

## TERRIER GROUP

And when it comes to screeching? Unfortunately, the “Norfolk screech” is pretty common, particularly if there are squirrels involved. Good luck in trying to tame the enthusiasm!

Is selective hearing a Norfolk trait? Not really. Lots of dogs of any and all breeds can be accused of exhibiting this behavior.

Thankfully, listening to their owners is one of those things that we really can influence. Saying that our dogs don’t (or won’t) listen because they are terriers isn’t any excuse. Basic obedience and frequent reinforcement really does help.

There are most certainly other Norfolk traits that I’m forgetting to mention because they are just part of the breed’s makeup.

So, while your special Norfolk is undoubtedly the best, he or she probably shares lots of those cute behaviors with the rest of the breed. Enjoy them!

—Sheila Foran,  
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Norfolk Terrier Club

### Norwich Terriers

#### CHOOSING A BROOD BITCH: A BIT OF A GAMBLE

I’m not a fan of country music, but as I began writing this column, from the radio in the next room the song “The Gambler”



Norwich Terrier

crooned, “the secret to survivin’ is knowing what to throw away, and knowing what to keep.”

Choosing a brood bitch is a bit of a gamble. Whether acquiring your first foundation stock or selecting the pick bitch puppy from your own litter, *knowing what to keep* is key to success. For breeders of Norwich Terriers—a breed with an average litter size of three to four puppies—this is easier said than done. Often, we must arrive at a conclusion from a small number of puppies.

As a breeder, my first priority is the brood bitch. I believe that no kennel or line is stronger

than its bitches. The foundation bitch is often the cornerstone of a successful line. Yet few people actually choose a Norwich Terrier brood bitch. Most will buy a “show quality” puppy, perhaps show and finish her, and then breed a litter hoping to get a female puppy to breed on. That “foundation” bitch becomes a permanent part of the new breeder’s line. The die is cast.

Too narrow a focus on finding a “show quality” bitch may bring disappointing results. While it is true that the great show dog (or bitch) is often valuable for the breeder, many great show dogs will fail to reproduce their

own excellent qualities. On the other hand, the dog or bitch who is hard pressed to even win a ribbon may prove invaluable as breeding stock.

So, how should we choose a brood bitch? The bitch herself (whether adult or puppy) must be evaluated, to include her health, temperament, and conformation. Certainly, we only want to keep the brood bitch who was a good mother and, we hope, an easy whelper too. Remembering that the goal is to select a bitch who will produce progeny retaining the ideals of a Norwich Terrier, *her ability to produce* is most important.

If acquiring a new adult bitch (or if deciding whether to keep a bitch in our breeding program), we may be able to evaluate the progeny she has already produced. If she consistently produced high quality puppies, that is a promising sign of what she is likely to produce again. The key word is “consistently.” A single star (usually the one we are most likely to see in the show ring!) in a litter of rather ordinary puppies is not a good sign.

In assessing the bitch’s progeny, we would like to determine how the sire might have contributed to their excellence or mediocrity. Even an outstanding brood bitch will fail with the wrong mate.

Because Norwich bitches produce a small number of puppies, evaluating her based on

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her progeny is difficult. If the bitch is young, her progeny will be few (or none). In this case, we will need to predict her ability to produce by her appearance and her pedigree. She should come from a good whelping line.

In any pedigree, I place the most importance on the dam. This is because there are many dogs produced by an exceptional sire to each one from an outstanding dam. I suspect this is true because an exceptional stud dog will be bred to many bitches, of which only a few are of exceptional quality.

Scrutiny of the pedigree may bring to light names of Norwich whose qualities we would prefer not to reproduce. Of course there is not a perfect pedigree, but if the dam has produced quality Norwich and is herself of first-rate ancestry, we can lessen the uncertainty. The letters “Ch.” before names in a pedigree mean very little to me, because as mentioned earlier, show worth and breeding worth are not the same metric. The show-champion Norwich bitch who needs artificial progesterone supplementation and a C-section, and then produces a singleton puppy, is not brood bitch quality.

We must evaluate the individual bitch under consideration in her appearance and structure. If she has serious faults in several aspects of the ideal Norwich, it is certainly a more risky gamble to breed from her. I like to see correct proportions and angulation, good skeletal structure

and bone, and breed type. We know some faults are hard to eradicate. A Norwich Terrier bitch may be lacking in one particular trait (too big or too small, too light in bone, soft coat, have a long loin), but with intelligent selection of a mate, she is not as likely to pass her undesirable trait to her puppies.

As breeders, we must work with what we have available to us. Great bitches are few and not easy to obtain—obtaining a daughter may be easier. Choose only the best bitch to purchase or to breed from, considering her individual merit and her pedigree. To make it all work requires that we adhere to some simple rules of thumb and be ruthless in our final decisions. I have spayed and placed several young bitches, rather than breed them to “see what I’d get.” Each possessed some desirable qualities, but magical thinking is no better than a gamble.

*“Know when to walk away, know when to run ...”*

—Jane R. Schubart,

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### Parson Russell Terriers

#### EXCESSIVE GROOMING IS INCORRECT

It has been mentioned by many that the “overgrooming” and “incorrect grooming” of the Parson Russell Terrier has become the norm. The PRTAA has asked judges to



Correctly groomed Parson Russell Terriers. From the breed’s AKC standard: “The terrier is shown in his natural appearance not excessively groomed. Sculpturing is to be severely penalized.”

pay more attention to this, as it goes against the breed’s AKC standard (<https://prtaa.org/breed-standard>).

Our breed standard says:

“Coat: Smooth and Broken: Whether smooth or broken, a double coat of good sheen, naturally harsh, close and dense, straight with no suggestion of kink. There is a clear outline with only a hint of eyebrows and beard if natural to the coat. *No sculptured furnishings.* The terrier is shown in his natural appearance not excessively groomed. *Sculpturing is to be severely penalized.*”

“Faults—Soft, silky, woolly, or curly top-coat. Lacking undercoat. *Excessive grooming and sculpturing.*”

Yet many who groom and show the Parson (novice and professional alike), for one example, fluff the hair on the Parson’s legs to make it look like a Wire Fox Terrier. Or worse, chaps! This is not correct.

The accompanying image showing correctly groomed Parson Russell Terriers is provided on the PRTAA website (under Breed Standard/Breed Education Presentation).

I have been in the ring when a judge correctly called out a handler for blatantly shaving the dog. The dog was shaved very close to the skin up the neck and down the throat. When told that the procedure was incorrect for the breed, the handler replied that she/he had multiple