

# This is the **PARSON RUSSELL TERRIER**



*Everything about the Parson Russell Terrier says foxhunting: conformation, character, attitude and intelligence.*

## **An Introduction**

He is of balanced and flexible build with straight legs and a narrow chest. The breed is distinguished by a weatherproof double coat—either smooth or broken coated. The height will range from 12 to 15 inches at the withers, and the breed typically weighs between 15 and 18 lbs., balance being the main factor. He is predominantly white with black, tan or tricolored markings, or all white. Characteristic in the broken coat is a hint of eyebrow and beard.

Still widely used with foxhounds in England, his country of origin, the Parson Russell Terrier is popular throughout the world. He is first and foremost a working terrier: single-minded, tenacious, courageous and clever in the hunt field. At home he is energetic, playful, overwhelmingly affectionate and highly active. He can be difficult if not properly trained and is not the dog for everyone.

While your Parson should be good with older children, *he must be supervised with younger children and especially with other dogs.* Don't expect your Parson to be idle. From the time he is a puppy until old age, he will require a great deal of attention and exercise. He will insist on being involved in whatever you're doing. The Parson is very intelligent and easily trained; however, if left to his own devices with little supervision, he can become a handful. He has a strong hunting instinct and should not be allowed to run at large.

## **History**

The Parson Russell Terrier was first bred in the south of England in the mid-1800s to hunt red fox both above and under the ground. In the traditional sport of foxhunting, the Parson Russell ran with horse and hound across the countryside. When the hounds drove the fox to ground, the Parson Russell dug in and followed the fox, baying to bolt him back above ground.

The breed is named for the well-respected huntsman, Reverend John Russell (1795-1883), a founding member of The Kennel Club in 1873, who maintained his own pack of foxhounds. Rev. Russell bred a strain of white fox terrier known countrywide for its distinctive type,

weatherproof jacket, and hunting acumen. So well respected were the Parson's terriers, they became known as "the Parson's Terriers," or the "Jack Russell Terrier." Parson Russell was referred to as "the father of the wirehaired fox terrier."

He later crossed some of his bitches with Old Jock, a smooth-coated fox terrier he greatly admired, and we see the smooth coat in the breed today although not as prevalent as the broken coat. The Parson's terriers were frequently interbred with notable fox terrier kennels of the day, and his bloodlines can be found in modern fox terrier pedigrees. English champion Carlisle Tack (1884) carried Rev. Russell's bloodlines and was said to be indistinguishable from the type of terrier bred by Russell.

Accordingly, the *Parson Russell Terrier Association of America (PRTAA)* adopted Carlisle Tack for the club's logo. The breed we recognize today as the Parson Russell Terrier mirrors Rev. Russell's own stock.

Authorities claim that after Rev. Russell's death some of his bloodlines were crossed onto the Welsh Corgi as well as the Staffordshire Terrier and other terrier breeds, which would explain the many specimens seen with short legs, long bodies, and big chests, known as "Jack Russell Terrier" although not representative of Rev. Russell's terriers. The PRTAA, parent club for the breed, requested a name change from Jack Russell Terrier to Parson Russell Terrier to distinguish the Parson's terrier from the "Jack Russell." The name change was approved by the AKC in 2003.

## **Care of the Parson Russell Terrier**

A puppy should be kept in a safe and healthy environment with room to move about freely. Fresh water should be available at all times, and he must be kept on a regular feeding schedule. A proper diet of high quality feed will grow your puppy into a healthy, handsome terrier. From the time you acquire your puppy, regular veterinary care is vital to his health. A puppy vaccination schedule, along with other health recommendations by your veterinarian, should not be neglected. The Parson is a robust breed with a

minimum of health problems. The greatest challenge is keeping him safe from his own adventurous spirit, so a fenced in yard is ideal. Both the smooth coat and the broken coat shed continuously through the year although not excessively. While the smooth-coated Parson requires very little in the way of grooming, the broken-coated Parson will require periodic trips to the groomer to keep his coat in good shape. Ideally, the broken coat is hand stripped. The Parson is clean and generally does not require frequent bathing.

## Identification

Protect your Parson Russell Terrier in case it is lost. Identify your Terrier with a collar and tags. AKC Reunite (formerly CAR) now offers a free dog tag with recovery information. A 24-hour toll free hotline is available with staff to help locate the owners. Further protection, using a permanent tattoo or microchip, can be added and registered with AKC Reunite. There is a 100% rehoming rate with enrolled animals. Call **800-252-7894** or go to **www.akcreunite.org** for more information.

## Responsible Ownership

Acquiring a Parson is a commitment for the life of the dog. The breed can have a life span of 16 years. He relies on you for love, affection, and care. Don't let him down. If you cannot live up to these expectations, please don't consider the purchase of a Parson Russell Terrier. With proper training, the Parson is the best of companions.

## The Question of Breeding

Breeding should be left to the experts. There is always the risk of losing the mother and/or the puppies, in addition to a hefty veterinary bill. Puppies are not easily sold, and you have the responsibility of keeping every puppy until it can be placed in a suitable, loving home. Parson puppies do not always get along after the age of 6 weeks and often must be separated, so it is necessary to have the proper facilities. Unless you intend to show your Parson, it is highly recommended that you spay or neuter. Your altered terrier may still participate in AKC performance events such as field trials, earthdog tests, obedience, tracking and agility, although he cannot participate in conformation events.



If, after careful consideration, you make the decision to breed, both the dog and bitch should be tested for any hereditary eye problems (CERF) and hearing deficiencies (BAER) before breeding. Both parents



should be properly registered with the American Kennel Club (AKC) and should conform to the breed standard. It is recommended that you contact an experienced, successful breeder of Parson Russell Terriers before you make the decision to breed.

## Canine Health Foundation

Many Parson Russell Terrier Association of America members support health research for the Parson Russell Terrier through the AKC Canine Health Foundation—a nonprofit charitable organization whose mission is to help dogs live longer, healthier lives. Supporting the Canine Health Foundation will help ensure a healthy future for all dogs. For more information about ongoing health research to help your Parson Russell Terrier, see **www.akcchf.org** or call toll-free **888-682-9696**.

## Recommended Reading

*Jack Russell Terriers Today*, by Sheila Atter Howell (Book House, New York)

*The Parson & Jack Russell Terriers*, by Jean & Frank Jackson (The Crowood Press, England)

*Parson Jack Russell Terriers, An Owners Companion*, by Jean and Frank Jackson (Popular Dogs Publishing Co. Ltd., England)

*Parson's Nook/Parson's Corner*, official newsletter and yearbook of the Parson Russell Terrier Association of America, parent club for the breed

## Need more information?

Please visit our website for further information:

**www.PRtAA.org**



**Parson Russell Terrier Association of America, Inc.**