

Norwich Terriers, 11-16

Title: Puppy Love

“Whoever said you can’t buy happiness forgot little puppies”

You just love the standup prick ears, the jovial attitude, the compact body on short legs, and the affectionate look in their eyes—you’ve fallen in love with the Norwich Terrier! Originally bred in England to dispatch vermin in the farmyard, the Norwich Terrier is endowed with great enthusiasm and energy, but makes a superb companion around the home. Owners adore their purebred Norwich Terriers for more than just looks alone! Norwich personality traits including their love for their human owners, curiosity, brave spirit, and gregariousness are endearing breed traits that make Norwich stand out from other small terrier breeds.

Every week, Norwich Terrier breeders listed on the Norwich Terrier Club of America (NTCA) website www.norwichterrierclub.org get inquiries from prospective new owners who have fallen in love with the breed, experienced owners who love the breed and would like to enlarge their Norwich families, and owners looking to fill the void in their hearts after losing a Norwich to illness and old age. Given the typically small litters of 1 to 3 puppies (although sometimes a lucky breeder will be blessed with 5 or even 6) and the unpredictable newborn period where a seemingly healthy newborn puppy can fade and die within a week or two after birth, it is not surprising that the process of acquiring a Norwich Terrier puppy is a like a treasure hunt. Breeders often have waiting lists, so be patient and flexible about sex and color. Norwich puppies are not ready to leave home until 10 to 12 weeks old, and some breeders keep the puppies longer, in order to observe growth and development before determining the best placement for each puppy. Once past the newborn stage, Norwich Terriers are generally healthy and hardy and typically live thirteen to sixteen years.

Finding the right puppy begins with finding a good breeder, and contacting an NTCA breeder is the best way to start. For the love of the dog, good breeders are dedicated to producing puppies that exceed the breed average in terms of health, temperament, structure (conformation) and breed type, and usually hope to keep a puppy from a planned breeding to improve upon what they already have. The sire and dam of a planned breeding have been carefully selected by the breeder based on personal observations and studying family histories and pedigrees.

Prior to breeding the NTCA *recommends* the following health screens:

- Eye examination for congenital eye disease: CERF (Canine Eye Registration Foundation) evaluation
- Hip dysplasia: either OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) or PennHip evaluation
- Patellar Luxation: OFA evaluation

Results of the health screening tests are available online at the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals website www.offa.org. Norwich Terriers who have completed the NTCA-recommended health screening tests are given a CHIC (Canine Health Information Center) number, also listed in the OFA database. Breeders listed by the NTCA ensure that the recommended health screens are performed on sire and dam before breeding. Clinical research on a serious health issue called “Upper Airway Syndrome” (UAS) that may affect some Norwich is currently underway, with the hope that an accurate screening test can be established for the future.

Buying a “Norwich” puppy sight unseen off an Internet website, whether the puppy is AKC-registered or not, increases the possibility that you are purchasing a “Faux Norwich” whose pedigree may contain ancestors that were Cairn terriers. Unscrupulous breeders have bred Norwich with other terrier breeds hoping to produce bigger litters for personal gain. Once new owners realize that they have purchased an expensive mixed-breed terrier that was sold to them as a purebred Norwich Terrier, they have little recourse once the puppy is home with them and the fraud is discovered. The puppy may be very nice, but it may not look like a typical purebred Norwich Terrier when it matures or have the breed type, temperament, and good health that responsible breeders strive to produce with each litter. Proving in court that the puppy they purchased is not a purebred Norwich Terrier is expensive and close to impossible. NTCA breeders agree to the NTCA *Code of Ethics* to breed only purebred Norwich Terriers.

The good breeder strives to place each puppy in a home where it is treasured as a beloved pet and companion, and has a chance to reach its best potential if it is also to have a career (e.g. conformation, agility, obedience, therapy, earth dog). Norwich Terriers thrive on human attention and benefit from regular exercise. However, because of their innate hunting instincts, they must be walked on a lead or be let out only in securely fenced yards—or their strong prey drive may lead them astray while chasing after the neighborhood squirrel! Truly, “Life is merrier with a Norwich Terrier...”

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