

## Silky Terrier Club of America, Inc. Breed Education

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# History of the Silky Terrier

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In Australia, in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, breeders embarked on the establishment of the Australian Terrier Breed. There has been much speculation as to what already established rough coated terrier breeds from England were used. Some that have been mentioned are Skye Terrier, Manchester Terrier, Norwich Terrier, Border Terrier, Cairn Terrier and the now long extinct Clydesdale which was also called Paisley Terrier. Also mentioned were Dandie Dinmont Terriers which, if true, could account for the length of time it took to establish level toplines in both Australian and Silky Terriers.



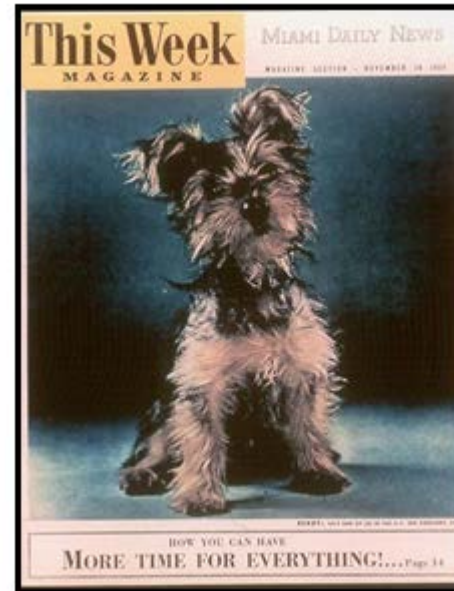
Australian Terrier



Yorkshire Terrier

Speculation is that, in their attempt to improve the blue and tan coloring of the Australian Terrier, the Yorkshire Terrier breed was used. In the resultant litters some pups resembled Australian Terriers, some resembled Yorkshire Terriers and some that resembled neither. These others looked similar to the Australian Terrier but had the silky coats of the Yorkshire Terrier. These silky coated dogs were bred together and were the beginning of the Silky Terrier in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

During World War II a few Silky Terriers were brought back to the United States by service men that had been stationed in Australia. In 1954 a picture of an appealing Silky Terrier pup graced the cover of a nationally syndicated Sunday newspaper supplement. As a result of this picture literally hundreds of Silkys were imported from Australia during the next few years and the American Kennel Club officially recognized the breed in 1959.



# SILKY TERRIER STANDARD

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**General Appearance** - The Silky Terrier is a true "toy terrier". He is moderately low set, slightly longer than tall, of refined bone structure, but of sufficient substance to suggest the ability to hunt and kill domestic rodents. His coat is silky in texture, parted from the stop to the tail and presents a well groomed but not sculptured appearance. His inquisitive nature and joy of life make him an ideal companion.

**Size, Proportion, Substance** - Shoulder height from nine to ten inches. Deviation in either direction is undesirable. **Proportion** - The body is about one fifth longer than the dog's height at the withers. **Substance** - Lightly built with strong but rather fine bone.

**Head** - The head is strong, wedge-shaped, and moderately long. Expression piercingly keen, eyes small, dark, almond shaped with dark rims. Light eyes are a serious fault. Ears are small, V-shaped, set high and carried erect without any tendency to flare obliquely off the skull. Skull flat, and not too wide between the ears. The skull is slightly longer than the muzzle. Stop shallow. The nose is black. Teeth strong and well aligned, scissors bite. An undershot or overshot bite is a serious fault.

**Neck, Topline and Body** - The neck fits gracefully into sloping shoulders. It is medium long, fine, and to some degree crested. The topline is level. A topline showing a roach or dip is a serious fault. Chest medium wide and deep enough to extend down to the elbows. The body is moderately low set and about one fifth longer than the dog's height at the withers. The body is measured from the point of the shoulder (or fore chest) to the rearmost projection of the upper thigh (or point of the buttocks). A body which is too short is a fault, as is a body which is too long. The tail is docked, set high and carried at twelve to two o'clock position.

**Forequarters** - Well laid back shoulders, together with proper angulation at the upper arm, set the forelegs nicely under the body. Forelegs are strong, straight and rather fine-boned. Feet small, catlike, round, compact. Pads are thick and springy while nails are strong and dark colored. White or flesh-colored nails are a fault. The feet point straight ahead, with no turning in or out. Dewclaws, if any, are removed.

**Hindquarters** - Thighs well-muscled and strong, but not so developed as to appear heavy. Well angulated stifles with low hocks which are parallel when viewed from behind. Feet as in front.

**Coat** - Straight, single, glossy, silky in texture. On matured specimens the coat falls below and follows the body outline. It should not approach floor length. On the top of the head, the hair is so profuse as to form a topknot, but long hair on the face and ears is objectionable. The hair is parted on the head and down over the back to the root of the tail. The tail is well coated but devoid of plume. Legs should have short hair from the pastern and hock joints to the feet. The feet should not be obscured by the leg furnishings.

**Color** - Blue and tan. The blue may be silver blue, pigeon blue or slate blue, the tan deep and rich. The blue extends from the base of the skull to the tip of the tail, down the forelegs to the elbows, and half way down the outside of the thighs. On the tail the blue should be very dark. Tan appears on muzzle and cheeks, around the base of the ears, on the legs and feet and around the vent. The topknot should be silver or fawn which is lighter than the tan points.

**Gait** - Should be free, light-footed, lively and straightforward. Hindquarters should have strong propelling power. Toeing in or out is to be faulted.

**Temperament** - The keenly alert air of the terrier is characteristic, with shyness or excessive nervousness to be faulted. The manner is quick, friendly, responsive.

*Approved October 10, 1989 Effective November 30, 1989*

# DISCUSSION OF THE SILKY TERRIER STANDARD

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## **GENERAL APPEARANCE (Standard)**

*The Silky Terrier is a true “toy terrier.” He is moderately low set, slightly longer than tall, of refined bone structure, but of sufficient substance to suggest the ability to hunt and kill domestic rodents. His coat is silky in texture, parted from the stop to the tail and presents a well groomed but not sculptured appearance. His inquisitive nature and joy of life make him an ideal companion.*

The description aptly portrays the Silky as a toy terrier. Emphasis should be placed on the word “terrier.” The ideal Silky is often referred to as being naturally clean pointed which means the absence of long hair on the ears and feet. Three extremely important words in the General Description are “NOT SCULPTURED APPEARANCE.” Any necessary tidying of hairs should result in a NATURAL, not a trimmed appearance.

## **SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE (Standard)**

### **SIZE**

*Shoulder height from nine to ten inches. Deviation in either direction is undesirable.*

### **PROPORTION**

*The body is about one-fifth longer than the dog’s height at the withers.*

### **SUBSTANCE**

*Lightly built with strong but rather fine bone.*

Only desirable shoulder height is mentioned. Weight is not specified because it depends entirely on the size of the dog’s bone as well as his muscular development. The body should feel solid and sturdy. Correct body proportion is mentioned in detail in the Standard’s section covering Neck, Topline and Body. The rather fine bone does not mean it should be fragile – it should be strong but not coarse.

## THE HEAD (Standard)

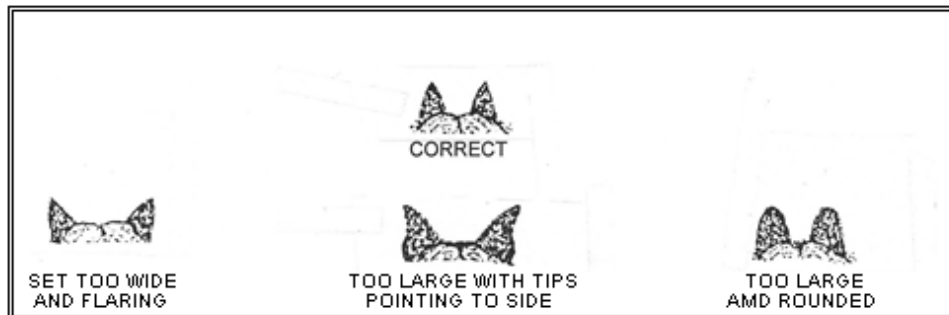
*The head is strong, wedge-shaped, and moderately long. Expression piercingly keen, eyes small, dark, almond shaped with dark rims. Light eyes are a serious fault. Ears are small, V-shaped, set high and carried erect without any tendency to flare obliquely off the skull. Skull flat, and not too wide between the ears. The skull is slightly longer than the muzzle. Stop shallow. The nose is black. Teeth strong and well aligned scissors bite. An undershot or overshot bite is a serious fault.*



## DISCUSSION

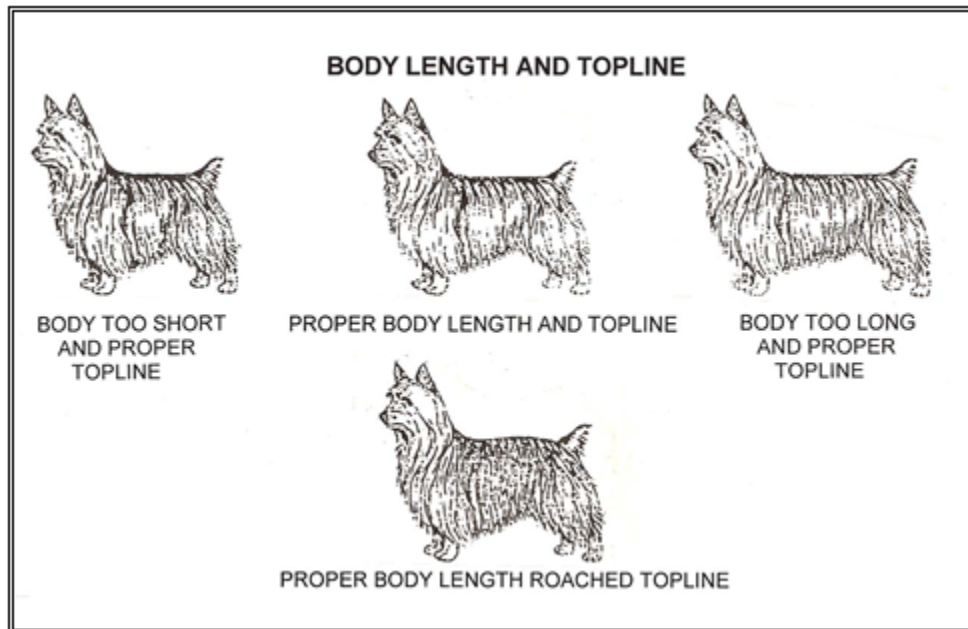
The moderately long head with the skull just slightly longer than the muzzle gives the required terrier appearance. The foreface should be strong with sufficient space for uncrowded teeth. A snippy muzzle is usually accompanied by missing or misaligned incisors.

Small dark eyes are essential for the alert, keen expression, which is lost when the eyes are large and round. Light eye rims are usually accompanied by a light nose and toenails; all indications of pigment deterioration. Ears should point straight up and not be rounded at the tips.



## NECK, TOPLINE AND BODY (Standard)

The neck fits gracefully into sloping shoulders. It is medium long, fine, and to some degree crested. The topline is level. A topline showing a roach or dip is a serious fault. Chest medium wide and deep enough to extend down to the elbows. The body is moderately low set and about one-fifth longer than the dog's height at the withers. The body is measured from the point of the shoulder (or fore chest) to the rearmost projection of the upper thigh (or point of the buttocks). A body which is too short is a fault, as is a body which is too long. THE TAIL IS DOCKED, set high and carried at twelve to two o'clock position.



## DISCUSSION

A slightly crested, medium length neck results in correct head carriage. A long neck is not in balance with the body nor is a short neck which prevents the proper proud head carriage

The topline, from withers to set-on of tail, should be level when gaiting. The wording of the previous Standard led some to believe that a roached topline was correct. The description of how the body is measured makes it clear that the body, not the topline, is about one-fifth longer than the height at the withers. This results in a moderately low set, medium length dog.

Tail carriage is an excellent indication of proper, as well as improper, temperament. A Silky with the called for terrier temperament and high tail set will carry it at twelve to two o'clock position. When he is standing in a relaxed position his tail carriage may drop slightly; however, it should move to a desirable position when he is gaiting. Some Silkys, when excited, will carry their tails over their backs in an over-gay position. This should not be considered a major fault. This carriage is preferable to a tail carried below the two o'clock position indicating lack of terrier temperament.



**12 O'CLOCK – CORRECT**



**2 O'CLOCK – CORRECT**



**LOW SET – INCORRECT**



**GAY OR UNDOCKED - INCORRECT**

## **FOREQUARTERS (Standard)**

*Well laid back shoulders, together with proper angulation of the upper arm, set the forelegs nicely under the body. Forelegs are strong, straight and rather fine-boned. Feet small, cat-like, round, compact. Pads are thick and springy while nails are strong and dark colored. White or flesh-colored nails are a fault. The feet point straight ahead, with no turning in or out. Dewclaws, if any, are removed.*

## **DISCUSSION**

The forelegs should be parallel and set back well under the body. This requires the called-for well laid back shoulders and upper arm angulation. Without this angulation they will be set forward, with little or no chest in front of the legs, preventing efficient movement. As terriers the forefeet may turn out slightly when standing but they should point straight ahead when the dog is gaiting.

## **HINDQUARTERS (Standard)**

*Thighs well-muscled and strong, but not so developed as to appear heavy. Well angulated stifles with low hocks which are parallel when viewed from behind. Feet as in front.*

## DISCUSSION

Well-muscled thighs indicate adequate exercise. Straight stifles are a fault. Low hocks require the rear pasterns to be short, not long.

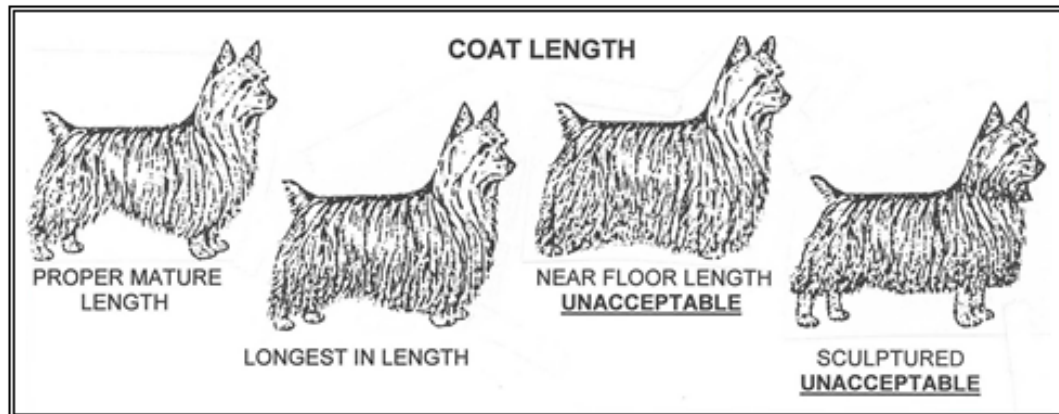
## COAT (Standard)

*Straight, single, glossy, silky in texture. On matured specimens the coat falls below and follows the body outline. It should not approach floor length. On the top of the head the hair is so profuse as to form a topknot, but long hair on the face and ears is objectionable. The hair is parted on the head and down over the back to the root of the tail. The tail is well coated but devoid of plume. Legs should have short hair from the pastern and hock joints to the feet. The feet should not be obscured by the leg furnishings.*

## DISCUSSION

The straight, single, glossy, silky coat makes no allowance for woolly or harsh texture. This single coat lies flat to the body with no undercoat. Woolly stand-off coats are usually accompanied by an undercoat. Such coats are often a dull black, which nearly always remains so at maturity.

A well-coated tail will have an inch to an inch and a half of fall to balance with the body coat. The hair on the muzzle should not be long; correct length gives a clean-pointed appearance to the face. The Standard's description of length of body coat makes it clear that a coat which approaches floor length is not a virtue.





## **COLOR (Standard)**

*Blue and tan. The blue may be silver blue, pigeon blue or slate blue, the tan deep and rich. The blue extends from the base of the skull to the tip of the tail, down the forelegs to the elbows, and half way down the outside of the thighs. On the tail the blue should be very dark. Tan appears on muzzle and cheeks, around the base of the ears, on the legs and feet and around the vent. The topknot should be silver or fawn which is lighter than the tan points.*

## **DISCUSSION**

The Standard describes the color of mature Silkys. The black puppy coats should change to blue as they mature.

The Standard notes the tan should be deep and rich; it does not specify that the blue should be deep and rich. The body color ranges from light to dark blue, not black. Gold or bronze color in the body blue is very undesirable. The silver blue color is nearly always dark at the roots, which are easily visible at the center part on the back. Without these dark roots the color is generally an unacceptable washed-out silver, not silver blue. The black hairs on the face and around the eyes, often referred to as a black mask, should grow out by the time the puppy reaches six months of age. If it doesn't the face and topknot will have an incorrect sooty appearance instead of clear color. The muzzle and cheeks are tan; the topknot should not be tan; it should be a lighter color; either fawn or silver. A silver topknot is rare and seldom seen without an undesirable sooty appearance.

## **GAIT (Standard)**

*Should be free, light-footed, lively and straightforward. Hindquarters should have strong propelling power. Toeing in or out is to be faulted.*

## **DISCUSSION**

The word "lively" does not mean a bouncy gait. A well-constructed Silky will have reach and drive and his movement will be smooth and effortless.

## **TEMPERAMENT (Standard)**

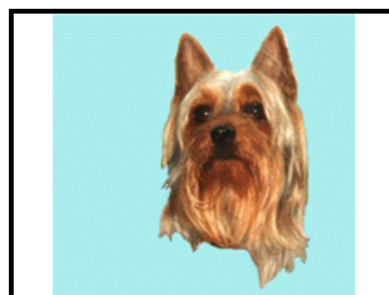
*The keenly alert air of the terrier is characteristic, with shyness or excessive nervousness to be faulted. The manner is quick, friendly, responsive.*

## **DISCUSSION**

Tail carriage, as mentioned previously, is a good indication of terrier temperament or lack of it.

# Heads and Expression

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# Bitch Examples

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# Male Examples

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# Movement

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# Light Eye

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# Tail Set

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STCA membership has expressed their desire to maintain the currently approved AKC Standard that declares the tail is docked. The best the STCA can do is relay information to show you what an undocked tail might look like if docked as there is no description in our standard.

**CORRECT**



**CORRECT**



**CORRECT**

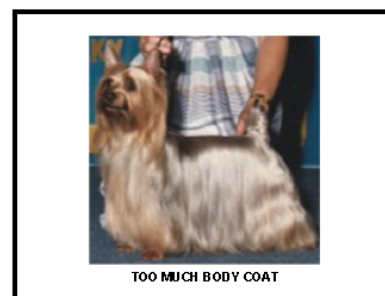


**CORRECT**



# Coat Problems

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# Breed Comparison: Silky, Yorkshire, Australian Terriers

These are 3 blue & tan terriers that have a close relationship. Yorkshire Terriers were taken to Australia and some were cross bred with the Australian Terriers to produce a hardy dog (much like the Aussie) with a lovely silky single coat (much like the Yorkie). Those of us in love with the Silky Terrier Breed feel we have the 'best' of both.

## Quick Comparison – Australian Terrier • Silky Terrier • Yorkshire Terrier

- Blue & Tan or Solid Red (Sandy), silver or lighter shade topknot
- Oval eye, small, darker the better
- Very Robust with longer body than tall (at shoulder)
- Wedge Shaped Head
- Sturdy Body
- Broken Coat
- V-Shaped, Small, Erect, Ears on top of head
- Strong Terrier temperament
- Tail Docked, Erect 12 to 1 o'clock position
- Good pets

- Blue & Tan (Slate, Pigeon, Silver with rich tans)
- Almond eye, small, dark
- Refined bone, small 9 – 10" at shoulder
- Wedge Shaped Head
- Solid, well-muscled but refined
- Single coat, silky cool texture, glossy – not floor length follows body outline
- V-Shaped, small on top of head
- Good pets for families but not small children as they are prey driven and may chase or nip

- Blue & Tan (slate or gun-metal - darker) – any solid color other than described or combination of colors is disqualification
- Small, petite not over 7 lbs
- Square built (shoulder height equal to length of body); very compact
- Small head, short muzzle, not too prominent
- Single coat, silky, glossy, coat to floor
- V-Shaped ears carried erect not too far apart
- Good pets



Australian Terrier



Silky Terrier



Yorkshire Terrier



Australian Terrier 8 Week



Australian Terrier 6 Months



Australian Terrier Adult Head



Australian Terrier Adult Body



Silky Terrier 8 Weeks



Silky Terrier 6 Months



Silky Terrier Adult Head



Silky Terrier Adult Body



Yorkshire Terrier 8 Weeks



Yorkshire Terrier 6 Months



Yorkshire Terrier Adult Head



Yorkshire Terrier Adult Body

# Important Breed Characteristics

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## **Toy Terrier**

Emphasis on the word "*Terrier*". Keenly alert air, manner quick, friendly, responsive

## **Silky, Blue & Tan Coat**

Coat with tan markings, topknot lighter than the tan points

## **Moderately low set**

Slightly longer than tall, 9: - 10: at the shoulder

## **Rather fine bone**

Should be strong not coarse

## **Not sculptured**

Natural, not trimmed appearance

# Items of Major Importance when Judging

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- Temperament
- Coat Texture
- Tail is docked
- Judge topline while moving

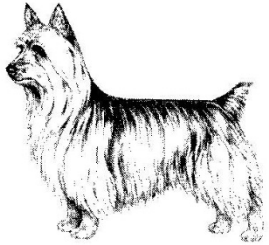
# Serious Faults Listed in the Standard

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- Undershot or overshot bite
- Light Eyes
- A roach or dip in the topline

# Rule of 5's for Silky Terriers

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**Breed Character:** True 'toy terrier', owns their ground, keen, alert, friendly, and refuses to be ignored.

**Breed Outline:** Moderately low set, head held high, ears up, alert, feet well under body, ready to move stance, slightly longer than tall, tail docked at 12 to 2 position carried erect to balance ears, coat follows body outline

**Head and Expression:** Piercing eyes, ears erect to hear what around, alert, body up on feet but not defensive

**Movement:** Lively, light gait, good reach and drive, covers ground efficiently without bounce or prance, flowing movement, not stilted

**Coat Type:** Flowing, silky coat following body outline, any shade of blue with rich tans and lighter topknot, good color contrast, glossy, cool to touch