

The Dutch Barge Dog, Schipperke

Are you looking for the perfect companion dog to tag along in your sea escapades? Look no further for the Schipperke is the right partner for you. This dog is not prone to sea sickness and is agile, brave and reliable even on board.

This small breed of dog is of Belgian origins and said to have first appeared during the early 16th century. Its body is thickset, round and compact and its face resembles that of a fox. All Schipperkes must be of color black and that other shades are considered disqualifications.

There are more than one unique and noticeable physical traits of a Schipperke. One being it possesses a rather distinct coat composed of a stand-out ruff, cape and culottes. The ruff surrounds its neck like an expensive fur coat and trails down its back elegantly.

The ears are small, erect and pointed and the tail is docked. Some Schipperkes are born tail-less while some are born with varying lengths of tail. A few months after birth, the tails are docked but in the US and Canada, the tails are docked right after birth.

The Schipperke's coat sheds moderately, has a soft and fluffy undercoat, and a course and longer overcoat. The overcoat must always be colored black while the undercoat may be slightly lighter. To keep this dog's appearance in a tiptop condition, the coat must be brushed weekly.

Also called the "Tasmanian Black Devil" or the "little black devil", the Schipperke is one headstrong, independent and hardheaded little creature. It is overflowing with energy, very inquisitive and when it is hit with boredom, it destroys things it finds interesting. Sometimes, when the master gives orders, it intentionally ignores or refuses the must to obey.

Supposedly, the word schipperke is an English term which means "little sailor". Studies corrected, however, that the word is a term borrowed from the Dutch word "shapocke" or "scheperke" meaning "little shepherd". As further evidence, the Schipperke holds a strong similarity to the Belgian Sheepdog also called the Groenendel.

The Schipperke was mistaken by the English as a barge dog since it had been used as onboard security, ratter and horse tower of the barges in the canal. In the US, this breed is fondly called as the Belgian Barge Dog or the Belgian Ship Dog. Also, this breed served as messenger dogs for the Belgian Resistance against Nazi occupation during WWII.

About the Author

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