

# The Australian Terrier



## ***Congratulations on your new Australian Terrier!***

*Congratulations on having acquired an Australian Terrier. We hope that you have many years of enjoyment and companionship from your new friend. This brochure will help you learn more about your chosen breed, and its Parent Club, the Australian Terrier Club of America.*

### **History**

The Australian Terrier, one of the smallest of the working terriers, was bred to be both helper and companion in the rough times and terrain of his native Australia. A native dog, known as the rough-coated terrier, had been in Tasmania since the early 1800's. These terriers are believed to be cross-bred with a number of other breeds of British terrier stock to produce a sturdy, weather resistant, fearless little dog that the settlers needed as they expanded the frontiers of their country to help control rodents and snakes on the waterfronts and in the homesteads, sometimes tending sheep, to sound an alarm when intruders appeared and to be a companion. The breeds chosen for crossbreeding were selected to promote specific desired traits. While there are differences among the historians of the breed, there is a consensus of opinion that the breeds used included the precursors of the Dandie Dinmont, the Skye, the Yorkshire, the old Black and Tan Terrier, with perhaps some Irish Terrier and Cairn.

The Australian Terrier was the first Australian breed to be recognized and shown in its native land and also the first Australian breed to be officially accepted in other countries.

### **Health**

Aussies are generally quite healthy and should require a minimum of medical care. Plan to take your new puppy for a check up soon after bringing him home to establish a relationship between you, your dog and your vet. As with some of the small breeds of

dogs, luxating patellas (or kneecaps) can occur, as can Legg-Perthes Disease, a malformation of the hip joint which manifests itself in a youngster as limping and pain. Other health problems that have been found to occur in this breed include diabetes, immune deficiency problems, skin and digestive allergies and malignancies. These are not common problems and this is generally a very sturdy breed, with an average life span of 12-15 years.

### **Physical Characteristics**

The Australian Terrier is a small, sturdy, medium boned working terrier about 10-11 inches in height at the withers (top of shoulder). Its body is rather long in proportion to height, with a long slightly arched neckline. The coat is harsh and straight, about 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches all over its body in an adult, with a distinctive ruff and apron, with a soft silky topknot, often lighter in color. Its tail is docked, leaving slightly less than <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>, and the ears should be carried erect. Aussies come in three colors, including blue and tan, sandy, or solid red. As befitting their heritage as versatile workers, Australian Terriers are sound and free moving with good reach and drive. Their expression should be keen and intelligent, their manner spirited and self-assured.

### **Temperament**

Australian Terriers are not suited to living outside or spending long hours in a run or fenced yard alone. They are happiest when in close contact with their owners and families. Australian Terriers are born diggers: "going to ground" is part of their heritage. They are excellent jumpers and it is nearly impossible to train an Aussie to resist the urge to chase squirrels, rabbits, and cats. This breed was bred to hunt vermin and the instinct is still very strong in their temperament. Terriers in general are very lively and have a high energy level. As with other terriers they can be dog aggressive and somewhat bossy, and care must be taken when living in a multi pet household.

## Grooming

This breed requires little grooming to be a good pet. Nails should be trimmed regularly. The coat should be kept clean and brushed at least once a week. Teeth should be brushed regularly and ears cleaned occasionally. Bathe your Aussie infrequently, as Aussies have a harsh coat and frequent bathing may soften the coat and dry the skin. Aussies should be kept free of fleas, as many have a low tolerance for fleas and their presence can result in mild itching to extreme allergic reactions. A grooming video DVD is available from the Australian Terrier Club.

## The Australian Terrier Club of America (ATCA)

The first Australian Terrier club was formed in Australia in 1887. At about the same time Aussies were exported to England and granted a separate registration by the Kennel Club of England. Australian Terriers were introduced to this country in the late 1940's, coming initially from Great Britain and Ireland. The breed remained relatively unknown until 1957, when the Australian Terrier Club of America was formed. The Australian Terrier became the 114th breed recognized by the American Kennel Club in 1960, and the Club became an AKC member Club in 1977. Today there are over 200 members worldwide.



## Be a Responsible Pet Owner

Your Aussie will give you love and companionship, but with every right comes a corresponding duty. Pet owners must consider their responsibilities to their neighbors and their community. Remember to keep your dog confined and not let it run loose. Not only is this dangerous for the dog, but also can have legal ramifications for you, the owner. When you exercise your dog, clean up after him and dispose of the waste properly.

Shelters in the US destroy many pets each year. Most of these puppies came from unplanned or unwanted litters. Only those Australian Terriers closest to the ideal breed standard should be bred so the characteristics and health of this breed that we love can be preserved. Please spay or neuter your new

pet puppy as soon as your veterinarian feels it is appropriate. Not only will this ensure the continued quality of the breed, but will prevent unwanted litters and illness later in life, such as mammary tumors or testicular cancer. It will also help curb aggression and the tendency to roam in the males.

Australian Terriers compete in the breed ring, in obedience, in agility, as well as earthdog activities and tracking. Consider contacting a local kennel club for information on basic obedience classes or puppy kindergarten for your new dog. These classes are an excellent way to socialize your new puppy, and provide you, the new owner, with guidance in helping your puppy become a well-trained addition to your family.

## Australian Terrier Club of America Information

### ATCA Website

[www.australianterrier.org](http://www.australianterrier.org)

### ATCA Facebook Page

[www.facebook.com/  
AustralianTerrierClubOfAmerica](http://www.facebook.com/AustralianTerrierClubOfAmerica)

### The Talkabout – ATCA Newsletter

As a new Aussie owner, ATCA would like to offer you a complimentary subscription for one year. Please go to :

[www.australianterrier.org/newowner.html](http://www.australianterrier.org/newowner.html)

for detailed information on how to sign up.

### Educational Information

The ATCA Store offers several items especially for new owners. Available are a New Owners Guide, a Grooming CD, the Illustrated Breed Standard as well as fun Aussie items. For more information , please go to:

[www.australianterrier.org/store.html](http://www.australianterrier.org/store.html)

### Breed Referral Information

[australianterrierinfo@yahoo.com](mailto:australianterrierinfo@yahoo.com)

### Australian Terrier Rescue

ATCA has an active rescue program to assist Aussies in need:

[www.australianterrierrescue.org](http://www.australianterrierrescue.org)

