

HISTORY

From the backstreets of Brussels, Belgium, and a somewhat shaded ancestry, comes our charming little Brussels Griffon.

Most authorities agree that the Brussels Griffon was developed in Belgium from small rough-coated dogs kept as ratters in stables. Hence the name Griffons d'Ecurie (wire-coated stable dogs). Although there is no complete record of the breeds crossed and recrossed to achieve the Griffon as we know it today, there is no doubt that the Affenpinscher, the English Toy Spaniel, and the Pug were the basic breeds used. The influence of the Affenpinscher is seen in general size and wire coat texture. The smooth-coated variety of the Brussels Griffon is a direct result of the introduction of the Pug. The contribution of the Toy Spaniel can be seen in the large expressive eyes, the well rounded forehead, the upturned underjaw and nosepad, the deep red color of the Ruby, and the black and tan of the King Charles.

Whatever it had been called before, by 1880 in Belgium the breed was called the Griffons Bruxellois - the Brussels Griffon. By 1883 Belgian breeders had formulated a standard and had established regular classes in show competition. Prior to this time the breed was entered in a mixed variety called Rough or Long Coated Terriers. In 1889 the Club du Griffon Bruxellois was established in Brussels. At about that time the smooth was recognized as a separate variety under the name Griffon Brabancon. By the late 1890s the breed was quite the rage as the Queen of the Belgians and the Duke of Flanders bred Griffons on an extensive scale.

The early 1890's saw the Griffon Bruxellois and Griffon Brabancon introduced to England and by 1898 it was admitted to the English Stud Book. English clubs were formed to promote the development of this new breed.

In 1899 the first Griffons appeared in the American Kennel Club Stud Book and were shown in miscellaneous classes at Westminster. The Breed gained classification in 1900 and the first Champion was recorded with AKC in 1908. The first U.S. Brussels Griffon Specialty was held in New York City on May 10, 1918 with 53 Griffons entered.

The Brussels Griffon Club of America remained active, as the parent club until 1939. In 1945 the American Brussels Griffon Association was established as the parent club.

After World War II, two reformations of the breed standard were made. The first, in 1959, saw the combining of a two-part standard, Griffon Bruxellois and Griffon Brabancon. The 1990 reformatting removed the disqualification of the Black Smooth variety, restoring it to its rightful place in the ring.

Responsible concern to maintain the breed's high quality, while protecting the breed's popularity, remain our goal as the American Brussels Griffon Association approaches a new century.