NECK, TOPLINE AND BODY

Neck—strong and well constructed. The neck is in the shape of a truncated cone, clearing the shoulders well. It is strongly muscled and has good length. Topline—the Briard is constructed with a very slight incline, downward from the prominent withers to the back which is straight, to the broad loin and the croup which is slightly inclined. The croup is well muscled and slightly sloped to give a well-rounded finish. The topline is strong, never swayed nor reached. Body—the chest is broad and deep with moderately curved ribs, egg-shaped in form, the ribs not too rounded. The breastbone is moderately advanced in front, descending smoothly to the level of the elbows and shaped to give good depth to the chest. The abdomen is moderately drawn up but still presents good volume. Tail—tucked, well feathered, forming a crook at the extremity, carried low and not deviating to the right or to the left. In repose, the bone of the tail descends to the point of the hock, terminating in the crook, similar in shape to the printed “J” when viewed from the dog’s right side. In action, the tail is raised in a harmonious curve, never going above the level of the back, except for the terminal crook. Disqualification—tail non-existent or cut.

FORE QUARTERS

Shoulder blades are long and sloping forming a 45-degree angle with the horizontal, firmly attached by strong muscles and blending smoothly with the withers. Legs—the legs are powerfully muscled with strong bone. The forelegs are vertical when viewed from the side except the pasterns are very slightly inclined. Viewed from the front or rear, the legs are straight and parallel to the median line of the body, never turned inward or outward. The distance between the front legs is equal to the distance between the rear legs. The construction of the legs is of utmost importance, determining the dog’s ability to work and his resistance to fatigue. Dewclaws—dewclaws on the forelegs may or may not be removed. Feet—strong and rounded, being slightly oval in shape. The feet travel straight forward in the line of movement. The toes are strong, well arched and compact. The pads are well developed, compact and elastic, covered with strong tissue. The nails are always black and hard.

HIND QUARTERS

The hindquarters are powerful, providing flexible, almost tireless movement. The pelvis slopes at a 30-degree angle from the horizontal and forms a right angle. The legs viewed from the side, the legs are well angulated with the metatarsus slightly inclined, the hock making an angle of 135 degrees. Dewclaws—two dewclaws are required on each rear leg, placed low on the hock, giving the hock a wide base to the foot. Occasionally the nail may break off completely. The dog shall not be penalized for the missing nail so long as the digit itself is present. Dewclaws form additional functioning toes. Disqualification—anything less than two dewclaws on each rear leg. Feet—if the rear toes turn out very slightly when the hocks and metatarsus are parallel, then the position of the feet is correct.

TAIL

The outer coat is coarse, hard and dry (making a dry rasping sound between the fingers). It lies down flat, falling naturally in long, slightly waving locks, having the sheen of good health. On the shoulders the length of the hair is generally six inches or more. The undercoat is fine and tight on all the body. The head is well covered with hair which lies down, forming a natural part in the center. The eyebrows do not lie flat but, instead, arch up and out in a curve that lightly veils the eyes. The hair is never so abundant that it masks the form of the head or completely covers the eyes.

COLOR

All uniform colors are permitted except white. The colors are black, various shades of gray and various shades of tawny. The deeper shades of each color are preferred. Combinations of two of these colors are permitted, provided there are no marked spots and the transition from one color to another takes place gradually and symmetrically. The only permissible white white hairs scattered throughout the coat and/or a white spot on the chest not to exceed one inch in diameter at the root of the hair. Disqualification white coat, spotted coat, white spot on chest exceeding one inch in diameter.

GAIT

The well-constructed Briard is a marvel of supple power. His movement has been described as “quicksilver” permitting him to make abrupt turns, springing over small obstacles and sudden stops required of the shepherding dog. His gait is supple and light, almost like that of a large feline. The gait gives the impression that the dog glides along without touching the ground. Strong, flexible movement is essential to the shepherd. He is above all a trotter, single-tracking, occasionally galloping and frequently needs to change his speed to accomplish his work. His conformation is harmoniously balanced and strong to sustain him in the long day’s work. Dogs with clumsy or inelegant gait must be penalized.

TEMPERAMENT

He is a dog of heart, with spirit and initiative, wise and fearless with no trace of timidity. Intelligent, easily trained, faithful, gentle, and obedient, the Briard possesses an excellent memory and an ardent desire to please his master. He retains a high degree of his ancestral instinct to guard home and master. Although he is reserved with strangers, he is loving and loyal to those he knows. Some will display a certain independence.

Disqualifications

All dogs or bitches under the minimum size limits. Yellow eyes or spotted eyes. Nose any color other than black. Tail non-existent or cut. Less than two dewclaws on each rear leg. White coat. Spotted coat. White spot on chest exceeding one inch in diameter.

Approved February 8, 1975
Reformatted January 12, 1992

THE BRIARD

Published by the Briard Club of America
http://www.briardclubofamerica.org

For additional information contact:

THE BRIARD, or Chien Berger du Brivis, is an ancient working breed of France, dating back to the eighth century. Early tapestries depict similar large shaggy dogs with the Emperor Charlemagne, and Napoleon was also reported to have had Briards. Thomas Jefferson owned Briards and may have brought the first ones to the United States. The Briard has been used since early times as a guardian of the flocks and a herding dog. He was the official dog of the French army and was used to carry supplies to the front lines and served as a sentry dog. Due to his keen hearing, he was used by the medical corps to search for wounded soldiers.

Bravery, loyalty and intelligence form the basic character of the Briard. His herding instincts and well-balanced character make him an ideal family dog and guardian of the home. He is never too old to play and is especially devoted to his family. The Briard has been bred for centuries as a guard and herding dog, the Briard is naturally aloof with strangers, and this instinct will have a strong influence on his temperament as an adult dog. You, however, can do much to determine the type of disposition he will have. As a pup, the Briard should be taken with you as often as possible, encouraging people to pet him, letting him become accustomed to strange people and familiar with the world around him. This should begin as soon as you receive your puppy and should continue throughout his life. A formal Puppy Kindergarten class, and later at around six months of age a beginning obedience class, are two of the best ways to
Intelligent and obedient, the Briard learns quickly, has an excellent memory and an ardent desire to please those he loves. He has the ability to understand an enormous range of commands as well as tonal qualities and body language. Because of this intelligence and desire to please, the Briard can be trained for a wide range of activities, including herding, obedience, tracking, agility, flyball and therapy work, giving both you and your Briard hours of pleasure and satisfaction from the togetherness.

There are many other bonuses with this breed. To mention a few, he is usually quiet in the house and adapts quickly to the emotional climate. While large, he is agile and active—amazingly fast when he is going places—but he has none of the constant motion of smaller breeds and some large breeds. The Briard seems equally at home in the city or the country, proficient at herding, agility, flyball and therapy work, giving both you and your Briard hours of pleasure and satisfaction from the togetherness.

The Breard is one of the few dogs that lives life with an air of philosopher. You may not see these traits in the young puppy but you may be confident that attention and love will bring unexpected rewards.

Although he has the physical requirements for the outdoor life, the Briard is, at heart, a housedog. He is happiest when he can be at his master’s side and this devotion dictates whether he is indoors or out. He is a companion, who brooks no interference as he bounds down a country road, pushing at your knees, then running ahead, checking back constantly, one who has a deep capacity to join in the family rituals, and will follow you from room to room as you go about your business.

Breed Standard

**General Appearance**

A dog of handsome form. Vigorous and alert, powerful with out coarseness, strong in bone and muscle, exhibiting the strength and agility required of the herding dog. Dogs lacking these qualities, however concealed by the coat, are to be penalized.

**Size, Proportions**

Size—males 23 to 27 inches at the withers, bitches 22 to 25 inches at the withers. Disqualification—all dogs or bitches under the minimum. Proportions—the Briard is not cobby in build. In males the length of the body, measured from the point of the shoulder to the point of the buttock, is equal to or slightly more than his height at the withers. The female may be a little longer.

**Head**

The head of a Briard always gives the impression of length, having a slightly longer width than height. The skull is long and narrow, giving the impression of two rectangular forms, equal in length but differing in height and width, blending together rather abruptly. The larger rectangle is the skull and the other forms the muzzle. The head joins the neck in a right angle and is held proudly alert. The head is sculptured in clean lines, without folds or excess flesh on the sides, or under the eyes or temples. Expression—the gaze is frank, questioning and confident. Eyes—set in the eyes set well apart with the inner corners and outer corners on the same level. Large, well opened and calm, they must never be narrow or slanted. The color must be black or brown with very dark pigmentation of the rim of the eyelids, whatever the color of the coat. Disqualification—yellow eyes or spotted eyes. Ears—the ears should be attached high, have thick leather and be firm at the base. Low-set ears cause the head to appear to be too large. The length of the natural ear should be equal to or slightly less than one-half the length of the head, always straight and covered with long hair. The natural ear