’s Day in 1989.

There were many really handsome males during the late 80s and 90s. Two of the top winners were CH Wildflower Stardust, owned and bred by Janet Turner (Dalton) and CH Gleanngay Bantry Bay Kashmir, owned by Candy Way. Both were stallions and owned the ring whenever and wherever they were shown. Other very deserving dogs that defined type were CH Doubloon’s Master of Illusion, owned by Cindy Vogels and Jackie Gottlieb, CH Shar D’s Let the Games Begin, owned by Shari Boyd and Dee Boyd, CH Paisley After Midnight owned by Kathy and M.E. McIndoe, CH Legacy Wild West Wildflower, owned by Robert Hale and Jon Caliri, and CH Kaylynn’s August Moon owned by Kay Baird.

It seemed for a few years that there was not going to be another stallion type Wheaten and then along came Kovu! Kovu, CH Caraway Celebrate Life, owned by Betty Chapman and Beth Verner, broke many records in the breed and after winning the breed from the classes at Montgomery County Kennel Club under breeder judge Gay Dunlap, he proceeded to win

when exercised daily. Preferably this includes providing, in a safe area, the opportunity to run full speed and explore unencumbered their surroundings. For this reason many breeders highly recommend a fenced yard for families considering a SCWT puppy.

The SCWT is a single-coated dog and as such does not shed. Instead the coat grows long and will reach the floor if not trimmed. To keep them mat free, clean and comfortable, regardless of the desired coat length, it is imperative to brush and comb the SCWT every week, and more frequently when they transition from puppy to adult coat.

Trimming the SCWT can be little to severe. For those who prefer a SCWT look like a SCWT, trimming is required to foster the essence of the breed as described in the *SCWT Illustrated Breed Standard and Amplification*:

- Coat: soft, silky, waving, flowing, warm wheaten color.
- Silhouette: square, medium-sized, neck moderately long.
- Head: rectangular long, in proportion to the body; ears small to medium, level with the skull and point to the ground.

Grooming guides are available at www.scwtca.org/pubs.htm#groom.

In summary, the SCWT is a joy to live with. Their versatility adds spice to life and many exude a youthfulness that lasts long into their senior years. With a SCWT around, dull moments are rare. To learn more about SCWTs, the best single source is www.scwtca.org.

Genetics and Dog Shows Share Centuries of History

As you know, genetic research didn't start at Embark Veterinary. It started with the fathers of evolution and genetics. During the 19th century, an era of curiosity about nature, animals, and scientific discoveries blossomed. In 1859, Charles Darwin published *Origins of Species* about his theory of evolution using natural selection. A few years later, Augustinian monk Gregor Mendel discovered through his experimentation with pea plants that characteristics can be passed down through generations. Mendel, considered by many to be the father of genetics, also defined the words "recessive" and "dominant" in his 1866 paper explaining how invisible factors (genotypes) can predictably produce visible traits (phenotypes).

Following Mendel's discoveries, Friedrich Miescher, a Swiss physiological chemist, discovered what he called "nuclein" or the nuclei of human white blood cells. What he actually discovered became known as deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA. Despite these revolutionary discoveries, the scientific community took decades to embrace them. Meanwhile, for centuries, dog breeders had been selectively breeding purpose-bred dogs. But around the 1850s, breeding programs (starting with English Foxhound packs) began to be recorded. In 1873, the Kennel Club in England started the first purebred dog registry and published official breed studbooks.

Across the Atlantic, American dog fanciers were just as keen as their British Isle counterparts in holding field trials and dog shows. By 1877, the Westminster Kennel Club held its first dog show. In 1884, the American Kennel Club became the governing body of the sport of purebred dogs through its dog show rules, registry, and breed studbooks. Westminster was its first member club. Around 1900, British biologist William Bateson brought Mendel's theories back to the forefront of the scientific community. Savvy dog breeders began to follow Mendelian inheritance when planning their breeding programs, with a new understanding of visible and invisible traits. Selective breeding of purebred dogs with closed gene pools would advance canine genetic research in the future.

As more dog breeds emerged at the turn of the 20th century, dog shows began classifying them by type into Sporting, Non-Sporting, Terrier, Toy, and Working Groups. In 1944, Oswald Avery identified DNA as the substance responsible for heredity and, in 1950, Erwin Chargaff continued that research with his discovery that DNA was species specific. Genetic discoveries continued with Rosalind Franklin's work in 1951 on X-ray diffraction studies, which set the groundwork for the discovery of DNA's double helix structure by James Watson and Francis Crick in 1953. By 1983, not only did the Herding Group debut at Westminster but Huntington's became the first mapped human genetic disease. In 1999, Narcolepsy became the first mapped canine genetic disease by a team of researchers at Stanford University.

During the 21st century, the human genome was sequenced in 2003, followed by the canine genome in 2005 with "Tasha" the Boxer. In 2008, "Uno" the Beagle became the first Westminster Kennel Club Best in Show winner to donate DNA to research. His contribution helped to launch the first ever canine SNP array.



Courtesy of The Westminster Kennel Club.

By 2015, Embark Veterinary founders Ryan and Adam Boyko's DNA research contributed to the understanding of the origins of the domestic dog. Their love of dogs and science, guided by their mission to improve the life and longevity of all dogs and end preventable diseases, evolved into the founding of Embark Veterinary. In 2019, Embark Veterinary was selected as the official Dog DNA Test of the Westminster Kennel Club. In 2021, Embark scientists published their roan gene discovery. This was followed by the red intensity gene research article in May.

Embark Veterinary may have a short history compared to that of the Westminster Kennel Club. However, the contributions of Embark's founders, Ryan and Adam Boyko, have been felt across the canine world thanks to their research into the origin, over 15,000 years ago, of domesticated dogs. Ryan and Adam have spent the last decade learning everything they can about dogs and genetics. Meanwhile, The Westminster Kennel Club is America's oldest organization dedicated to the sport of dogs. The Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show is the second longest continuously held sporting event in the US and, since 1948, is the longest nationally televised live dog show. The club has spent more than a century enhancing the lives of all dogs. A partnership between the two organizations was simply a natural fit.

In June 2021, Embark and Westminster will team up again at the 145th Annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, held at Lyndhurst in Tarrytown, New York, on June 11th-13th. Embark will have an on-site swabbing station for exhibitors and award every Best of Breed winner an Embark for Breeders DNA Kit. Embark will also donate \$10,000 toward canine health research in honor of the Best in Show winner. It's evident that genetics and dog shows have shared a long history over the centuries, coming together today with a shared love of purebred dogs. ■

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Ch. Gleanngay Bantry Bay Kashmir

“IT IS NOT A WORKING DOG NOR A SPORTING DOG, BUT A LONG LEGGED TERRIER THAT SHOULD BE COMPARED TO THE KERRY AND THE IRISH TERRIERS.”

the breed there the next two years and to gain a group three. He and handler Shari Boyd-Carusi topped it off by winning the terrier group at the prestigious Crufts Dog Show, held in Birmingham, England. He was exciting to watch in a way that was reminiscent of CH Wildflower Stardust, who appears on both sides of Kovu's pedigree. The breed had a new hero!

Since a breed depends upon strong bitches, Wheatens have been well blessed. Starting in the 1970s CH Gleanngay Goldilock, CH Andover Antic of Sunset Hills, CH Cloverlane's Connaught, CH Amaden's Rainbow's End, and CH Legenderry's Ainlee produced many great dogs or great producers. Many lines come down from these bitches. Some of the more famous are Bantry Bay, Bendacht, Bonney, Clanheath, Kairi, Legacy, Shandalee, Westridge, Wildflower, and so many more. Elena Landa, Doubloon Wheatens, has had some lovely bitches in the ring during the past few years as have the kennels mentioned above. Elena has been a consistent winner and does the breed proud by being the Terrier Breeder of the year for the Eukanuba Classic in 2011.

The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America and the regional clubs have been known for being mentors and for welcoming newcomers. Jackie Gottlieb edited an Owner's Manual in 1979 with the help of many club members and with some minor changes it has been the guide for the breed ever since. There is a very active public education committee, now chaired by Connie Kohler of California. The breed has recently acquired certification for herding and all the performance events are very popular with Wheaten owners. The dogs are very bright and enjoy the work and the activity of those events.

HEALTH & BREED TYPE

During the mid 1980s it was discovered that a significant percentage of the breed was suffering from an illness that was caused by loss of protein. Dogs were dying from intestinal or renal issues and it was obvious to the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America that something needed to be done. A Health Committee was formed, research began at North Carolina State University and the University of Pennsylvania. Wheatens lost some well-known breeders due to the devastation of certain lines and the fear that went with it. The illness appeared to be a wild card seeming to show up any time and any place.

Many breeders began to import dogs from Europe in an effort to water down the gene pool. Some are breeding pure Irish dogs with thinner, shiny coats, while some of the imports look very much like the American bred dogs but are perhaps a bit longer due to the FCI standard and the differences from the SCWTCA standard. For the past several decades, the breeders only tool to breed away from what appeared to be a genetic problem was the information of pedigrees of affected and non-affected which were listed in a voluntary national registry.

Finally, a DNA test which identifies genetic mutations associated with PLN (Protein Losing Nephropathy) was announced at the University of Pennsylvania in May, 2012. Breeders have been quick to have their SCWTs to be tested and are making better informed breeding decisions based on these results. However, it is important that while breeding to improve the overall health of the breed, that breed type does not get overlooked... and judges need to help with that. Knowing that this breed is

a happy, charming dog that is not the tough terrier in the ring helps, as does recognizing that beneath the silky coat should lie a square terrier that moves in true terrier tradition.

The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier is to be viewed and judged in the United States by the AKC Standard. This is not the same as the FCI or international standard. For example, while undocked tails have been recently accepted to accommodate the imports, many of which have natural tails, docked tails are preferred.

The National Club has provided many aids to help insure the maintenance of breed type. In the early 1990s an exceptional *Illustrated Standard* was developed by Gay Dunlap with artwork drawn by Jody Sylvester. It is a timeless piece and available free of charge to all judges. A judges' education program was developed first by Cindy Vogels. Gay Dunlap and Gary Vlachos have created a very strong judges' education DVD that is used across the country in Judges' symposia. These people have worked tirelessly to assure that judges should be able to pick out the correct type of a Wheaten Terrier. It is not a working dog nor a sporting dog, but a long legged Terrier that should be compared to the Kerry and the Irish Terriers.

Given the new DNA information now available, it might be tempting for breeders to be so focused on health issues that preserving type in the show ring is forgotten, but the history is proud and needs to be honored. ■

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“SINCE A BREED DEPENDS UPON STRONG BITCHES,
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FANCIERS ASSOCIATION
Wednesday, June 13, 2018

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gay Dunlap is approved by the AKC to judge the Terrier and Toy Groups, Poodles, eight Hound breeds, Miscellaneous, Juniors and Best in Show. She is a provisional judge for 15 Hound breeds. Mrs Dunlap has judged across the US and has adjudicated in Australia, Canada, China, Finland, Ireland, and Sweden.

She bred Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers from 1970 until 2016 under the Gleanngay prefix with over 140 champions, including BIS, Specialty, and Group winners. She bred and owned the top-producing Terrier sire of all time, Ch Gleanngay Holliday, ROM. Prior to her involvement with Wheatens, she bred and exhibited Yorkshire Terriers.

She has served on the SCWTCA Board of Directors numerous times, including a 14-year period during which she also served as its President. She was a member of the SCWT Standard Committee charged with drafting the first breed standard adopted by AKC, and Chairman of the Standard Revision Committee that produced the SCWT standard currently in use by AKC.

A regular contributor to numerous periodicals, she wrote the SCWT Standard Amplification and produced the SCWT Illustrated Breed Standard and Amplification, along with the SCWTCA Judges Education PowerPoint Presentation. She has served as Editor of the SCWTCA quarterly publication, Benchmarks, and as an AKC Delegate, representing SCWTCA.

She continues to chair the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America's Judges Education Committee and served for a year as President of the Miniature Bull Terrier Club of Southern California. She also served on the board of the Kennel Club of Palm Springs and as its specialties' coordinator. She is a member of American Dog Judges Association of America and is the organization's webmaster.

Mrs Dunlap lives in Palm Desert, California, and makes herself available to all in need of her creative skills, which include design, writing, editing, and proofreading. Her non-canine activities include creative writing, design, including web design, and cooking. She is an avid tennis fan!

WHAT'S UNDER THAT COAT?

An Educated Look At The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier

BY GAY DUNLAP

There's a sound and well-structured dog under that coat... or at least there should be. Can you tell, visually, or do you feel you must put your hands on the dog to determine its true make and shape? Certainly, artful groomers can set lie to what is really under a jacket, and this is true with most, if not all, coated breeds. Those of us who come from coated breeds, and also know our way around with a pair of scissors, are usually quite adept at spying the telltale signs of a dog that is little more than a hair cut. Others, not so much. Hair can hide a lot. So, with this in mind, here are a few visual aids that, hopefully, will help with speeding up the judging process among those less familiar with "the tricks of the trade" used by handlers and other scissor-gifted exhibitors.

WHAT'S UNDER THAT COAT?

First, let's take a look at this well-balanced Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier (Fig. 1a & 1b). He has been artfully trimmed. Is the topline absolutely level (we have a tendency toward prominent lumbar vertebrae), and is there sufficient bend of stifle? His proportions appear quite correct, although there are a couple of qualities that can't be immediately assessed. Otherwise, everything we need to know, structurally, is there—if we know what we are looking at.

With the properly proportioned SCWT, length of head, neck, and back should be equal (blue lines). Body length, sternum to pin bone, should be equal to height, withers to ground (red lines). Length of backskull should equal foreface (pink lines). Depth of body, withers to brisket, should equal length of leg, elbow to ground (purple lines). Shoulder and forearm, set at a 90-degree angle, should be equal in length (green lines). Rear angles are equal (yellow lines).

In the best of worlds, the measurements here would be equal, as specified in the legend. When one considers the possible build-up of coat in certain areas, the dog used in the diagram comes pretty darn close. Of course, these measurements represent perfection. Perfection, although difficult to achieve, should always be that for which we strive. He may have a slightly longer second thigh (K-L); something that is hard to determine under the leg furnishings. Additionally, if body depth (C-G) equals elbow-to-ground (G-H),

he appears to need a tad more leg. To my eye, this dog displays beautiful breed type with pleasing balance and angles.

Let's proceed to examine other SCWT outlines in the same manner (Fig. 2a & 2b). Clever groomers have created several techniques designed to suggest a shorter back. One is to backcomb and tease hair from the lower portion of the neck, withers, and part-way down the back. When a dog appears to have a neck as thick as this one, it is a dead giveaway that the dog is not as short-backed as one might suppose. It is also hard to determine shoulder layback under all the hair. In the same manner, build-up of hair in front of the tail can easily hide a low-set tail and/or croup drop-off. Excess hair on the top-skull can create the impression of both a longer head and a longer neck. The latter also makes the ear, which should be level with or slightly above the topskull, appear low-set. Another ruse, designed to create a back shorter than it really is, is to bring the tuck-up farther forward than the loin area, and allow the side skirt behind the ersatz tuck-up to appear as leg furnishings. Based on the over-stretched rear, I would suspect a straight stifle.

Here's another dog with slightly different proportions (Fig. 3a & 3b). Obviously, head, neck, and back are not equal. It is lacking sufficient neck to balance a pleasing length of head. It is also slightly longer than tall. The lack of neck would indicate an upright shoulder. Added to that, the dog is low on leg.



Figure 1a

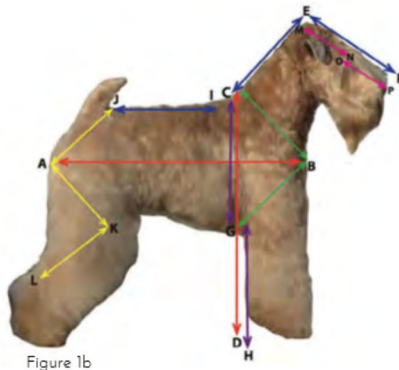


Figure 1b

LEGEND:

FE = EC = IJ
AB = CD
CG = GH
CB = BG
JA = AK = KI
MN = OP



Figure 2a

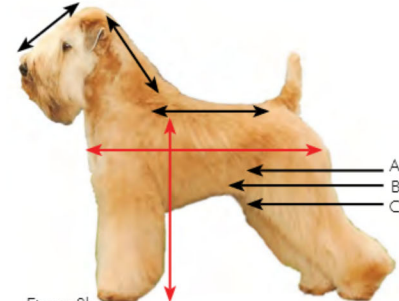
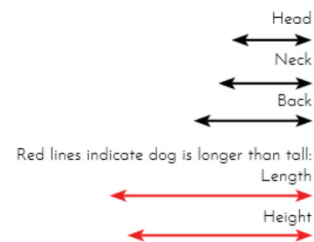


Figure 2b



A. Proper tuck-up should be beyond ribcage
B. Instead of here
C. Body coat disguised as leg furnishings



Figure 3a

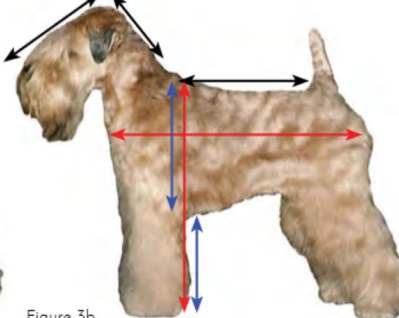
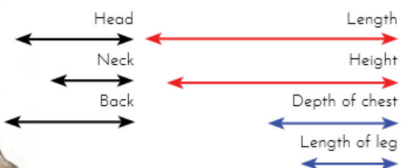


Figure 3b



WHAT'S UNDER THAT COAT?

Below is one more example of the build-up of hair over withers (Fig. 4a & 4b). This is used to create the illusion of a shorter back, although in this case, not so successfully. The lack of balance is further destroyed by the fact that the dog is low on leg, certainly not helped by excessive coat left on the undercarriage.

Taking a brief look at the correct Wheaten head, many that we see in the ring today are thick with coarse backskulls that form a three-dimensional block (width, length, depth) instead of a neat, clean brick (narrow, long, and lean) (Fig. 5). Heads tend to be square rather than rectangular. Skull and muzzle should both be rectangular, equal in length and on equal planes. Ideally, the skull should be easily spanned by a woman's hand. The two photos (Fig. 6a & 6b) taken from the front cannot take into account the foreshortening of muzzle; but hopefully, they project that the width of the head should be approximately half the length of the head and, also, that the muzzle should not "fall off" or lose width to any appreciable degree.

It is hoped that those reading this article will be inspired toward more thoughtful judging (and breeding) of the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, understanding as well that much of it can be applied to other coated breeds, notably the Kerry Blue Terrier. ■

Heads tend to be square rather than rectangular. Skull and muzzle should both be rectangular, equal in length and on equal planes. Ideally, the skull should be easily spanned by a woman's hand.



Figure 4a

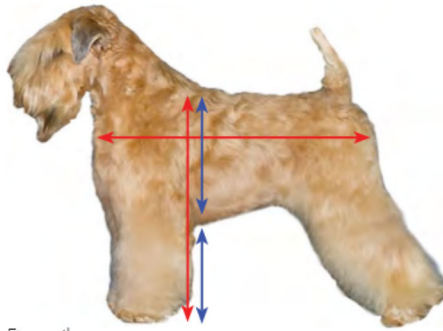


Figure 4b

Length, point of shoulder to pin bone
Height, withers to ground
Withers to brisket
Elbow to ground

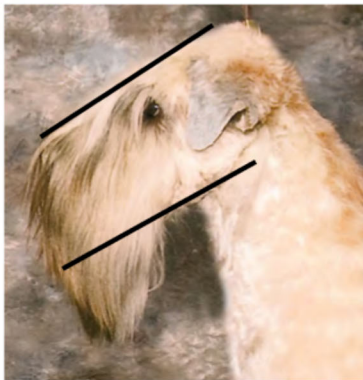


Figure 5



Figure 6a



Figure 6b

The Essence of TYPE

ESSENCE—"THE INTRINSIC NATURE OF SOMETHING; THE QUALITY WHICH DETERMINES SOMETHING'S CHARACTER" (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS)

PART 3 - SOFT COATED WHEATEN TERRIER COAT AND COLOR

BY CINDY VOGELS

"While Mrs. Holmes goes out of her way to decry overly abundant coats, thin coats where skin is readily visible are equally faulty. One key factor is undercoat. Ideally, the coat is single and abundant. Some dogs do carry single coats throughout their lives, while others start out with undercoat that intensifies during adolescence and then dissipates with maturity, resulting in single coated adults. It's remarkable that such divergent puppy coats actually mature into very similar adult coats."

The essence of breed type can be defined as how the various parts of a dog come together with the requisite temperament to make a breed unique.

In my previous two articles on SCWT type, I described proper silhouette and head properties. This article will not be a primer on Wheaten coat (that might be a chapter rather than an article*); instead, I will attempt to explain the relationship between proper coat and breed type. In other words, which coat factors contribute to the uniquely Soft Coated Wheaten "look?"

Our standard states, "An abundant single coat... Texture soft and silky with a gentle wave." Color is described as "any shade of Wheaten" and goes on to describe guard hairs of different colors and the characteristic darker mask. However, there is a range of acceptable coat textures and colors. In fact, while still remaining "typey," many Wheatens go through continual changes in coat and color. In an attempt to categorize coats, breeders often use the terms "Irish," "American," "Continental," etc., but I will attempt to discuss coat without geographic designation. Too often the terms are used pejoratively, and coat texture and color are controlled by heredity not birthplace. Geographic differences in coat variations reflect selective breeding. I will discuss coat and color separately, but the two actually go hand in hand. Proper color generally reflects (pun intended) proper texture as the requisite shine is due to the quality of the individual hair shaft. (For an excellent discussion of this phenomenon, see: "What Makes for Colors and Coat Texture in Yorkies," by Janet Bennett. Benchmarks, Volume 7, No. 2, Spring, 1979)

Both the AKC and the FCI standards will be quoted as well as the SCWTCA Illustrated Standard; while we must adhere to the requisites of the AKC standard, the FCI standard represents the edicts of the country of origin—Ireland. To view the standards, go to www.akc.org, www.fci.be. For a copy of the Illustrated Standard, go to the SCWTCA website at www.scwtca.org.

The most desirable coats are soft, silky, abundant, wavy, and single. Maureen Holmes, in her book, *The Softcoated Wheaten Terrier*, ("Printed by Racmo, Meppel; 1991, page 152-153) sums it up well, stating, "coat... must be soft and silky to the touch, wavy or curly, NOT Coarse... The coat must have body and be shiny. IT IS NEVER TO BE WOOLY. Thick, white, wooly, straight hair or stand-off coat are serious deviations as is a frizzy coat." Since the American standard states



that the coat is to fall in “gentle waves,” I take exception to the inclusion of the word “curly” in describing the ideal coat. In fact, in the original Irish standard it was specified that coat “...if curly, curls must be large and loose.” (Redlich, Anna *The Dogs Of Ireland*. Dundalk, Ireland; Dundalgan Press, 1949, page 166). Note that Mrs. Holmes uses the word “body.” This is important to our discussion, as the amount of coat that Wheatens carry has a tremendous impact on their appearance. While Mrs. Holmes goes out of her way to decry overly abundant coats, thin coats where skin is readily visible are equally faulty. One key factor is undercoat. Ideally, the coat is single and abundant. Some dogs do carry single coats throughout their lives, while others start out with undercoat that intensifies during adolescence and then dissipates with maturity, resulting in single-coated adults. It’s remarkable that such divergent puppy coats actually mature into very similar adult coats. Both the American and the FCI standards allow latitude when assessing coat texture in young dogs. However, the ideal coat will be wavy, abundant, and soft, even at six months.

The American standard mentions guard hairs only in the color section but, in the past, many adolescent Wheatens’ coats contained harsh guard hairs (the infamous “dead reds”). Today, many dogs sport coats where any guard hairs that do appear are soft, so this is the ideal for which we should be striving.

Unacceptable coat qualities include: coarse, woolly, frizzy, and/or plush. All of these factors produce a “stuffed animal” look. An overabundance of coat is caused by the presence of undercoat and produces a look that is foreign to correct breed type. On the other hand, too little coat is as faulty as too much coat. To be typey, Wheatens must be well-covered with coat. All the standards and amplifications agree on this.

Adult Wheaten coats must never be straight or tightly curled. Fortunately, the fashion of blow-drying (and even ironing) Wheaten coats has been replaced by air-drying, which enhances the coats’ natural waves. While “straight” is pretty self-explanatory, a distinction should be made between “waves” (gentle undulations) and “curls” (ringlets). Any sign of kink in the coat is particularly offensive.

I see the breed coming full circle in terms of coat quality, and if there can be any semblance of a silver lining behind the ominous kidney cloud, I think the rash of imports have not only improved coat quality, but also re-adjusted our eyes to the look of correct and typical coat. We can only hope that, just as it has become nearly impossible to finish a Wheaten with a curly, frizzy coat, in the future, the other undesirable coat qualities (harsh, woolly, overabundant, straight) will become nearly extinct as well.

Our (American) standard calls for “any shade of Wheaten.” The FCI standard is a little more specific, stipulating color must be: “A good, clear wheaten of shades from light wheaten to a golden reddish hue.” In the American standard amplification, proper color is described as “...any shade of Wheaten from pale gold through warm honey” (*Illustrated Standard*, page 26). Sometimes, proper coat casts a platinum-like sheen. Mrs. Holmes refers to this phenomenon saying, “... over this [coat] is a ‘silver sheen’ characteristic of the breed.” (Ibid. page 152.)

Correct color should be thought of as falling within a range of acceptable hues. The American standard amplification reminds us, “Very deep color in a puppy does not always predict strong adult color. Color change continues throughout the life of the dog. The hairs are often banded. Closely observed, the Wheaten is not a self-colored dog. (*Illustrated Standard*, page 26.) Both the American and FCI standards go into detail about puppy coats. However, the FCI describes newborn puppy colors, which would be nearly—if not entirely—cleared by the time they entered the ring. Our standard devotes a paragraph to the color transition that some coats make between six months and two years of age. While we still do see many Wheatens’ coats that go through the described transition, increasingly, many do not.

Most importantly, coat color must always be warm and reflective, which is dependent upon proper coat texture. (See photos above.) Again, proper coat texture creates correct color; you will never see ideal color on an improperly textured coat, as it will not carry the requisite sheen. Mrs. Holmes is quite adamant in stating “coat color... must have a warm GOLDEN hue NOT yellow... Brown is a colour that is NEVER mentioned or allowed in a WHEATEN ... No black or gray is allowed in the adult coat, which includes the head.” (Ibid. page 153.) She singles out the head because it is not uncommon to find grey shading, allowed on ears and muzzle,



“Proper coat is only one important component and must never be championed above the whole dog.”

spilling over onto the head. She goes on to say, “A white or pale coat must also be penalized.” (Ibid. page 153.) I would take exception to faulting a “pale” coat. If it has shine and is not white, I would call it acceptable—far more acceptable than a dull, oatmeal or grayish hue.

Historically, trimming has been a point of contention both here and abroad, but presently, I don’t consider it a problem here. A general discussion of presentation is outside the parameters of this article, but it can affect breed type when improper presentation creates an uncharacteristic look. While the FCI standard still allows for untrimmed dogs (which is rarely seen abroad), the American standard only describes trimmed dogs, cautioning that “Dogs that are overly trimmed shall be severely penalized.” Wheatens’ coats should never be cut as close as our Kerry Blue cousins. But, most often, when dogs appear to be over-groomed, it is the byproduct of poor coat quality and not overworked scissors. As noted above, the cessation of blow-drying and ironing of coats has greatly contributed to the uniformity of proper wavy coats seen in the ring today.

Can an otherwise excellent Soft Coated Wheaten with a bad coat be considered excellent? No! Can an excellent coat make an otherwise mediocre Soft Coated Wheaten excellent? No! Proper coat is only one important component and must never be championed above the whole dog. Accompanying photos depict ideal coat color and texture.

*For an excellent in-depth discussion of coat, see Kickie Norrby’s *Evaluating Coat in the Wheaten Terrier*. Also, note color photos of Wheaten Terrier coat in Maureen Holmes’ book *The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier*, pages 155 & 156. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cindy Vogels

A native of Rockville Centre, New York, Cindy earned a Bachelor of Music (Flute) from New England Conservatory of Music and a Master Of Music (History) from the University of Colorado. Her interest in dogs began in high school, and she and her mother, Jackie Gottlieb, have bred over 100 “Andover” Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier champions; they have owned numerous top winners and producers, including Ch. Andover Song N Dance Man, most of whose 30-year-old breed records still stand. Cindy also bred champion Kerry Blue, Norfolk, and Welsh Terriers, Brittany’s, and Greyhounds. Cindy is AKC approved to judge all Sporting, Hound, Terrier, and Toy breeds, eight Non-Sporting breeds, Best in Show, and Junior Showmanship. A busy judge, she has adjudicated at many prestigious shows worldwide, including judging Best in Show at both Westminster KC and Montgomery County KC all-Terrier show. Her participation in dog clubs include: former President and AKC Delegate, Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America; presently, Show Chairman, Evergreen Colorado KC. Cindy also serves on the Board of Directors of Take the Lead and is Treasurer of the AKC Canine Health Foundation. Longtime Colorado residents, Cindy and her husband of 40-plus years, David, enjoy an eclectic mix of house dogs. When not indulging their granddaughter, the Vogels family enjoys sports and travel, and they are ardent “foodies.”

IS THAT A SOFT COATED WHEATEN TERRIER?

by EMILY HOLDEN

A LITTLE HISTORY

I have been asked this question many times during the past forty-nine years. Fortunately, it has always been in public parks or on walks and never in the show ring. My first Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier was wrong in every way. I bought him in 1969 and had great plans for sweeping the miscellaneous classes with my beautiful dog. After all, the newspaper ad promised a show quality pup, perfect in every way, from fine old Irish stock. What he turned out to be was a walking, growling exception to every principle we hold dear in our breed's description of type. While he won his first two shows, I still learned very quickly that he was not what I wanted to be showing.

I feel very sorry for our new enthusiasts who win big with their first dog, especially if it is professionally handled. They miss out on all the great learning experiences available to those of us who start with dogs that we are willing to admit are less than perfect. What really matters is that breeders and exhibitors actually have the desire to learn, and that they search out the best mentors; people who have bred consistent correct type, those that have bred multiple winners, and who are good teachers.

In 1969, we Wheaten folk were still feeling our way toward AKC recognition and the development of a breed standard. In 1973, the year of AKC recognition, there were 33 entries at the Montgomery County Kennel Club show and the entries could easily have represented 15 different breeds. Abby's



Cloverlane Connaught was one of the 1973 champions and is used as the example of the SCWT in the AKC Book of Dogs



CH Amaden's Duke of Pearlcroft



CH Amaden's Bugger Vance



Ch Abby's Dhu of Waterford

Postage Dhu O' Waterford owned by Marjorie Shoemaker led the way, winning the dog points three of the first four shows to become the first breed champion. By 1990 the special's ring at Montgomery was a totally different story due to the breeding and grooming influence of one great dog, Ch Gleanngay Holliday, and by the expert trimming and handling directed by his breeder, Gay Sherman (Dunlap), and executed by Penny Belviso. Those who didn't breed to him trimmed their dogs

to look like him and those who couldn't trim, hired handlers who either could, or thought they could. We were excited that at last we were developing breed type.

1990 marked another important milestone in breed history. As president of the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America, I suggested that the Board authorize the development of an Illustrated Standard and that Gay Dunlap chair the project. She and illustrator, Jody Sylvester, made the club proud



CH Bryr Rose Symbol of Paris

with a booklet still considered an example of a best practice. Wheaten enthusiasts and judges alike stand to learn everything they need to know about what distinguishes a Wheaten Terrier from other breeds if they would but study this illustrated standard and use the information objectively.

1990 also marked the beginning of the importation of Irish dogs, followed by European dogs, the latter primarily of Irish descent. The objective of most breeders was to water down the intense gene pool that was producing illnesses that were killing off noticeable numbers of the breed. But we soon found that the imported dogs brought with them other issues. The FCI standard is not the same as the AKC standard and health testing was not carried forth in Ireland or in parts of Europe as it was in the US. Some imported dogs were also carrying genes for black or grey coloring that had been eliminated years before here.

THE PROBLEM

The 2017 Best of Breed rings at the Delaware Valley Specialty held with Bucks County Kennel Club and at the SCWTCA specialty held with the Montgomery County Kennel Club Show certainly showed improvement from 1973 and some succeeding as well, but there are some obvious issues.

- Long bodies! Some argue that they are short on leg, but I am seeing long rib cages and long top lines.
- Black faces, beards and ears... neither standard calls for these and in fact, color should be clear by two years of age.
- Tails are everywhere...too long, too short, gay, or low-set
- Ears hang low and wiggle to and fro, (kidding), but expression does matter. After all, Wheatens are Terriers!
- Broad skulls, coarseness
- Coats looking wooly—some of those may just be poor scissoring or improper thinning. There are some lovely Irish coats in the ring as well as some lovely American coats that haven't been blown stick straight.

Presentation is a problem that isn't going to be improved by better breeding practices. Actually a better dog under the coat would help. It would be great if exhibitors understood the meaning of two words, moderation and blending. Breeders and exhibitors would benefit



Gleanngay Holliday with his handler, late Peggy Belviso



Gleanngay Holliday with breeder, Gay Dunlap

from reading the Illustrated Standard and then watching the specialty video.

Note that beards and falls are bizarre on many dogs. Many tuck-ups are not blended but appear as curtains under the body and don't begin to follow the lines of the dog. Yes, it is easier to critique than to do the actual work but the very best way to learn is to observe and then to practice. Some things can be helped with the use of a quality shampoo, more practice grooming, moving the dog between snips etc. But, if you don't have a picture in your mind's eye of a really great Wheaten, whether you be judge, breeder or professional handler, the results will not be great.

THE SOLUTION

Let's go back to the Illustrated Standard. It won't produce miracles but will provide a guide for evaluating dogs, picking the right puppy, grooming well and quite possibly might lead to making better breeding decisions.

The pages in the beginning of the booklet titled "Essence of SCWT Type", pack major punch.

COAT—SOFT, SILKY, WAVING, FLOWING, WARM WHEATEN COLOR

If the coat is all chopped off, it does not wave or flow. If it is too long, it flops.

Watch dogs and emulate grooming that highlights the outline of the dog without coat flopping and getting in the way of the dog's movement. Bad grooming gives the illusion of movement issues that often aren't there. Dull coats are not to be rewarded and there should be no gray in the adult coat nor should the beard or fall be black. We are talking about a Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier!

SILHOUETTE

Square cannot be emphasized enough! Judges reward too many long, low dogs. Perhaps they are judging on movement but, in doing so, they are ignoring one of the four most important aspects of Wheaten type. A Wheaten should hold its square outline as it moves and should maintain a level top line. The Wheaten should hold its square outline as it moves and should maintain a level top line. The tail should be carried high and erect, straight up from the back with plenty of dog behind it. Imports will carry natural tails which may be carried forward over the back. To determine whether the tail is correct, visually dock it level to the top of the neck, where the neck joins the head. If the tail is erect to that point, it is correct. Dogs with long tails in classes other than OPEN were bred in the USA where docked tails

are preferred. Wheatens are not sun-lovers but they should show with erect tails. Overly aggressive or fearful dogs are not useful in breeding programs. Excuses made for poor temperament only harm the breed and its future.

HEAD

The head is a rectangle, not a square skull with a rectangle attached. The skull and foreface should be equal in length. The cheeks and the skull should be smooth and clean on three sides. The ears should be small to medium... not large and hanging low. Terrier expression, often expressed with the ear carriage, is important on Wheatens just as it is on any other Terrier! The Wheaten should have ears set so that the tip is level with the outside corner of the eye. You should also see a big black nose.

ATTITUDE

A Wheaten should appear happy, but steady. Males should stand their ground when faced off, but should not appear aggressive.

Relating the pictures in the Illustrated Standard to one's own dog might prove difficult. It requires looking past the emotions of loving the puppy you have raised and seeing the dog that is in front of you. If that is possible, a true breeder lies within. ■

SOFT COATED WHEATEN TERRIER

COURTESY THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

General Appearance: The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier is a medium-sized, hardy, well balanced sporting terrier, square in outline. He is distinguished by his soft, silky, gently waving coat of warm wheaten color and his particularly steady disposition. The breed requires moderation both in structure and presentation, and any exaggerations are to be shunned. He should present the overall appearance of an alert and happy animal, graceful, strong and well coordinated.

Size, Proportion, Substance: A dog shall be 18 to 19 inches at the withers, the ideal being 18½. A bitch shall be 17 to 18 inches at the withers, the ideal being 17½. Major Faults - Dogs under 18 inches or over 19 inches; bitches under 17 inches or over 18 inches. Any deviation must be penalized according to the degree of its severity. Square in outline. Hardy, well balanced. Dogs should weigh 35 to 40 pounds; bitches 30 to 35 pounds.

Head: Well balanced and in proportion to the body. Rectangular in appearance; moderately long. Powerful with no suggestion of coarseness. Eyes dark reddish brown or brown, medium in size, slightly almond shaped and set fairly wide apart. Eye rims black. Major Fault - Anything approaching a yellow eye. Ears small to medium in size, breaking level with the skull and dropping slightly forward, the inside edge of the ear lying next to the cheek and pointing to the ground rather than to the eye. A hound ear or a high-breaking ear is not typical and should be severely penalized. Skull flat and clean between ears. Cheekbones not prominent. Defined stop. Muzzle powerful and strong, well filled below the eyes. No suggestion of snipiness. Skull and foreface of equal length. Nose black and large for size of dog. Major Fault - Any nose color other than solid black. Lips tight and black. Teeth large, clean and white; scissors or level bite. Major Fault - Undershot or overshot.

Neck, Topline, Body: Neck medium in length, clean and strong, not throaty. Carried proudly, it gradually widens, blending smoothly into the body. Back strong and level. Body compact; relatively short coupled. Chest is deep. Ribs are well sprung but without roundness. Tail is set on high. Docked tail preferred. Whether docked or natural, the tail is to be carried upright 90 degrees from the back, either straight or with a slight curve forward. Any deviation from this ideal is to be penalized accordingly.

Forequarters: Shoulders well laid back, clean and smooth; well knit. Forelegs straight and well boned. All dewclaws should be removed. Feet are round and compact with good depth of pad. Pads black. Nails dark.

Hindquarters: Hind legs well developed with well bent stifles turning neither in nor out; hocks well let down and parallel to

each other. All dewclaws should be removed. The presence of dewclaws on the hind legs should be penalized. Feet are round and compact with good depth of pad. Pads black. Nails dark.

Coat: A distinguishing characteristic of the breed which sets the dog apart from all other terriers. An abundant single coat covering the entire body, legs and head; coat on the latter falls forward to shade the eyes. Texture soft and silky with a gentle wave. In both puppies and adolescents, the mature wavy coat is generally not yet evident. Major Faults - Woolly or harsh, crisp or cottony, frizzy, kinky or standaway coat; in the adult, a straight coat is also objectionable.

Presentation - For show purposes, the Wheaten is presented to show a terrier outline, but coat must be of sufficient length to flow when the dog is in motion. The coat must never be clipped or plucked. Sharp contrasts or stylizations must be avoided. Head coat should be blended to present a rectangular outline. Eyes should be indicated but never fully exposed. Ears should be relieved of fringe, but not taken down to the leather. Sufficient coat must be left on skull, cheeks, neck and tail to balance the proper length of body coat. Dogs that are overly trimmed shall be severely penalized.

Color: Any shade of wheaten. Upon close examination, occasional red, white or black guard hairs may be found. However, the overall coloring must be clearly wheaten with no evidence of any other color except on ears and muzzle where blue-gray shading is sometimes present. Major Fault - Any color save wheaten. Puppies and Adolescents - Puppies under a year may carry deeper coloring and occasional black tipping. The adolescent, under two years, is often quite light in color, but must never be white or carry gray other than on ears and muzzle. However, by two years of age, the proper wheaten color should be obvious.

Gait: Gait is free, graceful and lively with good reach in front and strong drive behind. Front and rear feet turn neither in nor out. Dogs who fail to keep their tails erect when moving should be severely penalized.

Temperament: The Wheaten is a happy, steady dog and shows himself gaily with an air of self-confidence. He is alert and exhibits interest in his surroundings; exhibits less aggressiveness than is sometimes encouraged in other terriers. Major Fault - Timid or overly aggressive dogs.



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Q&A ON SOFT COATED WHEATEN TERRIERS

JULIE FELTEN

I reside in Wauconda, Illinois, a north-west suburb of Chicago. I am employed as an insurance agent specializing in home and auto products. Outside of dogs I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, music, bird watching and shopping. I've had dogs since my early childhood, showing for about thirty years and judging since 2000.



KATHY FERRIS

I live in Holland, Pennsylvania and grew up in Connecticut. I run our family's large boarding/grooming kennel. I am a second-generation dog person and I have been involved for 45 years. I have been a breeder/owner/exhibitor, a professional handler and I am currently an AKC licensed judge.



SUE GOLDBERG

We live in northern New Jersey, when it's not snowing, and in southwest Florida when the weather starts to get chilly. Outside of dogs, I am an executive recruiter, retained by corporate clients to fill their senior level positions. We've been involved with Wheatens since 1968 when they were still in the Miscellaneous class. I started showing in 1971 and started judging in 1995. We have produced 70 Champions, mostly breeder/owner handled by me, multiple Specialty winners, multiple Group Winners, a Best in Show bitch and three of the Top Producers in the breed.

1. Describe the breed in three words.

JF: Good tempered, happy and spirited.

KF: Joyful, moderate and square.

SG: Square outline, silky coat and exuberant personality.

2. What are your "must have" traits in this breed?

JF: A soft, wavy flowing coat, square and medium in size and a rectangular head that is moderately long and in balance with his silhouette. Correctly positioned small to medium ears and a medium length of neck, transitioning smoothly into his well laid back shoulders. Steady attitude. Must be able to cover ground in efficient and graceful sporting Terrier fashion.

KF: Proper coat color and texture, clean, never coarse head and body with balance.

SG: A square, balanced outline, bang-up tail, shoe-box head, soft, silky wheaten-colored coat, moderation in all aspects, including structure and presentation, an easy gait and a confident, happy, outgoing personality.

3. Are there any traits in this breed you fear are becoming exaggerated?

JF: Heads too coarse and small for the body. If the proportions are correct, then the head should be approximately the same length as the neck.

KF: Length of body causing the look of an Irish Terrier when moving and overdone heavy heads.

SG: A few years back, extremes and exaggerations were a concern. That is, too short backed, too long necked and too big. Size has always been a concern and still is, though it seems to be improving.

4. Do you think the dogs you see in this breed are better now than they were when you first started judging? Why or why not?

JF: As one of the largest Terrier entries at all breed shows, the breed is alive and well. Overall the quality is about the same as when I first started judging. I feel the breeders are doing a fine job keeping the SCWT on track. Kudos to them for keeping their breeding programs active and attracting new breed people.

KF: I do think this breed has improved. There is much greater consistency of type and you can find depth of quality in the classes when there is a large entry. Perhaps more attention was paid to structure with stabilizing type. I also think a greater education of coat quality has helped especially judges understand that nuance of the breed, allowing them to award correct specimens.

SG: I started judging soon after a flux of imports was brought into this country in a well-intended, but misguided, attempt to expand the gene pool. With them

**"AS ONE OF THE
LARGEST TERRIER ENTRIES
AT ALL BREED SHOWS,
THE BREED
IS ALIVE AND
WELL."**

came roller-coaster topline, long backs, wedge-shaped heads, low tailsets and testy temperaments. It set the breed back 30 years. It has been a long road back, but we seem to be recovering and getting back to the square, upstanding, confident sporting Terrier that our standard describes. However, having recently judged our Roving National, it was distressing to see many exhibits with huge ears—a problem we had conquered years ago and now has come back again like a bad penny!

5. What do you think new judges misunderstand about the breed?

JF: Clever grooming is rampant in the breed.

KF: That they are soft and wooly instead of the importance of correct texture with color. They also need to remember it is still a Terrier and should have a proper body structure with good muscle underneath to follow with form and function.

SG: Structurally, the Wheaten is a moderate, square dog with level topline, butt behind the tail, a rectangular head and an easy gait. The hardest thing for new judges to master is coat quality. While coats don't vary nearly as much as they used to—when they often looked like what a friend once described as, "Wooly Coated Whitens" instead of Soft Coated Wheatens—some judges need help distinguishing soft and cottony from soft and silky. A silky coat that has sufficient length to flow when the dog is in motion is a joy to behold.

6. Is there anything else you'd like to share about the breed? Please elaborate.

JF: Please do not hesitate to spar the breed. Seeing a well-constructed SCWT standing on its toes in proper soft wavy coat, alert to his surroundings, is a sight to behold.

KF: This should be a self-assured, fun-loving breed.

When you judge them they should make you smile. You should look for that when structure and type are equal.

SG: Wheaten color never fully stabilizes, but must always be clear, not gray or smutty. The standard says, "any shade from pale gold to warm honey"—just like a field of ripe wheat. Puppies are often darker in color; adolescents may be very light.

I suggest to my mentees that they wear something white when judging our breed to distinguish it from the pale wheaten color of an adolescent and to be wary of gray or black anywhere other than the perfectly acceptable blue-gray ears or beard. Gray elsewhere, such as shoulders, elbows, top skull, etc. should be shunned as it will most likely be passed down generation after generation. Additionally, judges need to be aware

"A SILKY COAT THAT HAS SUFFICIENT LENGTH TO FLOW WHEN THE DOG IS IN MOTION IS A JOY TO BEHOLD."

that our standard requires that dogs that are overly trimmed be "severely penalized" as the coat is a distinguishing characteristic of our breed.

7. And, for a bit of humor: what's the funniest thing you've ever experienced at a dog show?

KF: We used to joke that certain successful handlers could win even if they walked in to the ring with a pig. The old Tar-Heel Circuit used to be known for fun events and great participation from all the exhibitors, breeders, handlers and judges. We were watching the groups when one of the very well-known handlers did exactly that with a potbellied pig under one of the group judges. People laughed so hard it brought tears to the eyes. Those kind of things always helped remind us that we should never take ourselves too seriously and enjoy our sport.

SG: Many years ago I finished a bitch whose co-owner decided to put a CD on her himself. They were going for her last leg at a show where I was showing another of our Wheatens in conformation. The obedience ring was quite nearby and we were on at the same time. As I was exiting the breed ring, I heard them call the Field Rep to the obedience ring. He had to make a determination as to whether she would qualify for her CD. It seems she spotted me in the breed ring and performed her entire heel exercise watching me with her head at her owner's knee—speeding up, slowing down, sitting when he stopped—backwards! At the time the obedience rules only said the dog's head must be at the handler's knee; it did not specify the way the dog must be facing, so she got her CD! ■

WHAT'S UNDER THAT COAT?

...AN EDUCATED LOOK AT THE SOFT COATED WHEATEN TERRIER

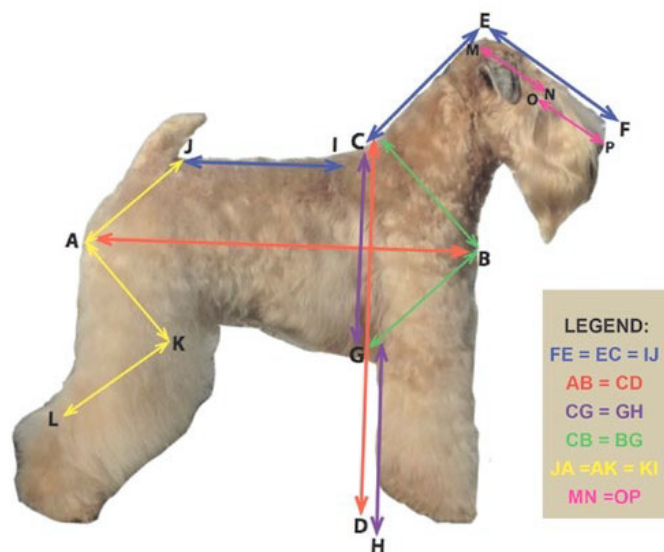
by GAY DUNLAP

There's a sound and well-structured dog under that coat...or at least there should be. Can you tell visually or do you feel you must put your hands on the dog to determine its true make and shape? Certainly artful groomers can set lie to what is really under a jacket and this is true with most, if not all, coated breeds. Those of us that come from coated breeds and also know our way around with a pair of scissors are usually quite adept at spying the tell-tail signs of a dog that is little more than a hair cut. Others, not so much. Hair can hide a lot, so with this in mind, here are a few visual aids which hopefully will help in speeding up the judging process among those less familiar with "the tricks of the trade" used by handlers and other scissor-gifted exhibitors.

First, let's take a look at this well-balanced Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier. He has been artfully trimmed. His proportions appear quite correct although there are a couple of qualities that can't be immediately assessed. Is the topline absolutely level (we have a tendency toward prominent lumbar vertebrae) and is there sufficient bend of stifle? Otherwise, everything we need to know structurally is there if we know what we are looking at. With the properly proportioned SCWT, length of head, neck and back should be equal (blue lines). Body length, sternum to pin bone, should be equal to height, withers to ground (red lines). Length of back skull should equal foreface (pink lines). Depth of body, withers to brisket, should equal length of leg, elbow to ground (purple lines). Shoulder

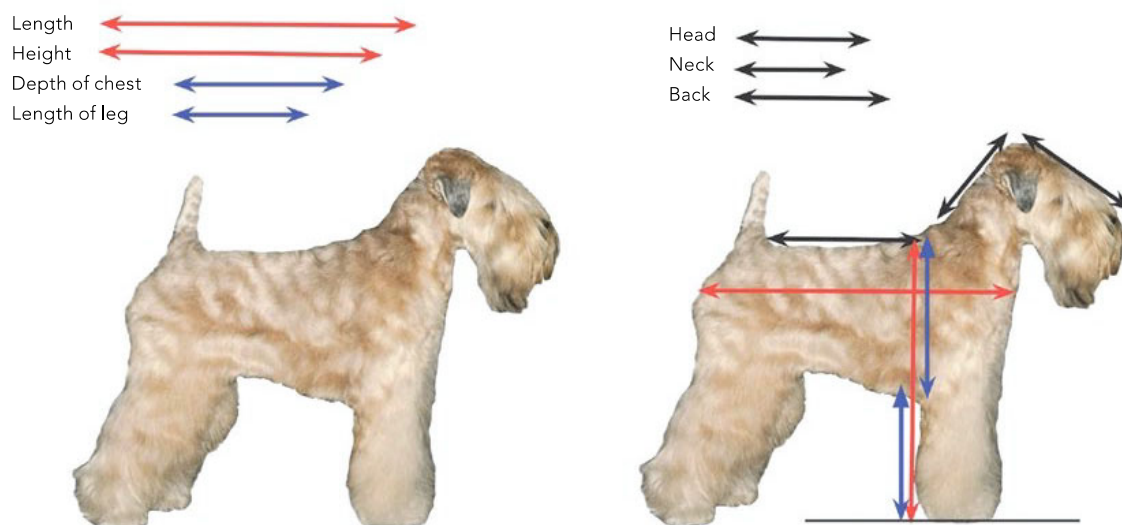
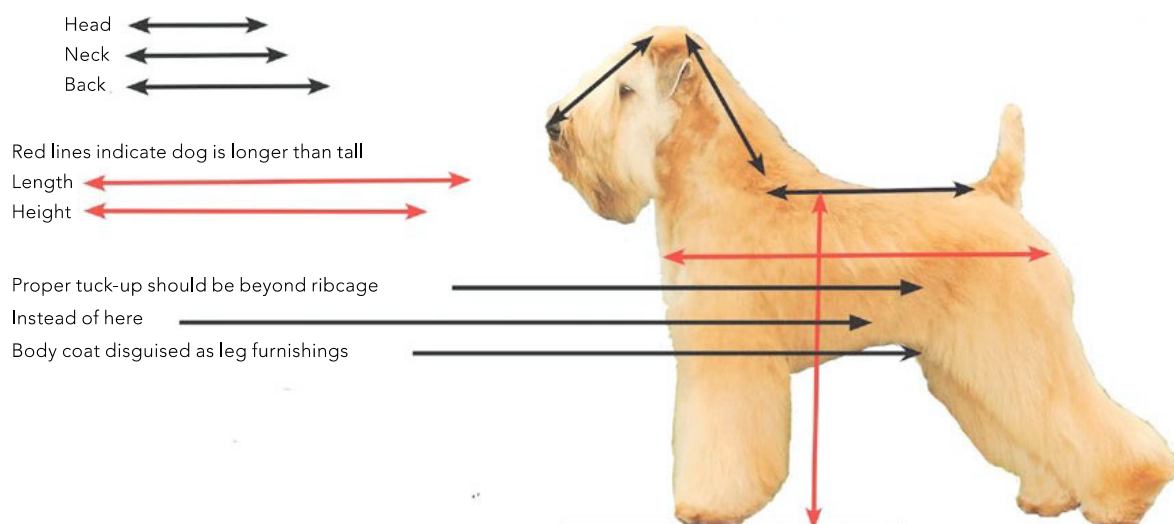
and forearm, set at a 90° angle, should be equal in length (green lines); rear angles are equal (yellow lines).

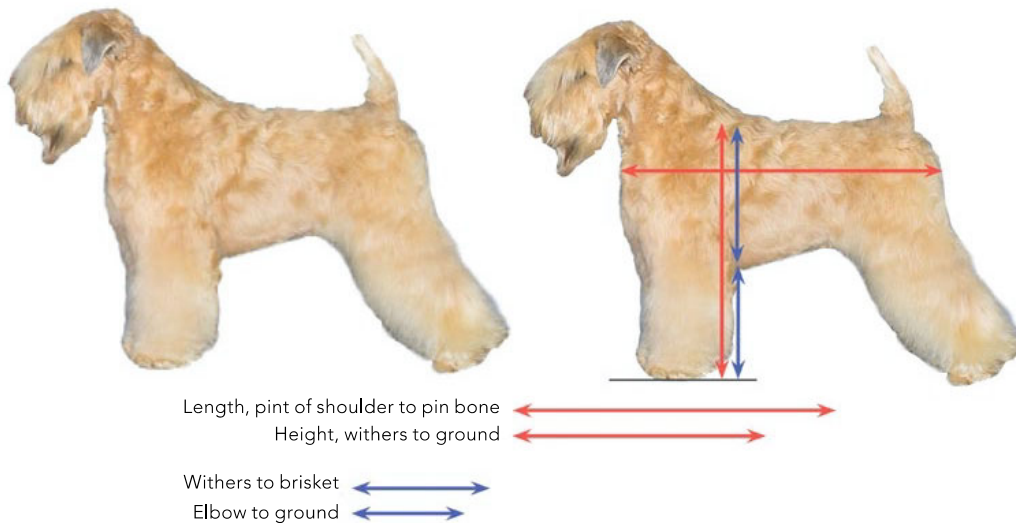
In the best of worlds, the measurements here would be equal as specified in the legend. When one considers the possible build up of coat in certain areas, the dog used in the diagram comes pretty darn close. Of course, these measurements represent perfection. Perfection, although difficult to achieve, should always be that for which we strive. He may have a slightly longer second thigh (K-L), something hard to determine under the leg furnishings. Additionally, if body depth (C-G) equals elbow-to-ground (G-H) he appears to need a tad more leg. To my eye, this dog displays beautiful breed type with pleasing balance and angles.



Let's proceed to examine other SCWT outlines in the same manner. Clever groomers have created several techniques designed to suggest a shorter back. One is to back-comb and tease hair from the lower portion of the neck, withers and part way down the back. When a dog appears to have a neck as thick as this one, it is a dead giveaway that the dog is not as short backed as one might suppose. It is also hard to determine shoulder layback under all the hair. In the same manner, build up of hair in front of the tail can easily hide a low set tail and/or croup drop-off. Excess hair on the top-skull can create the impression of both a longer head and a longer neck. The latter also makes the ear, which should be level with or slightly above top-skull, appear low set. Another ruse, designed to create a back shorter than it really is, is to bring the tuck-up further forward than the loin area and allow the side skirt behind the ersatz tuck-up to appear as leg furnishings. Based on the over-stretched rear, I would suspect a straight stifle.

Below is another dog with slightly different proportions. Obviously, head, neck and back are not equal. It is lacking sufficient neck to balance a pleasing length of head. It is also slightly longer than tall. The lack of neck would indicate an upright shoulder. Added to that, the dog is low on leg.





Here is one more example of the build up of hair over withers used to create the illusion of a shorter back, although in this case, not so successfully. The lack of balance is further destroyed by the fact that the dog is low on leg, certainly not helped by excessive coat left on the undercarriage.

Taking a brief look at the correct Wheaten head, many that we see in the ring today are thick with coarse back skulls that form a three-dimensional block (width, length, depth) instead of a neat, clean brick (narrow, long and lean). Heads tend to be square rather than rectangular. Skull and muzzle should each be rectangular, equal in length and on equal planes. Ideally, the skull is easily spanned by a woman's hand. The two photos taken from the front do not take into account the foreshortening of muzzle but hopefully project that the width of the skull should be approximately half the length of the head and, also, that the muzzle should not fall off or lose width to any appreciable degree.

It is hoped that those reading this article will be inspired to more thoughtful judging (and breeding) of the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, understanding as well that much of it can be applied to other coated breeds, notably the Kerry Blue Terrier. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Approved by the AKC to judge the Terrier and Toy Groups, Poodles, Dachshunds, Miscellaneous, Juniors and Best in Show. Ms. Dunlap bred Yorkshire Terriers briefly, followed by Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers (since 1970) under the Gleanngay prefix, with over 160 champions, including BIS, Specialty and Group winners. She bred and owned the top-producing Terrier sire of all time, Ch Gleanngay Holliday, ROM. She has judged across the US and has also adjudicated in Australia, Canada, China, Finland, Ireland and Sweden.



A regular contributor to numerous periodicals, she wrote the SCWT Standard Amplification and produced the SCWT Illustrated Breed Standard and Amplification, along with the SCWTCA Judges Study Guide DVD. She has also served as editor of the SCWTCA quarterly publication, Benchmarks, and as an AKC Delegate, representing SCWTCA. Additionally, she is web-master for ADSJ.

She chairs the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America's Judges Education Committee and serves as president of the Miniature Bull Terrier Club of Southern California. She is a member of the Kennel Club of Palm Springs, American Dog Judges Association, Dog Judges Association of America, the AKC Canine Health Foundation and Take The Lead.

She lives in Indio, CA with her 13-year old SCWT, Tilly, and a 2-year old Mini Bull Terrier, Roxy.

Her favorite pastimes at home include cooking, reading, web design, tennis and listening to classical music.



TO TRIM OR NOT TO TRIM?

That is the Question!

By Sue Goldberg

In the late 1960s, we were living on Long Island and looking for a non-shedding dog in addition to our Pixiecroft-sired miniature Poodle. Attending the Westbury Kennel Club show, watching the Miscellaneous Class, we fell in love with what was then called the Soft Coated Wheaten. Note that the word “terrier” was omitted from the name. Good thing. We had two young sons—we would never consider a TERRIER! Billed as a miniature sheepdog, these were shaggy, happy, fun-loving, medium-sized and non-shedding. Perfect for a young family.

After nearly three years of following the breed, we finally acquired our first Wheaten: Legenderry's Iollann the Fair, ROM, pick of the first litter sired by Jackie Gottlieb's Ch. Stephen Dedalus of Andover (“Sweeney”), who was to become the watershed sire of our breed. He was personality-plus crowned with a glorious, untrimmed, silky golden coat and I was hook, line and sinker in love. I told my husband if I ever left him for another male, it would be for this dog!

Sweeney's pretty, golden sheepdog look changed the course of Wheatens at the

time as it had great appeal to the meticulous housewife and stay-at-home Moms and that's what most of us were. My “mentors” in the breed were in it maybe two or three years longer than I. None of us were “dog people”, coming to Wheatens from other breeds. We were a bunch of PTA Moms learning as we went.

AKC recognition was a distant goal; for now, we'd show in Miscellaneous, get our ribbon and go home. We proudly wore our t-shirts that read “I Love Wheatens NATURALLY!” and aimed for the Non-Sporting group to allow us to retain the untrimmed look. Meanwhile, across the Delaware River, in Pennsylvania, lived our arch enemies: “The Trimmers”!

The Trimmers believed these were terriers and thus these heretics trimmed the coats and docked the tails to a length more in keeping with a handle of a vermin-hunter—rather repugnant to Non-Trimmers who worshipped the long, flowing locks of our pretty house pets. We docked the tails quite short—a la Sheepdog—and the length of the tail alone revealed on which side of the Delaware the dog had been bred. Judges said they looked like two different breeds.

In 1973, recognition came and we were assigned to the Terrier Group. While most of us were figuring out Reserve Winners, the race to finish the first Champions began. Jackie turned Sweeney over to the venerable Cliff Hallmark to handle; Cliff picked up his scissors and turned our mascot into a TERRIER! The halcyon days were over. The two factions made peace and reluctantly, we began to trim and, with many variations along the way, eventually developed the look of today: six hours of studied naturalness!

Fortunately, from our original Standard to the current, the mantra remains the same: The Wheaten is a natural dog and must so appear. Our Standard states, “Coat: A distinguishing characteristic of the breed which sets the dog apart from all other Terriers. The Wheaten is presented to show a terrier outline, but coat must be of sufficient length to flow when the dog is in motion.” It adds, “Dogs that are overly trimmed shall be severely penalized.” We count on the judges to preserve that distinction.

We've come a long way since then, and a square Wheaten with a bang-up tail and a silky flowing coat is a joy to behold. I must confess, however, that when I see a five-month-old untrimmed puppy with that mini-Sheepdog look, my heart still melts. ■

BIO

Sue Goldberg, Wheatens of Shandalee, is a Breeder of Merit with 70 Champions, Group and Specialty winners and 3 of the breeds Top Producers to her credit. She co-authored the SCWTCA Owners' Manual, Code of Ethics, and the Breed Standard. She has been a keynote speaker at numerous seminars, a Delegate since 1988 and judges the Terrier and Sporting Groups, half the Non-Sporting breeds, Juniors and BIS. She judged Wheatens at Montgomery in 2010; two National Specialties in Canada; multiple Regional Specialties across the US, plus numerous Terrier and Sporting Specialties; as well as assignments in Europe and China.



The 'mini-Sheepdog' look that put the breed on the map on the East Coast. The year is 1971. Note the length of the tail.



By 1990, we had achieved and accepted the trim we see today: a square terrier outline yet leaving enough coat to flow when the dog is in motion. Note that tails were now docked longer.

JUDGING WHEATENS

By Richard Urquart

When AJ asked if I would write this article for *Show-Sight Magazine* he said he had no instructions other than, “I want you to talk about what you think every judge should know when they walk into a ring full of Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers.”

My first thought was that not many judges get to see a ring full of the breed. I have been actively breeding and showing since 1984 and outside of the National and Regional Specialties and a few areas in California and on the East Coast, very seldom are there full rings of our wonderful breed—at least in the classes.

My second thought was that I would obviously need to reference the standard, I didn’t want to repeat the classic, “How to judge X breed” article going over the standard in a detailed fashion and opining on the meaning of what “well-boned” or describing a “tail set on high” as they might apply to the SCWT. (See the National’s Judges Education CD found on scwtca.org for a very detailed overview of the standard complete with all of the appropriate pictures.)

I decided to take you into a ring full of SCWTs (or least one with a few good ones) and tell you what I look for when judging. When I breed I want to improve (or at least not hurt) the dogs I am breeding, so in choosing breeding stock I will be very critical of individual traits. But in this article I hope to convey how I use

the standard as a judge of the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, a judge who happens to be a breeder and exhibitor. I do admit that on occasion a breeder bias may influence how I weigh the individual traits of an entry, but I consciously try to ignore them when judging.

So, I walk into a ring full (or maybe not so full) of SCWTs—where to begin? How about with the entire standard!? It is very easy for a judge to memorize the characteristics outlined in the standard, to break down into sections and then subsections those characteristics, letting those be the stand alone deciding factors, good or bad. It is a lot more difficult to see all of the individual characteristics (good and bad) as a whole and evaluate the overall quality of the dog.

For me, there are a two descriptions of SCWTs in the very first section of the breed standard (General Appearance) that for me form the basic frame in which I begin to observe and evaluate my entries. As I view each of the dogs, watch them move and examine them individually, I want to see and feel a “medium-sized, hardy, well-balanced sporting terriers, square in outline” that present “the overall appearance of an alert and happy animal, graceful, strong and well coordinated.”

With those two descriptions I can generally evaluate the overall quality of the dogs in the first moments after they enter the ring—during the initial lineup as they stand and during the first go around. To be more descriptive: what I am hopefully seeing and beginning to sketch in my frame

is the essence of the breed: the coat, the silhouette, the head and the attitude. I, like most judges, stand back and look at the entire lineup. Immediately, assuming the individual entries have been trimmed to “show a terrier outline” meaning a “square”, “sporting terrier outline”, I should be able to see clearly the balance, length of leg and proportions of each entry. A sporting terrier outline for a SCWT is square, if the length of the dog as measured from the chest to the rump (or for the pedantic: the prosternum to the ischium) is equal to the height of the dog as measured from the top of the withers to the ground. The exhibit is not a well-balanced sporting terrier if the length of the leg from the floor to the elbow and the elbow to the top of the withers is not equal and length of the neck to the length of the head to the length of the back. No tape measure is required—I know it when I see it. However, I am also aware that until I see the dogs move and put my hands on each, what I am seeing may also be misleading.

There are other qualities that begin to stand out as I walk the line and look at each exhibit, and they take their place in my framework. Are the “legs straight” and parallel, and do the stifles appear well bent? Does the dog have some width in the rear as it stands? I get a better feel for this when I have the dog free stack after the down and back and I walk around the rear of the dog. Does the head seem to be well balanced and in proportion to the body? Are the ears “small to medium in size” and do they appear to break even with

“...I want to see and feel a ‘medium-sized, hardy, well-balanced sporting terriers, square in outline’ that present

‘THE OVERALL APPEARANCE OF AN ALERT AND HAPPY ANIMAL, GRACEFUL, STRONG AND WELL COORDINATED.’”

the skull? And, using the frame in which I am making my observations: is the dog “alert” and “happy”? Does it appear to be self confident in its attitude and expression? Again, the standard describes the requisite temperament to include a dog that is not only alert, but one that also “exhibits interest” in his surroundings. I observe the coat and start to get a feel for size (I know where 18 and 19 inches are on my leg), and although I am not necessarily at that point “measuring” the dogs it still a characteristic of which I am conscious.

I then move the dogs around together. I continue to frame my observations: is the gait “free, graceful and lively with good reach in front and strong drive behind?” Temperament quality becomes more defined: “The Wheaten is a happy, steady dog and shows himself gaily with an air of self confidence” and with tail erect. At this time I can begin to fill in another important detail: is the dog maintaining the outline of a Sporting Terrier even on the move? The standard reads that the neck should be “carried proudly”—if read in conjunction with the more specific directive that the length neck is “medium” that clearly means while moving the profile must be maintained.

In addition, maintaining its profile on the move is consistent with the “compact” body that is “relatively short coupled. However, if the moving entry is consistently dropping its head and begins to appear streamlined, it is most often too long. And the profile must continue to be balanced while on the move: does the neck disappear into the shoulders on the move? Is the back “level” as the dog moves and is it “strong” without flexing or hard up and down movement? Hard pounding does not make for stamina or more precisely, a sound dog. And to repeat, these observations are being placed my frame: is the dog “alert and happy animal” and is it “graceful, strong and well coordinated”?

A little history that is the material from which I have constructed my frame—although the breed is a 20th century addition to the sport of dog showing and its Irish history lost in the mists of time, the breed has been known for over 200 years. SCWTs were not only used as an all



purpose farm dog that could rid its territory of vermin, it was also a capable gun dog—most likely for a poacher—while being equally at home herding its owner’s livestock. In my opinion, that history dictates a “hardy” dog that should be capable of powerfully covering ground effortlessly and with stamina.

As the dog moves, I also consider what many believe to be the defining characteristic of the dog, but which the standard twice describes as “a distinguishing characteristic.” I mentioned it earlier as part of the essence of the breed. It often causes the most angst among non-breeder judges: the coat. During movement, I hopefully see coats that exhibit a “soft, silky and gently waving nature” that have “sufficient length to flow” as the dogs goes around. I always remember the standard directive that states, “Dogs that are overly trimmed shall be severely penalized.”

Without spending a considerable amount of time, judges of our breed should be aware, as am I, that the standard also states, “In both puppies and adolescents, the mature wavy coat is generally not yet evident.” Under color it reads: “Any shade of wheaten.” The vast majority of entries in the classes are either young adolescents that are of a lighter color or puppies that are often times darker. Adult coats are really not fully evident until 3-4 years of age and although some Specials may sport the full adult coat, many judges may never see the soft, silky and gently waving coat that is prized. When that coat is dis-

played, it is most often of varying shades of wheat. The adult coat is very seldom a solid color and may even carry some black guard hairs. Although there is nothing wrong with placing puppies in the ribbons—even BOB if it truly exudes breed essence, do not ignore the adult with the mature coat because it appears to be the odd man out in a ring full of puppies and adolescents. Although the finer nuances of coat type could be the subject of a more extensive article, suffice it to say that my approach is that the dog under the coat is the more important part of the package I am judging.

From a breeder’s perspective, improving the coat of a SCWT is far easier than improving a front or rear end assembly. Given two, three or four exhibits of equal quality (and I mean equal quality overall), then the coat, a component of the breed’s essence, may be a deciding factor—emphasis on the “may be.”

Finally, the individual examination: I can now almost complete the picture I have been painting in my frame, filling in the details and highlights and perhaps find the perfect SCWT—not!

I can now see that the profiles that were held by the entries with the good reach and drive I saw on the go around are consistent with the short backs, and relatively short loins I am now feeling, and perhaps confirm that the drop in the head of another is consistent with the long back and/or long loin. I feel the “well laid back” and “well knit” shoulders that are clean

“But I keep in mind that
**SPARRING IS ALL OR NOTHING,
WIN OR LOSE.”**

and smooth, and because they are supported by a dog with a deep chest and well sprung ribs—the clean movement I observe when the dog comes back to me is totally expected. Wow, this entry may be somewhat loaded in the shoulders, but there is absolutely no break in the transition from neck to back at all. The bend of the stifles is there. It is not an illusion created by a skilled groomer, as was the length of neck and blending of neck to back on another well-conditioned and athletic entry that also seemed to have good reach and drive on the move. The hocks are parallel and the feet are round and compact. This feminine bitch has good substance and bone—not fat, but if you were to lift her, she would seem to weigh more than you would expect of a bitch her size. You feel it in the bone and muscle, she is hardy and could survive the harshness of the Irish life that requires her to free whelp in barns and haystacks, to go after a badger for her owner and then rest peacefully by the fire in the evening.

This one has the gorgeous shiny and more open adult coat of the land of origin that drops every bit of dirt or mud by the end of day—without being brushed—and that one has a soft, wavy, abundant coat with a deep wheaten color. I put my hands on heads that appeared well proportioned on observation and I begin to find the head planes: a “skull flat and clean between the ears” equal with the “foreface” with a “defined stop” and “no suggestion of snappiness.” The entry has a “powerful and strong” muzzle, is “well filled below the eyes” with “cheekbones not prominent.” There is a scissor bite (level on another is acceptable) with clean, white, large teeth. Oh, and look at those “dark reddish brown or brown”

eyes that are “almond-shaped” and which were only “indicated” in the trim of the head before I pulled the fall back to fully expose them. And lastly size... I can now more accurately estimate the size (at the withers) of the individual dogs. I keep in mind that under General Appearance it states that “the breed requires moderation both in structure and presentation, and any exaggerations are to be shunned.” Although size need only be penalized according to severity—if it is excessive it can result in the loss of breed type.

I have one final tool: sparring. I do it. But I keep in mind that sparring is all or nothing, win or lose. If a dog fails to proudly stand its ground with confidence, remaining alert to the presence of the other dog(s) while defending if necessary or even expanding its territory, it will loose in my ring. If it seems to become an aggressor I will need to decide on the basis of other information whether I believe it is “overly aggressive,” a major fault. Although a SCWT “exhibits less aggressiveness” than other terriers, they are nonetheless a terrier, and a display of timidity is also a major fault. I have decided the BOB because of the spar—some gaining the ribbon and some losing. Bitches can be sparred, but I don’t expect them to do much more than ignore the others, but that doesn’t mean that any one of them should be intimidated or shy either and I won’t be surprised if one Alpha bitch decides to chase off another who invades her “territory.”

Now the fun part. I have a ring full of Specials or Class Winners that all have many good breed characteristics and that all have one or two minor problems that could be improved. I get to decide which of these will get the ribbons today. Which ones have been presented to exude

the essence of the breed? Which ones have consistently displayed a “take on the world attitude” either by standing aloof and self confident as they alertly observed their fellow entries or perhaps have displayed exuberance for life as a whole as they watched other rings and dogs with interest? Which dogs/bitches not only carry their balanced sporting terrier profile as they gracefully move around the ring, but also do so with a regal self-confidence or an adventurous “let’s go” attitude? Which ones with the requisite good reach and drive do so effortlessly and with a hint of untapped power as their coats flowed while carrying their tails fully “upright 90° from the back?”

Decision time. ■

BIO

Sonya and I have been actively breeding and showing since 1984 as Marquee Wheatens. We have finished over 50 champions, a good number of which have been owner handled from the BBE class, including a WD who finished with two back-back 5 point majors from the BBE class at Devon and the SCWTC National Specialty at MKC (under Anne Rogers Clark and Breeder/Judge Gary Vlachos) and then followed up with a BOB at the National Roving Specialty the following year (2001).

I am a semi-retired attorney and approved to judge SCWTs. I have judged a number of specialties including Great Western and NCTA weekends and I will have the honor, by vote of the membership, of judging the SCWTCA National Specialty at MKC in 2014. We are members of the Northern California Terrier Club as well as the National and are presently residents of Heflin, Alabama.

