

Congratulations On Your Kerry Blue Terrier!

A Bit o' Blarney inhabits Ireland's National Dog

By Robert Beuter, Deb Bednarek, Reita Nicholson,
and Melanie Feldges

The Kerry Blue Terrier of today is not much different from his predecessor, but just who that predecessor was is anybody's guess. The breed has been known in Ireland for at least 150 years, but its origins are as mysterious as the ancestry of breeds developed centuries earlier.

As typical in Ireland, legends abound; high on the list is the tale that peasants developed the breed because noblemen restricted ownership of the Irish Wolfhound to the upper classes. The gentry hunted with the giant hounds, and the countrymen poached with their Kerries.

Yet another version has it that a Russian shipwrecked in Ireland's Tralee Bay and a blue dog swam ashore. Breeding of this dog with local terriers produced the Kerry Blue. Another account identifies the ship as belonging to the Spanish Armada. It is further said



that the Kerry Blue Terrier may have been bred from the Irish Terrier and the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier or from an earlier terrier and the Irish Wolfhound.

In any case, the Kerry Blue was found mostly in the mountains of County Kerry around Lake Killarney. He was first and foremost a working dog, used for hunting small game and birds, retrieving from land and water, and for herding sheep and cattle. He has even been trained as a police dog in England. Today, he is a formidable watchdog and gentle companion.

Kerries were first shown as the Irish Blue Terrier in Ireland in 1916; in England it became the Kerry Blue Terrier and was shown at Cruft's for the first time in 1922. The dog came to the United States about the same time; four Kerries were shown at the Westminster Kennel Club show in the miscellaneous class that year. Trimming the dog for the show ring in England gave the breed popular appeal.

Temperament and Behavior

The Kerry Blue Terrier is an elegant, intelligent dog with an outgoing, people-oriented temperament. Like all terriers, they can be scrappy with other dogs so they are not necessarily good "dog park" dogs. A happy Kerry Blue is one with a purpose or job, so directing their energy into agility, obedience, herding or conformation activities can be beneficial and rewarding for both dog and owner.

Puppies should be whelped and raised in the breeder's home and given much individual attention and care for socialization with people and littermates. Puppies are generally kept by the breeder until 10-12 weeks of age to allow for this socialization.

The well-bred Kerry Blue Terrier loves children and adults and is an excellent playmate and guardian for older children. However, as with most terriers, children must be taught to treat the dog gently and



with respect. A Kerry wants to be with his people and will make sure that everyone gets some of his love and attention. He is a very observant dog and is aware of his surroundings at all times. Kerries are fun-loving, full of life, and mischievous with a great sense of humor.

Physical Appearance

The Kerry Blue is of a size to be comfortable living in a house or apartment. He does, however, need exercise. The compact and sturdy mature Kerry Blue measures 17.5-19.5 inches at the shoulders and weighs from 33-40 pounds. Males are a bit larger than females.

The breed is clean and is easily house trained. He has a beautiful, soft, dense and wavy nonshedding coat with no doggy odor. He is ideal for families suffering from allergies aggravated by errant dog hairs. For the show ring, the Kerry coat is usually washed and allowed to air dry.

It is then brushed, combed, and scissored. Many pet owners use electric clippers to shorten grooming time.

Kerry Blues are born black and mature to the adult blue-gray color. Changes should be seen anywhere from six to 18 months of age. The variations in shade may be anywhere from a light silver blue to dark slate blue. A black Kerry 18 months or older should be disqualified in the show ring.

This is a hardy dog with few genetic problems. Kerries should be OFA certified, which means x-rays have been taken of the hips and have been evaluated for signs of hip dysplasia by a board of veterinarians. With love and care, Kerries have been known to live longer than many other breeds; 12 to 14 years is normal with some going 15 years or more. The greatest safeguard for today's Kerry Blue lies in the fact that they are loved, nurtured, and closely watched and protected by the breeders who raise them.

A Kerry Blue Terrier is not for everyone, but those of us who are fortunate enough to be owned by one (or more) will say:

***“Once a Kerry lover,
always a Kerry lover.”***

Kerry Blue Terriers . . .

- 🐾 Kerry Blue Terrier puppies are born black and reach their beautiful blue color as they grow up. When you part the dense, soft, puppy coat the skin is actually blue. A Kerry must show color by 18 months in order to be shown.
- 🐾 Kerry Blue Terrier puppies must have their ears pasted on the top of their heads to ensure the correct ear carriage. Your breeder should help set your Kerries ears or locate another breeder that can set ears.
- 🐾 Kerry Blue Terriers do not shed. They do need regular brushing and grooming.
- 🐾 Kerry Blue Terriers are intelligent, high-energy, quick-witted and determined.
- 🐾 Kerry Blue Terriers were also known as Irish Blue Terriers.

Ownership is a commitment to provide the highest standard of care as it relates to the physical, social and mental well-being of the Kerry Blue Terrier. New owners need to be aware of exactly what a Kerry Blue Terrier is, and what it was bred to do.

The USKBTC encourages you to contact us for assistance or information and welcomes your application for membership. Mentoring new owners is part of our stewardship commitment to the breed. Spay or neuter your dog if you are not showing and have her/him microchipped. For more information, please contact:

www.uskbtc.com

***The Irish might say,
“May the wind be always
at your back and a Kerry
at the end of your lead.”***



United States Kerry Blue Terrier Club

Official breed club for the AKC www.uskbtc.com

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