

TERMS & INTERPRETATIONS

by LORENE VICKERS-SMITH

For the last couple years, I have been delighted to find newer breeder/exhibitors sticking with the breed and remaining anxious to learn. I hesitate to call them novice because many are already producing very high quality Griffons. Some of these 'newer' people are even interested in pedigree research.

I have been concerned that this kind of dedication had slipped to a bygone era. Are we seeing a turning point? Does the decline noticed by AKC in entries and many other aspects of our sport, perhaps instead mean that the chaff is falling by the wayside, letting some very quality younger enthusiasts remain? I hope this is the case.

It was recently called to my attention that some **TERMS AND INTERPRETATIONS** of the Standard that we older breeders take for granted, are not always clear with some of the newer people.

TERM: LAY BACK OR LAY IN

For instance, when we speak of *lay back* or *lay in*, we are speaking of the nose leather itself. The leather should be black, large and wide with open nostrils. The top of the nose pad will be tilted back in toward the forehead, forming the *lay back* or *lay in*.

AKC Standard: "Nose very black, extremely short, its tip being set back deeply between the eyes so as to form a lay-back. The nostrils large."

I have found that there are many ways that the actual nostril opening can look and function. I am not a veterinarian and I do not in any way consider myself an expert on internal tissues of the airways. I only have practical knowledge with my own observations and breeding practices.

I have been peering into brachycephalic nostril openings for a good 65 years. Before that I was aware of the Bostons snoring loudly on my bed. By 1964, when I started in Pugs, I decided that free (and silent) airflow in my dogs

was important to my own sleep as well as their health.

Stenotic nares didn't seem to be a big issue in Pugs then, but elongated soft palates definitely were evident in many Pug lines. The tendency of collapsed trachea of older dogs in all our brachycephalic breeds is an ongoing concern. Collapsed Trachea is not just caused by heredity or years of lead pressure on the neck, but also can be caused by the stress of struggling to get air through narrow passages.

Some good functioning nostrils can look too small or narrow. But because these dogs sometimes have open clear wind *below* the vertical slits and large internal airways, they can perform normally and live long, healthy lives.

Many dogs that are having difficulty breathing will seem uncomfortable especially when being picked up. Sometimes they almost look like they are chewing gum, but instead they are probably just trying to catch a good breath of air. When judging you will reward the black, large, wide-open nose pad with proper lay back called for in our Standard, when you can find it on a quality specimen.

A few years ago I read an excellent article written by Dr. Magda Omansky regarding Upper Airway Syndrome. Additional reading can be found at



This ideal head should be fixed in our "mind's eye".



Stenotic nares.



Nares with adequate airflow at bottom.

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BETWEEN THE EYES SO AS TO FORM A
LAY-BACK. THE NOSTRILS LARGE.' ”**



Fig. 1: Nosepad in perfection.



Fig. 2: This puppy's head was all there at birth.



Here are two more properly laid-in, upswept Griffons with beautiful clean finish to mouth.

www.thedoctorschannel.com/view/meet-the-breeds-the-norwich-terrier-2/.

As I worked to establish the Wisselwood line in both Pugs and Griffons, I focused on what I felt was important to me. One of my focuses from the beginning was the proper head type of the AKC Standard. In order to obtain the expression interpreted in the Standard, the nose must be very short. The Brussels Griffon Standard states, *“extremely short”*.

MYTH

Dogs do not need a length of nose to have good wind or live long healthy lives! Nothing a kennel club, a veterinarian or an animal rights group can tell me will ever convince me otherwise.

See Figure 1. The nose pad of this six-year-old Griffon is properly set right back into the domed forehead. It would be fair to say he has *“no length of nose at all”*. He walks miles each day and leads a fully functional life. He makes no noise while breathing or sleeping and comes from a line of longevity, most of whom also have no length of nose at all. He has a large nose leather and wide open nostrils. Evidently his internal pipes must be also large and healthy. (For perfection of this head, I would like a cleaner finish to the lips). ***I repeat, Brussels Griffons do not need a length of nose for health, function and longevity.***

Air can meet with obstruction anywhere from nostrils to lungs. Nostrils can be of normal size and the dog can still have much difficulty breathing due to restricted air from internal issues often later resulting in enlarged heart, CHF and shortened life.

If your brachycephalic dog (or your dolichocephalic or mesaticephalic dog) seems to have good wind through his nares but yet is struggling for breath, very sensitive to heat, makes labored racket or his sides heave during breathing; please go to a specialist and find out what really is going on. A specialist is necessary because so many veterinarians will first do the obvious, like clipping off the long soft palate or opening up the nares unnecessarily. During extremely hot weather the throat can swell along with the soft palate and a veterinarian who is not a specialist might cut it too short (or cut it when it doesn't actually need it at all). Having it cut too short can cause other problems for your dog.

The absence of length of nose does affect the brachycephalic in the extremities of weather. We must give our dogs extra protection because they have no snout to warm up cold air or cool off warm air before the short trip to their lungs. I have seen all dogs reverse sneezing but perhaps our brachys more often. The main cause seems to be allergies, irritants or dry air conditions. We mostly see it after furnaces come on in the fall. They do seem to reverse sneeze most often during their dearly paid for short *“down and back”* because stress or dust at the shows may cause their sinus to run? Who knows, but we all live in fear...ha!

TERM: UPSWEEP OF JAW

If the Brussels Griffon does not have the proper undershot bite, not only will the *“lay back”* of the nose leather and *“upsweep”* of the curved mandible be absent, but also the entire ‘pouty’ expression vital to breed type will not be present. The make up of the whole skull must all flow into place in the adult Griffon.

In this *ideal* undershot bite, the mandible will be longer than the maxilla. When the mandible is made correctly it will curve in a *“rocker” (upsweep)* that begins at the jaw hinge. The bottom teeth will just fold up over the top teeth. A definite chin will show, but no teeth—*clean finish to mouth and lips.*

See Figure 2. This puppy's head was all there at birth. He was born without any *length of nose*. Pictured at six months there is great width to muzzle and fill under eyes to balance the broad

**“DOGS DO NOT NEED
A LENGTH OF NOSE
TO HAVE GOOD
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HEALTHY LIVES!”**



Fig. 3: Same black smooth puppy front and in profile.



Everything is still in its proper place on these roughs from dome of forehead to Griffon POUT.



forehead and chin. Eyes are in line with the nose pad. You can actually see the upsweep to the mandible from the front. But the thing to note here is the beautiful *lip seal* or *clean finish*. The lips are plush, but not thick like the Pug. They are not long and do not overhang over the chin in front or form flews on the side of the mouth. This dog is clearly undershot without the need for you to look inside the mouth. Everything is in the right place. (For perfection of head, I would give the lovely dark eyes more size and of course smaller ears.) When you look at this face, you easily can see our saucy *pout*. If you cannot visually see the width of the jaw, muzzle or fill under the eyes please gently touch the sides of the face under the eyes, rather than pulling the beard down which will make even the nicest muzzle look narrow.

TERM: FOLD

I will use two established lines to demonstrate this. Having lived near and shown with Jacque Jone's Trey-acre's Griffs in early years, I know that many dogs of her line *fold as they age*. You could look at one of her six month olds in the ring and have an

"oh my" moment. Then see the same dog at 1½ years old and see the most gorgeous head imaginable. My Wisselwood puppies however, generally have a beautiful ttypy head at birth (or they never get it and remain "oh my"). This is what we call *folding—or continuing to fold up to two years*. Because juvenile folding is not uncommon in the development of our head/skull, we address it in the Illustrated Standard which I urge all to become familiar with. The entire head develops with age. I have noted mandibles continuing to sweep up with growth development and then, after a short rest period during which the bottom incisors peek out, they continue to tuck right up over the maxilla and finish off beautifully with the lips meeting cleanly together in front. It is quite miraculous to watch, especially when it develops properly. When some genes mix together the mandible may never *fold into the upsweep* and it remains straight. Since the mandible is a good bit longer than the maxilla—where can it go but straight out. This shovel mouth never properly finishes off or tucks up over the maxilla. This is why it may be necessary to feel the mandible if you have not yet trained your eye, or if the beard conceals the curve.

TERM: DOME

To complete this picture, the domed forehead is very important. The skull between ears is slightly rounded. The *dome is in profile of the forehead* starting immediately over the eyes and continuing to the top of the skull.

See Figure 3. Even in the front view of the black smooth puppy, you can see obvious dome that you confirm in pro-

file. (Note that this puppy's ears look out of balance. Puppies grow in spurts and she did grow nicely into her ears. Most breeders will wait until they are out of puppy stage before cropping.)

Your eye will soon be accustomed to see through the rough coat. Judging the Smooth head should now be easy for you. The Roughs will require more use of your fingers and concentration.

BITE

The AKC has classified the Brussels Griffon as a T breed (among six other Toy undershot breeds) on its new "Oral Exam Chart by Breed".

This means that when examining the bite of these seven breeds, the judge is to use the *THUMB EXAM*. This chart will be especially helpful to judges of multiple breeds. *We ask that when the judges use the Thumb Exam that NO part of their fingers or thumb go under the lips or in the mouth.*

Gently place the pad of your thumb in the center of the chin and tip it forward over the top lip towards the nose, but not over it. On the correct undershot bite, your thumb will not be vertically straight. Your thumb will tilt slightly toward the *nosepad* so that you can feel (along with see) the proper "*lay back*".

Special attention will need to be made to our *DQ for Bite Overshot*, which none of the other Toy "T" breeds have. On the rare occasion that you cannot ascertain if the dog is overshot (or wry) using the Thumb Exam here also, please ask the exhibitor to show the bite. If you plan to use the dog and still cannot be sure, then *very quickly* look yourself by flipping the top lips up while *focusing* on the visual. ■