

Wheaten and then along came Kovu! Kovu, CH Caraway Celebrate Life, owned by Betty Chapman and Beth Verner, broke many records in the breed and after winning the breed from the classes at Montgomery County Kennel Club under breeder judge Gay Dunlap, he proceeded to win the breed there the next two years and to gain a group three. He and handler Shari Boyd-Carusi topped it off by winning the terrier group at the prestigious Crufts Dog Show, held in Birmingham, England. He was exciting to watch in a way that was reminiscent of CH Wildflower Stardust, who appears on both sides of Kovu's pedigree. The breed had a new hero!

Since a breed depends upon strong bitches, Wheatens have been well blessed. Starting in the 1970s CH Gleanngay Goldilock, CH Andover Antic of Sunset Hills, CH Cloverlane's Connaught, CH Amaden's Rainbow's End, and CH Legenderry's Ainlee produced many great dogs or great producers. Many lines come down from these bitches. Some of the more famous are Bantry Bay, Bendacht, Bonney, Clanheath, Kairi, Legacy, Shandalee, Westridge, Wildflower, and so many more. Elena Landa, Doubloon Wheatens, has had some lovely bitches in the ring during the past few years as have the kennels mentioned above. Elena has been a consistent winner and does the breed proud by being the Terrier Breeder of the year for the Eukanuba Classic in 2011.

The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America and the regional clubs have been known for being mentors and for welcoming newcomers. Jackie Gottlieb edited an Owner's Manual in 1979 with the help of many club members and with some minor changes it has been the guide for the breed ever since. There is a very active public education committee, now chaired by Connie Kohler of California. The breed has recently acquired certification for herding and all the performance events are very popular with Wheaten owners. The dogs

are very bright and enjoy the work and the activity of those events.

Health & Breed Type

During the mid 1980s it was discovered that a significant percentage of the breed was suffering from an illness that was caused by loss of protein. Dogs were dying from intestinal or renal issues and it was obvious to the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America that something needed to be done. A Health Committee was formed, research began at North Carolina State University and the University of Pennsylvania. Wheatens lost some well-known breeders due to the devastation of certain lines and the fear that went with it. The illness appeared to be a wild card seeming to show up any time and any place.



Ch. Gleanngay Bantry Bay Kashmir

Many breeders began to import dogs from Europe in an effort to water down the gene pool. Some are breeding pure Irish dogs with thinner, shiny coats, while some of the imports look very much like the American bred dogs but are perhaps a bit longer due to the FCI standard and the differences from the SCWTCA standard. For the past several decades, the breeders only tool to breed away from what appeared to be a genetic problem was the information of pedigrees of affected and non-affected which were listed in a voluntary national registry.

Finally, a DNA test which identifies genetic mutations associated with PLN (Protein Losing Nephropathy) was announced at the University of Pennsylvania in May, 2012. Breeders have been

quick to have their SCWTs to be tested and are making better informed breeding decisions based on these results. However, it is important that while breeding to improve the overall health of the breed, that breed type does not get overlooked... and judges need to help with that. Knowing that this breed is a happy, charming dog that is not the tough terrier in the ring helps, as does recognizing that beneath the silky coat should lie a square terrier that moves in true terrier tradition.

The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier is to be viewed and judged in the United States by the AKC Standard. This is not the same as the FCI or international standard. For example, while undocked tails have been recently accepted to accommodate the imports, many of which have natural tails, docked tails are preferred.

The National Club has provided many aids to help insure the maintenance of breed type. In the early 1990s an exceptional *Illustrated Standard* was developed by Gay Dunlap with artwork drawn by Jody Sylvester. It is a timeless piece and available free of charge to all judges. A judges' education program was developed first by Cindy Vogels. Gay Dunlap and Gary Vlachos have created a very strong judges' education DVD that is used across the country in Judges' symposia. These people have worked tirelessly to assure that judges should be able to pick out the correct type of a Wheaten Terrier. It is not a working dog nor a sporting dog, but a long legged Terrier that should be compared to the Kerry and the Irish Terriers.

Given the new DNA information now available, it might be tempting for breeders to be so focused on health issues that preserving type in the show ring is forgotten, but the history is proud and needs to be honored. ■

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