

**The
American Brussels Griffon
Association**

Illustrated Breed Standard Guide





PREFACE

This Illustrated Standard Guide has been prepared under the auspices of the American Brussels Griffon Association for judges, as well as breeders and exhibitors, of the Brussels Griffon. It is intended as a tool to help visualize the perfect Brussels Griffon with a consistent interpretation of the breed Standard.

ILLUSTRATED BREED STANDARD COMMITTEE:

Lorene Vickers-Smith, Chairman
Dawn Vick Hansen
Marjorie Simon

BREED STANDARD COMMITTEE:

Dawn Vick Hansen, Chairman
Iris de la Torre Bueno
Jacque Jones
Richard Thomas
Marjorie Simon

On the following pages, **the official AKC Brussels Griffon Standard will be printed in bold type.** The Amplification of the Standard will follow in regular type.

The American Kennel Club computer imaging program was utilized in the preparation of this illustrated standard.





HISTORY

From the backstreets of Brussels, Belgium, and a somewhat shaded ancestry, comes our charming little Brussels Griffon.

Most authorities agree that the Brussels Griffon was developed in Belgium from small rough-coated dogs kept as ratters in stables. Hence the name Griffons d'Ecurie (wire-coated stable dogs). Although there is no complete record of the breeds crossed and recrossed to achieve the Griffon as we know it today, there is no doubt that the Affenpinscher, the English Toy Spaniel, and the Pug were the basic breeds used. The influence of the Affenpinscher is seen in general size and wire coat texture. The smooth-coated variety of the Brussels Griffon is a direct result of the introduction of the Pug. The contribution of the Toy Spaniel can be seen in the large expressive eyes, the well rounded forehead, the upturned underjaw and nosepad, the deep red color of the Ruby, and the black and tan of the King Charles.

Whatever it had been called before, by 1880 in Belgium the breed was called the Griffons Bruxellois - the Brussels Griffon. By 1883 Belgian breeders had formulated a standard and had established regular classes in show competition. Prior to this time the breed was entered in a mixed variety called Rough or Long Coated Terriers. In 1889 the Club du Griffon Bruxellois was established in Brussels. At about that time the smooth was recognized as a separate variety under the name Griffon Brabancon. By the late 1890s the breed was quite the rage as the Queen of the Belgians and the Duke of Flanders bred Griffons on an extensive scale.

The early 1890's saw the Griffon Bruxellois and Griffon Brabancon introduced to England and by 1898 it was admitted to the English Stud Book. English clubs were formed to promote the development of this new breed.

In 1899 the first Griffons appeared in the American Kennel Club Stud Book and were shown in miscellaneous classes at Westminster. The Breed gained classification in 1900 and the first Champion was recorded with AKC in 1908. The first U.S. Brussels Griffon Specialty was held in New York City on May 10, 1918 with 53 Griffons entered.

The Brussels Griffon Club of America remained active, as the parent club until 1939. In 1945 the American Brussels Griffon Association was established as the parent club.

After World War II, two reformations of the breed standard were made. The first, in 1959, saw the combining of a two-part standard, Griffon Bruxellois and Griffon Brabancon. The 1990 reformatting removed the disqualification of the Black Smooth variety, restoring it to its rightful place in the ring.

Responsible concern to maintain the breed's high quality, while protecting the breed's popularity, remain our goal as the American Brussels Griffon Association approaches a new century.



General Appearance: A toy dog, intelligent, alert, sturdy, with a thickset, short body, a smart carriage and set-up, attracting attention by an almost human expression. There are two distinct types of coat: rough or smooth. Except for coat, there is no difference between the two.

AMPLIFICATION:

The Brussels Griffon is a smart, compact little Toy dog with a definite terrier influence as to his attention to detail and smart carriage. The square body is a picture of substance, not elegance. He carries himself with great confidence, convinced that he deserves to be the center of attention.

The proper placement of eyes, nose, and upswept jaw characterizes what some call the Griffon "pout." When you look deep into the large soft eyes, you will see looking back an enchanted little being with startling intelligence. All of these features give him that "almost human" expression. This is a little dog with a lot of personality.

UNDESIRABLE:

While somewhat standoffish as they size you up, this trait should never result in cringing, slinking, or hiding.

Size, Proportion, Substance: **Size** - Weight usually 8 to 10 pounds, and should not exceed 12 pounds. Type and quality are of greater importance than weight, and a smaller dog that is sturdy and well proportioned should not be penalized. **Proportion** - Square, as measured from point of shoulder to rearmost projection of upper thigh and from withers to ground. **Substance** - Thickset, compact with good balance. Well boned.

AMPLIFICATION:

A compact, cobby, well-balanced Griffon with good muscle, bone, and substance, weighing 8 to 10 pounds, will be a small dog. Griffons often take two to three years to mature. These solid little Toys are often heavier than they appear. More important than weight, since there is no disqualification for weight or size, is the little square package with substance, overall balance, and breed type.

UNDESIRABLE:

Excessively large or extremely small. Racy or weedy. Too fat. Underdeveloped muscle. Too fine or too coarse.



Head: A very important feature. An almost human expression.

AMPLIFICATION:

The very essence of breed type is found in the unique head of the Brussels Griffon. The almost human expression evolves from the proper placement and relationship of eyes, skull, nose, lips, and jaw.

Eyes must be set wide apart and lined up horizontally with the nose. Lips must meet properly with a good upsweep to the jaw. The breed has borrowed heavily from the Toy Spaniel forbearers having a rounded topskull and domed forehead, large appealing eyes, wide nostrils, with a strong, wide turned-up underjaw and nose pad.

Our standard is very clear in the paragraphs on the Griffon head and leaves no room for the exercise of personal preference by breeders or judges. The head is to be evaluated as a whole. It is the responsibility of all who breed and judge to see that the Brussels Griffon does not lose that which makes him unique.

UNDESIRABLE:

Head not in balance with overall picture. Protruding nose. Vertical nose without proper lay-back from chin to forehead. Low-set nose. Weak or narrow muzzle and underjaw.



Correct heads and expression

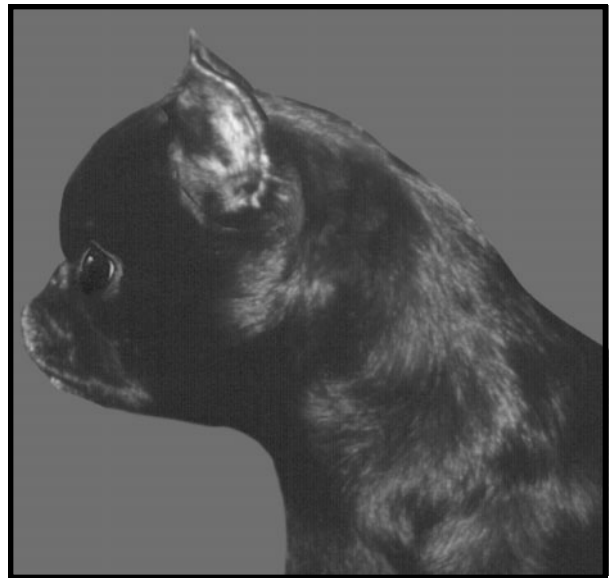
Eyes set well apart, very large, black, prominent, and well open. The eyelashes long and black. Eyelids edged with black.

AMPLIFICATION:

The eyes must be set well apart to allow room for the extremely short, well laid back nose to fit deep in line between them. The very large prominent eyes are a part of what gives the Griffon that "almost human" expression so important to breed type. The eyes are not really black but very dark brown, appearing almost black. Eye rims should be edged with black adding to the intensity of the dark eye. Well opened eyes are essential for correct expression.

UNDESIRABLE:

Light eyes. Small, squinted, or almond-shaped eyes. Eyes that bulge or with white showing around them. Close-set or high-set eyes. Lack of dark eye rims.



Correct Eyes
large, set well apart, set in line with nose, well open
almost human expression

Ears small and set rather high on the head. May be shown cropped or natural. If natural they are carried semi-erect.

AMPLIFICATION:

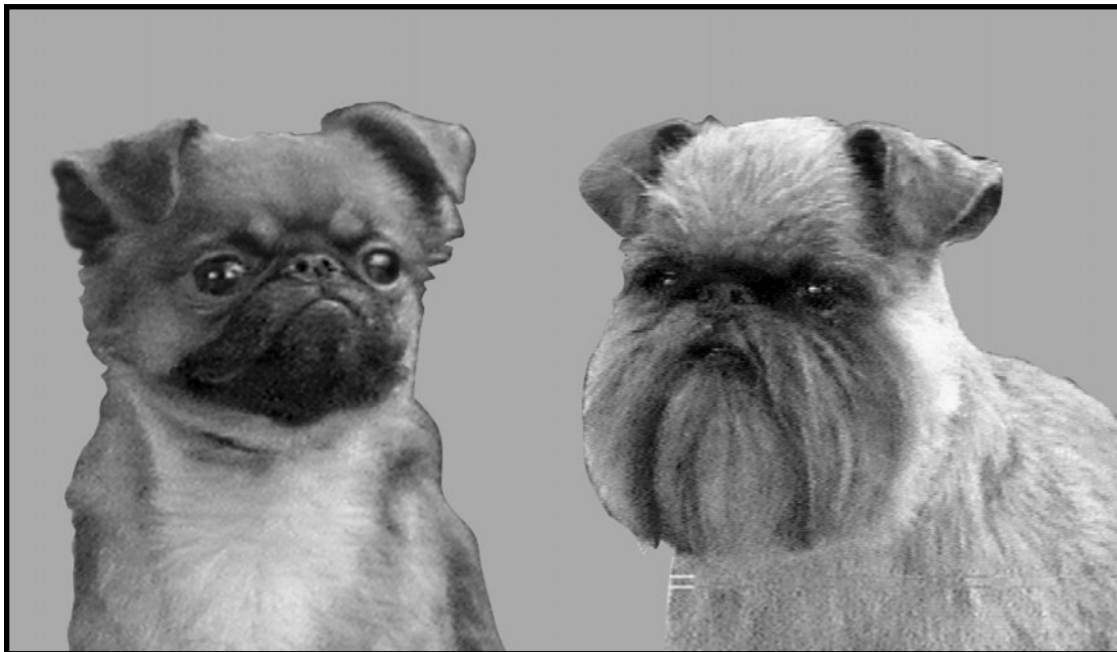
NATURAL: The ideal small natural ear should break slightly above the level of the top of the skull, having some "lift." The leather should cover the burr. A good natural ear can do much to enhance the skull by giving it the illusion of added width and size. (Please see page 7)

CROPPED: The cropped ear should have a slight bell (rounding of the outer edge) at the base to enhance the look of a large skull.

Cropping of the Griffon ear is of personal preference. Any ear can be cropped but a good, small natural ear is to be highly prized.

UNDESIRABLE:

Low-set ears. Hound-like or large, flying natural ears.



Correct natural ears



Ideal ears, heads, skulls and expressions.



Teething may cause ears to go up and down. This is the case with these two beautiful puppies.

Skull large and round, with a domed forehead. The stop deep.

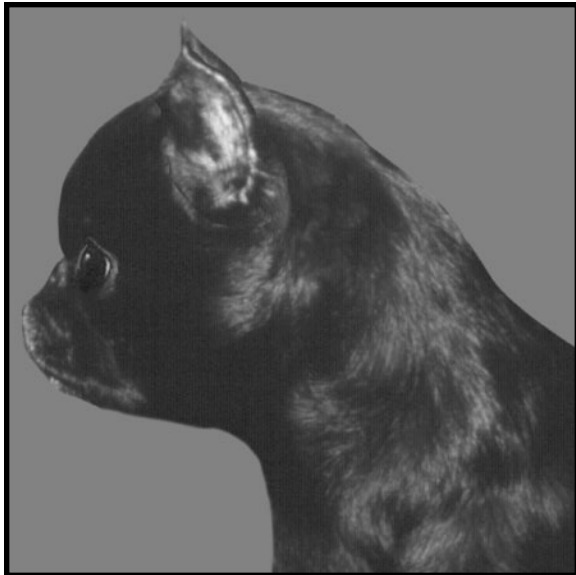
AMPLIFICATION:

The large skull is highly prized. The top skull, between the ears is slightly rounded. The forehead, the portion of the skull immediately over the eyes to the top of the skull, is where the dome occurs. A correct layback will tilt the extremely short nose up and back, high between the eyes forming a deep stop which can be felt but is not visible.

UNDESIRABLE:

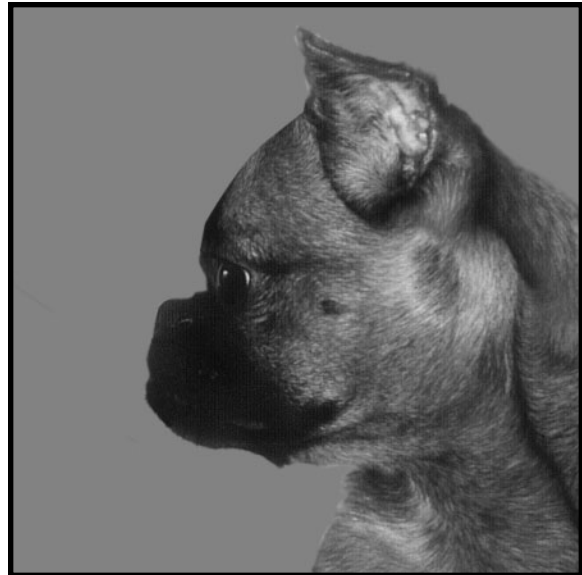
Flat forehead. Stop too visible.

Correct profile



Lay back of muzzle and nose pad.
Domed forehead.

Incorrect profile



Flat forehead, too much nose.
Nose and muzzle vertical without
layback.

Nose very black, extremely short, its tip being set back deeply between the eyes so as to form a lay-back. The nostrils large.

DISQUALIFICATIONS: Dudley or butterfly nose.

AMPLIFICATION:

The position of the nose is important and a guidepost to judging the entire head. Viewed from the front, the nose should be in line with the eyes. The face is flat, but flat on an angle. A vertical nose (i.e., the Peke or Pug flat-faced look) is one that lacks proper lay-back from chin to forehead. If the nose falls much below the eye it is generally a vertical nose accompanied by too much length of nose. The nose pad or leather should be large to accommodate the open nostrils.

UNDESIRABLE:

Pinched nostrils. Vertical nose pad. Nose pad set too low. Too much length of nose. Any variation from "very black" nose.



Correct lips, jaws and nose placement
extremely short nose with tip set back deeply between eyes
short plush lips, upward sweep of broad bottom jaw.



Incorrect lips, jaws and nose placement.

Lips edged with black, not pendulous but well brought together, giving a clean finish to the mouth. Jaws must be undershot. The incisors of the lower jaw should protrude over the upper incisors. The lower jaw is prominent, rather broad with an upward sweep. Neither teeth nor tongue should show when the mouth is closed. A wry mouth is a serious fault.

DISQUALIFICATIONS: Bite overshot. Hanging tongue.

AMPLIFICATION:

The upper lip should be short and plush. The upward sweep of the lower jaw is of great importance. It is this "pout" that sets the breed apart.

The underjaw should curve upward producing a prominent chin. The underjaw should be broad to give room for six incisors; however, visible breadth of muzzle and jaw is of primary importance and the Griffon need not be subjected to a Working breed tooth count.

Full cushioning of the upper lip and width of jaw can clearly be seen on the Smooth. Many people feel that Smooths appear to have a narrower muzzle. This may not be true since the Roughs give the illusion of a broader muzzle because of the beard.

PUPPIES: When judging puppies it is important to remember that the jaws grow for almost a year and some teeth may show in puppyhood. Maturity should correct this growth stage. Judges should always check age when in doubt. A retained baby canine may cause the upper lip to get hung up and give the illusion of a wry mouth. (Please see center pictures on page 11)

UNDESIRABLE:

A long upper lip giving a Pug-like look. Protruding tongues. Weak short underjaw. Narrow jaw and muzzle.

Without the correct upsweep, the lips will not meet, giving the clean finish to the mouth. A Griffon with a strong undershot jaw that DOES NOT curve up will no doubt show teeth and tongue. There will be too much space between the upper and lower incisors and the lips will not meet cleanly. (Please see bottom right picture on page 9)

SERIOUS FAULT:

Wry mouth.



Clean finish to the short upper lip



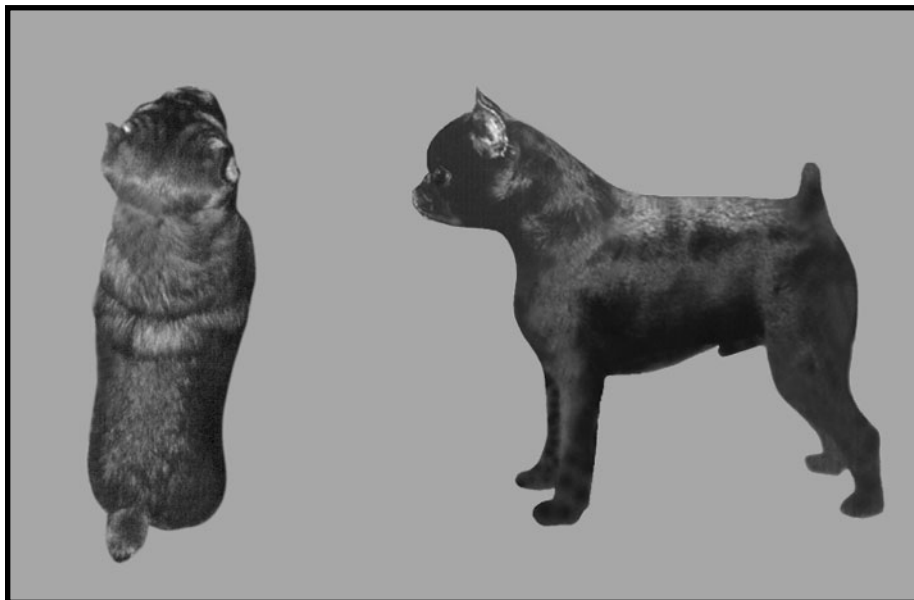
Medium length, gracefully arched neck



A straight "midline" from the nosepad through the chin will indicate that the mouth is not wry.



A retained baby canine may cause the upper lip to hang up and give illusion of a wry mouth.



Rear balances with shoulders
Correct balance, thickset and compact

Neck, Topline, Body: Neck medium length, gracefully arched.

AMPLIFICATION:

The neck joins a large impressive head to a substantial body. The most desirable neck is on the thick side and of medium length with a graceful arch. It should make a smooth line as it blends into the shoulders.

UNDESIRABLE:

Long, thin neck. Short neck giving a hunched, cloddy appearance.

Topline: Back level and short.

AMPLIFICATION:

The topline should be level from the withers to tail set with no dipping at the shoulders or roaching over the loin.

Body: A thickset, short body. Brisket should be broad and deep, ribs well sprung. Short-coupled.

AMPLIFICATION:

The brisket should be broad between the front legs. It should have enough depth to reach to the elbows. Griffons are a slow-maturing breed; good depth of brisket and spring of rib may not be fully developed in a young dog.

The Griffon should look broad and square with the rear and shoulders being approximately the same width when you look down on it. A well-sprung rib cage contributes to the overall look of substance in the body. The ribs should be well covered and the body should feel solid. The ribs should extend well back to a short, strong loin. Some accommodation is tolerated in this area with bitches.

UNDESIRABLE:

There should be no obvious tuck-up. A narrow front usually accompanies a slab-sided rib cage. Barrel chest or slab sides. Sloping croup or dip at withers. Any part in extreme that throws off overall balance of the entire picture.

Tail: Set and held high, docked to about one-third.

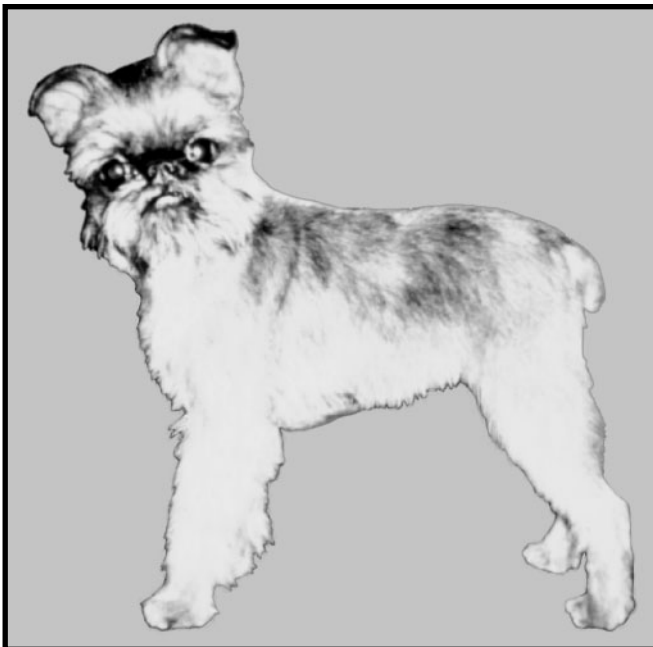
AMPLIFICATION:

Tail SET must not be confused with tail CARRIAGE. Tail set is structure and tail carriage is attitude. A high tail set is the extension of a level topline. The topline should be level from withers to tail set and the tail should be set high on a flat croup. The ideal tail carriage is twelve o'clock. Youngsters who are novices in the ring may not have the confidence to keep their tails up, but this is a matter of training and experience. The overall quality and age of the animal should be considered.

Docking to about one-third is a guide to approximate tail length. Puppies can be born with tail kinks which may result in having to cut the tail on the short side. A kink at the base may prevent the tail from being carried high. Others may be born with short tails or tailless. There should be no penalty for this although the lack of enough tail does effect the overall balance of the dog.

UNDESIRABLE:

Anything other than the ideal tail carriage and set.



Both of these lovely puppies have high tail sets, but one is a little older and better socialized.

Forequarters: Forelegs medium length, straight in bone, well muscled, set moderately wide apart and straight from the point of the shoulders as viewed from the front.

AMPLIFICATION:

The density of bone of the forelegs should be sufficient to balance the picture of the large round head and broad deep brisket with well sprung ribs. To avoid the straight terrier front, with its lack of reach, the shoulders should be laid back sufficiently. The front assembly should be in balance with the width of the rear and not give the impression of loaded shoulders or a pear-shaped body. Keep in mind the words square and balance. (Please see bottom picture on page 11)

UNDESIRABLE:

Out at the elbows or tied in at the elbows. Front assembly too narrow or too wide. Fiddle front.

Pasterns: Short and strong.

Feet: Round, small, and compact, turned neither in nor out. Toes well arched. Black pads and toenails preferred.

AMPLIFICATION:

Strong pasterns are needed to keep the Griffon up on its toes. The cat-like foot is round with thick pads and well-arched knuckles. Mention should be made of the so-called "web foot" found in some Griffon lines. This term is used to denote a foot in which the two center toes are fused together. This feature, like the kinked and short tails, can be traced to the cross with the English Toy Spaniel. Many of the most desired head characteristics are also features from this cross. Puppies born with web feet and kinked tails, which often seem to go together, tend to have excellent heads. Front and rear dew claws are generally removed.

UNDESIRABLE:

Large, hare, or splayed feet.

Hindquarters: Hind legs set true, thighs strong and well muscled, stifles bent, hocks well let down, turning neither in nor out.

AMPLIFICATION:

For good movement and balance it is important that both front and rear angulation are moderate. The thighs should have developed muscle and not give the appearance of softness or lack of exercise. When viewed from the side, the front of the rear toes should be in line with the rearmost point of rump.

UNDESIRABLE:

Straight or over-angulated stifles. Rear too narrow for shoulders (pear shaped). Lack of muscular development. Long hocks, sickle hocks, or cow hocks.

Coat: The rough coat is wiry and dense, the harder and more wiry the better. On no account should the dog look or feel woolly, and there should be no silky hair anywhere. The coat should not be so long as to give a shaggy appearance, but should be distinctly different all over from the smooth coat. The head should be covered with wiry hair, slightly longer around the eyes, nose, cheeks, and chin, thus forming a fringe. The rough coat is hand-stripped and should never appear unkempt. Body coat of sufficient length to determine texture. The coat may be tidied for neatness of appearance, but coats prepared with scissors and/or clippers should be severely penalized. The smooth coat is straight, short, tight and glossy, with no trace of wiry hair.

AMPLIFICATION:

Rough coats differ greatly in harshness, color, and fullness of furnishings. The double coat consists of the harsh outer hairs, or top coat, and the often softer and lighter undercoat. The topcoat should be very harsh, wiry, and dense. The hair of the top coat is most harsh and wiry at the tip and, depending on the length of the coat, becomes finer and lighter in color near the root. The "classic" coat has an undercoat nearly as hard as the topcoat. This ideal coat needs only to be tidied to keep the dog looking neat. This marvelous, hard-as-nails coat usually has scant leg furnishings and a short beard. Such coat texture, while rarely seen, should be highly prized.

Although the rough-coated variety does not shed, the dead or blown coat must be hand stripped or plucked to bring in the new hard jacket. Coats that are rolled or rotated will not be as even in texture or color as a coat that has been completely stripped out at one time.

Do not be misled by excessive hair. The wiry fringe formed by the slightly longer facial hair should not flow into a long beard. Excessive hair on the forehead and skull should not be left to camouflage many head faults, i.e., narrow head, long nose, flat forehead, etc. While thought to be impressive by some, a long, plush beard will distort proportional head balance. Soft, cottony furnishings generally indicate a coat that is too soft and fine. A correct hard wire coat will seldom, if ever, produce long profuse furnishings.

The Smooth coat is similar to that of the Boston Terrier, with no long hair anywhere. The ideal Smooth will feel sleek but not silky. It should have no undercoat, no ruff around the neck, and no pants on the rear. Removal of whiskers on the Smooth is optional.



The four Griffons at the top have the correct hard coat which will not grow profuse furnishings. They are groomed correctly.

The Griffon at the left does not have proper texture and her coat is "stylized" which may cover faults such as an improperly set nose or a length of nose, a flat forehead, narrow skull or a narrow muzzle.

Color: Either 1) Red: reddish brown with a little black at the whiskers and chin allowable;

AMPLIFICATION:

The red color can vary from a deep mahogany through the fiery red--all quite acceptable.

UNDESIRABLE:

Washed out, light fawn, blond, or tan colors.

2) Belge: black and reddish brown mixed, usually with black mask and whiskers;

AMPLIFICATION:

The name Belge comes from the native standard. This color is rarely seen to perfection. It consists of a two-colored hair shaft (banded, or mixed with rich red and black). The result is a smoky or smutty overall appearance. The Belge is often enhanced by a black mask and ears. Since the Belge can carry recessive genes for black and tans, they may have tan points.

UNDESIRABLE:

Pronounced shading or saddling in overall coat color.

3) Black and tan: black with uniform reddish brown markings, appearing under the chin, on the legs, above each eye, around the edges of the ears, and around the vent;

AMPLIFICATION:

The tan markings should not bleed into the black base color and should be cleanly positioned in the areas of all conventional "black and tan" dogs. A black dog with a red head or one with only tan legs is NOT a Black and Tan. Sometimes they are born with the correct tan points, but later the tan spreads into an Airedale-like pattern becoming a tan dog with a black saddle. These incorrectly marked dogs should not be shown or bred if the breed is to maintain the correct genes for black and tan. Color should be jet black with rich deep tan points.

UNDESIRABLE:

Anything other than conventionally placed tan points. Spreading tan or tan bleeding out of defined areas.

Color continued

4) Black: Solid black.

AMPLIFICATION:

The solid black color should be as true a jet black as possible. Sometimes the rough black has a rust or silver tinge to the undercoat and care should be taken to pull this out so that the harsh jet black topcoat will be clear. Some black roughs will carry single white hairs dispersed throughout the coat during adolescence. Often these are the very best colored and textured blacks. These white hairs generally disappear with maturity or a new strip.

UNDESIRABLE:

Anything other than a true jet black overall coat color.



Black and Tan



Belge

Color continued

Color: Any white hairs are a serious fault, except for "frost" on the muzzle of a mature dog, which is natural.

DISQUALIFICATION: White spot or blaze anywhere on coat.

AMPLIFICATION:

Noticeable white hair on ANY of the Griffon coat colors is a serious fault beyond puppy classes and white spots or blazes must be disqualified.

Any dog whose color is exactly even, especially on the head, neck, shoulders, and vent (areas that are frequently worked or rolled) should be checked for foreign substance.

The Brussels Griffon has a chocolate factor which can produce chocolates or livers in any of the coat colors. They totally lack black pigment. They have self-colored eyes, nose, foot pads, toenails, and eye rims. These can range from light to deep brown, but will not be black. The chocolate factor is accompanied by a Dudley nose which is a breed disqualification. Dogs exhibiting the chocolate factor must never be bred or shown.

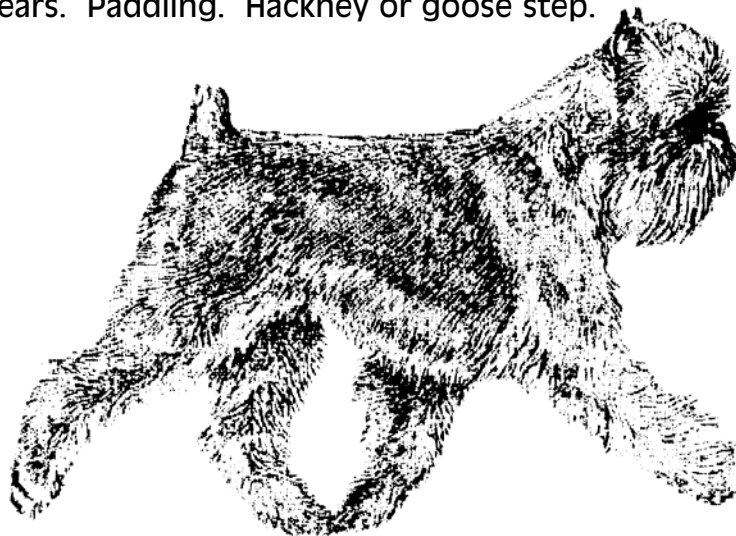
Gait: Movement is a straightforward, purposeful trot, showing moderate reach and drive, and maintaining a steady topline.

AMPLIFICATION:

The Brussels Griffon should step out smartly and smoothly. It should be a true, double track. Slight convergence to the center of gravity is natural as speed is picked up. Poor movement in a Toy dog should not go unnoticed.

UNDESIRABLE:

Over-reaching. Close rears. Paddling. Hackney or goose step.



Temperament: Intelligent, alert and sensitive. Full of self-importance.

AMPLIFICATION:

Temperament is influenced greatly by environment and experience. Griffons are very sensitive to harsh handling and due to their high intelligence, will never forget it. They can never be forced to do anything. Patience and a gentle manner will be rewarded because they are anxious to please and they love praise. Whether or not the puppy is pet or show, the owner needs to socialize and expose their Griffon to new experiences so he can grow emotionally and mentally. Being devoted to people they know, they often won't show for strangers. Griffons exhibiting poor temperaments should not be used for breeding.

UNDESIRABLE:

Shyness, sharpness or nervousness.



RING PRESENTATION

Griffons are usually happy showmen and should always be shown on a loose lead. Ideally they should be shown free standing. Should re-examination be necessary, please do not lean over the dog on the floor but rather place the dog back on the table. When examining the mouth, please remember that forcibly pushing up the upper lip can cut off the nasal passage, causing the Griffon to panic. It is often better to ask the handler to show the bite.



AKC STANDARD DISQUALIFICATIONS:

- Dudley or butterfly nose.**
- Bite overshot.**
- Hanging tongue.**
- White spot or blaze anywhere on coat.**

SCALE OF POINTS

The Scale of Points is a guide to evaluating the importance of certain aspects of the Brussels Griffon. It should not be used to consider individual parts above the dog's overall quality and balance.

Head	
Skull	5
Nose and Stop	10
Eyes	5
Bite, Chin, Jaws	10
Ears	5
	<hr/>
	35
Coat	
Color	12
Texture	13
	<hr/>
	25
Body and General Conformation	
Body (Brisket and Rib)	15
Gait	10
Legs and Feet	5
General Appearance	10
(Neck, Topline and Tail carriage)	40
	<hr/>
Total	100



*Approved September 11, 1990
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