

Spotlight: The Scottish Terrier

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Independent, yet loyal, the Scottish Terrier—also known as the Aberdeen or, more affectionately, the Scottie—is a breed with a proud history. Originally bred by farmers to keep rodents out of the fields, these confident canines soon earned their place at court. King James VI of Scotland, who was known to adore these distinctive dogs, popularized the breed throughout his home country during his reign. Later, when he was named England’s monarch, he gifted a French ruler with six puppies, further increasing the renown of Scotties around the world.

Since their arrival in the United States, which the American Kennel Club states occurred during the 1890s, Scotties have continued to be a favorite breed with families and with dog fanciers. A Westminster Kennel Club Best in Show winner many times over, the Scottish Terrier holds another distinction: preferred presidential pooch. They have lived in the White House as First Dog twice, since the small dogs were a favorite breed of Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and George W. Bush. In fact, according to PresidentialPetMuseum.com, Roosevelt’s beloved Scottie, known as “Fala,” is likely the only presidential pet to be memorialized in statuary: he is prominently featured in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial, sitting just a few feet away from his owner.

Given the Scottish Terrier’s origins as a “mouser” on farms, it’s not surprising that it has a keen expression with bright, piercing eyes, erect ears, and a responsive tail, features that convey a distinct impression of alertness. With a compact, yet sturdily built body that rests upon short, heavy legs, these diminutive doggies weigh in at about 20 lbs. and tend to be just under 10 inches in height (9.8 inches, on average). They have a double coat of fur that is hard and wiry on the surface with a soft, dense undercoat. Regular trimming and blending are required



to maintain the signature Scottie look, with the traditional shaggy beard, eyebrows, legs, and lower body parts. Coat colors range from dark gray to jet black, or brindle, which is a blend of these two shades. Less commonly, the coat may be wheaten, or straw-colored to nearly white, in hue.

Once nicknamed the ‘Diehard’ for their rugged nature and boundless determination, Scottish Terriers are playful, quick-moving, and self-assured dogs. Obedience training is recommended for these petite pooches, with the best type of training class being one that utilizes positive reinforcement, rather than correction-based courses. In spite of the Scottie’s independent spirit, it is a breed that has a strong desire for approval and tends to respond better to encouragement than other forms of discipline. Given their intelligence, they can learn practically any skill that is required and excel at agility exercises, the canine sport flyball, terrier hunt tests, and completing rally obedience courses.

Capable of developing deep, lifelong bonds with members of their families, the loving, loyal Scottish Terrier makes an excellent house pet. Take a closer look, and you will find a friend and companion, with a unique “paws-onality” that is second to none.

The advice provided in this article is general in nature, and may need to be adapted for your specific situation. Always consult your veterinarian.