



Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club of NSW Inc.

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Breed Standard

HEAD AND SKULL: *Skull almost flat between ears. Stop shallow. Length from base of stop to tip of nose about 3.8 cms (1 1/2 inches). Nostrils black and well developed without flesh marks, muzzle well tapered. Lips well developed but not pendulous. Face well filled below eyes. Any tendency to snippiness undesirable.*

In the early Standard of Points 55 out of 100 were allocated to the total head, i.e. including ears, eyes, muzzle and nose, thus expressing the importance attached to an attractive head. Whilst the points system has long since fallen into disuse a correct and attractive head is still regarded very highly. The head is naturally the first feature one is drawn to. In fact some judges are criticised for going overboard on heads and not paying sufficient attention to other parts of the body when making their assessment.

The skull needs to be almost flat between the ears, and most heads today fulfil this requirement. Breeders have successfully bred away the 'well domed skull' of the King Charles Spaniel. The ears need to be set high, otherwise the almost flat skull image is lost. The skull also needs to be wide enough to enable the eyes to be 'spaced well apart'. If the skull is narrow, the width necessary for the eyes is lost, and this tends to provide a mean expression. On the other hand, if the skull is too wide it can make the head look coarse. Either of these two extremes would make the head untypical. A puppy may have a prominent occiput i.e. back point of the skull which will provide the necessary width when the head 'breaks' as the puppy gets older.

The stop should be shallow. It does not mean as shallow as with some breeds, e.g. Collie, but shallow when compared with the King Charles Spaniel. The latter has a well-defined stop with its very short nose upturned to meet the skull. When compared to this the Cavalier's stop has to be much shallower. Half-way between the Collie and King Charles Spaniel would be about right.

The length of the nose from base of stop to tip of nose is about 3.8 cms (1 1/2 inches), whereas the USA Standard says at least 1 1/2 inches. Mrs Pitt observed in the 1950s:

'It is always a disappointment to me to see a short-faced Cavalier winning high honours as it shows a lack of appreciation of the beauty of the real type, and the years of work which went to make it.'

Nostrils should be black and well-developed without flesh marks. Black nose pigment is something that many breeders are currently finding difficult to achieve. It is not a new problem, as Susan Burgess noted when she judged Crufts in 1979:

'One of the biggest problems appeared to be pigmentation. The majority of the Blenheim and rubies, some tricolours and at least one black and tan had off-colour noses, which was horrifying.'

The weather has not helped but when tricolours and black and tans are affected surely this is a danger signal we cannot ignore.

I have found that if a puppy has pink skin showing through the hair under the nose, and on the chin, then the likelihood is that nose pigment will not be a strong black, and with time is likely to deteriorate. Too many Cavaliers have 'off-colour' noses ranging from not quite jet black, through shades of grey and brown, to a fawn, all of which detract from the desired expression. It has always been known that the nose pigment of some bitches will vary slightly as they come into season,



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or when they have a litter, and pigment is therefore felt by some to be related to hormones. It is also known that nose pigment in some dogs and bitches deteriorates in the winter. Whilst there is little authoritative information written about pigmentation, the rather poor nose pigment found today in many Cavaliers suggests it is a matter not receiving sufficient attention in breeding programmes. Bitches with poor pigment are being used for breeding, and it seems likely that some are being mated by dogs from lines with poor pigment, thus compounding the problem. Doubling up on a fault is a sure way of perpetuating, and indeed increasing, the problem.

The only way to improve pigmentation is by using breeding stock which has jet black pigment.

Nostrils should also be well developed and without flesh marks. Some young Cavaliers with small flesh marks may lose them as they mature, and when these small areas 'black in' they usually are 'dense black, and the pigment often remains good for the future. Those Cavaliers with larger flesh marks which remain into adulthood give an unfortunate 'odd look'. Flesh marks seem to be more prevalent in certain lines. It therefore seems risky to breed from a mature Cavalier still showing flesh marks as there is a likelihood that the fault will be reproduced in some progeny, possibly extending beyond the next generation.

The muzzle is to be 'well tapered'. The muzzle should not be box like, or pinched, but nicely tapered without being pointed. The lips should be 'well developed but not pendulous'. In other words, the lips should not hang below the lower jaw as with hounds. The Standard does not mention colour of the lips, but if they are black they complement the dark features of the nose and eyes and add to the attractiveness of the head. There should be no throatiness, double chin or thick hanging jowls.

The head should be well filled below the eyes. This is often referred to as cushioning and is important because it gives a nicely rounded look. The cheeks, however, must not be too full as they can then contribute towards a coarse looking head. Neither should there be any tendency to snipiness i.e. the contour of the face should not fall away too quickly beneath the eyes. The correct degree of cushioned, or padded, effect gives added appeal to the head and expression. A puppy often takes time to develop the cushioning. When considering the head we are therefore seeking the individual features to be well balanced, so that they fit together harmoniously, thus providing the sweet, gentle and soft expression which is so important in Cavaliers.

A dog's head should be slightly broader, with a more masculine tone, than the head of a bitch, which will be slightly smaller, more feminine and pretty.

EYES: *Large, dark, round but not prominent; spaced well apart.*

It has already been stated that eyes need to be spaced well apart. They should also be large, round and dark brown. Although large, they should not appear bulbous or protruding, because such eyes can appear to give a terrified expression and look awful. Small eyes, almond shaped eyes, or those that are too light, being hazel or even yellow tinged, can contribute to a hard, mean expression, whereas the Standard demands a 'gentle expression'. The rims to the eyes should also be dark but today there are many Cavaliers, even big winners, with white rims. Certainly the dark surrounding ring helps to give the total eye that lustrous, limpid look required.

Correct eyes do so much to bring about the desired soft, gentle expression. In her judge's critique for the Bath Championship Show of 1956 Mrs Pitt said: 'I should like to comment on the light eyes which were very prevalent.



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Breeding in a fault like this is a fault we have inherited from certain big winners and we shall have to be firmer in our breeding programmes as it is ugly to say the least.' The problem was still present to a certain extent fifteen years ago but has lessened in recent years. Light eyes are now rather the exception. This is good news and shows what can be done by skilful breeding.

There have been problems with some eyes being too small. As long ago as 1957, after judging the Cavalier Club Open Show Miss M.D. Barnes wrote: 'Is there a tendency for eyes to be getting smaller? Big dark eyes are imperative or we shall lose the true gentle expression.' In 1965 C.G.E. Wimhurst in *The Book of Toy Dogs* stated: 'there is a tendency for the large eye to shrink in size.' This problem is still with us today to a certain extent, and I believe it is rather more prevalent amongst tricolours. However, the recent reports of some judges suggest that the situation may now be starting to improve very slightly. Let us hope that this progress can be maintained because eyes can make or mar the expression and head - they are that important.

EARS: *Long, set high, with plenty of feather.*

Ears are required to be set high in order to enhance the almost flat skull. If they are set too low they make the skull appear rounded, even if it is not. When a Cavalier hears an unusual sound, or is alert, it is often possible to see the ears lift higher on the head, and they then tend to fan forward nearer to the eyes and cheeks, giving a picture frame effect. The ears of all four colours of Cavaliers should have long feathering. In practice it is often found that tricolours have particularly long feathering, followed closely by black and tans, with the Blenheims and rubies being a little less profuse.

MOUTH: *Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite i.e. the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws.*

Very important changes have taken place in the Breed Standard relating to mouths, viz:

1928 Standard: made no mention of mouths under points, but faults included 'Undershot'.

1948-1970: 'Mouth - Level' but faults included 'Undershot'.

1970-1985: 'Mouth - Level; scissor bite preferred'.

1986 onwards: 'a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite'.

These changes are understandable because breeders have had since 1925, or certainly since 1945, to produce the distinctive Cavalier head and mouth. It is appreciated that breeding a particular type is undoubtedly a long term project. But, approximately fifty years from 1945, or seventy years from 1925, is a reasonable period during which it can be expected that we should have substantially achieved the desired mouth. That is, I believe, the reasoning behind the important changes made to the Standard.

The fact remains that we still have something of a problem with Cavaliers being produced with incorrect mouths. We therefore still have progress to make in breeding this out. Bad mouths are hereditary, so as long as breeders continue to use stock for breeding which have incorrect mouths, or come from lines with this fault, the problem will continue. It will haunt such breeders - if not in the first generation, the probability is that it will recur in the second and subsequent generations.

Some breeds, e.g. Bull Terriers, have not paid sufficient attention to this problem and have paid dearly for it over a long period.



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Many see a bad mouth as a structural fault of some importance. Therefore it is no surprise that in many breeds a bad mouth is a complete bar to success in the show ring. I believe this applies almost completely to Cavaliers. This seems both understandable and reasonable, in view of the changes made to the Breed Standard over the years, and in view of what is so clearly expected now. Therefore I am surprised by the 'Interpretation of the Breed Standard' published by the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club in 1992 which states: 'A slightly undershot or level bite in a young pup could be overlooked as many will come correct by 18-24 months.' I believe this is flawed in two ways.

First, a judge has always been expected to judge what he sees before him on the day. It is unrealistic to expect him to be able to foresee whether an undershot mouth will have changed to a scissor bite in six or twelve months' time. No one can guarantee that, not even the breeder who knows the line well. I suspect that a considerable majority of undershot mouths remain undershot, and it is only a small, possibly a very small, minority that change to a correct scissor bite.

Second, by stating that an incorrect mouth can be overlooked in a young pup there is an implied suggestion that incorrect mouths are not as important as the developmental changes in the Breed Standard would indicate. The current Standard clearly states 'a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite', and I believe judges and breeders should stick to that requirement. If an exhibitor shows a puppy with an incorrect mouth, the exhibitor should not expect any clairvoyant allowances from the judge. If the owner is convinced the mouth will come right the sensible solution is that the puppy is held back from the show-ring until the 'bite' is correct.

The scissor bite, as the name implies, requires the upper teeth to close tightly over the lower teeth as they overlap. When a faulty mouth is found in a Cavalier it is usually that the upper teeth do not overlap, and in fact drop in behind the lower set. This is when the mouth is said to be undershot. A mouth may also be level, i.e. have a pincer bite, which occurs when the upper set of teeth rest on top of the lower set. That is also classed as an incorrect mouth. An overshot mouth is when the top teeth overlap the bottom teeth, and there is a gap between them. The gap can vary from slight to substantial, as with a pig or a parrot, and these descriptive terms are sometimes used.

I have noticed that a small number of adult Cavaliers now have quite tiny teeth, almost like weak baby teeth. I cannot see them being of much use in chomping up food. Perhaps such dogs only eat sloppy food. A full set of good, strong teeth provide a useful set of tools to any dog. A Cavalier should have forty-two teeth made up of twelve incisors; four canine, eye or fang teeth; sixteen premolars; and ten molars. The incisor teeth at the front are used for slicing, hence the importance of the scissor bite; the fangs are for gripping, hence their greater length, pointedness and strong roots; and the molars are used for grinding. Pre-molars are general purpose teeth. The whelping bitch uses the incisors to release newly born puppies from the foetal sac, and the molars to grind and sever the strong umbilical cord.

Judges on the Continent often pay much greater attention to teeth than British judges and have been known to count them. I have seen a number of Cavaliers with only ten instead of twelve incisors. I am not sure of the reason for this. Possibly it is because the dog has a slightly narrow jaw with insufficient space for twelve incisors, or there may be a hereditary factor involved.

A wry mouth is fortunately an extreme rarity with Cavaliers. A 'wry mouth' is when one of the jaws, usually the lower, is twisted to one side and is out of line with the upper jaw. It is inadvisable to breed from a Cavalier with a wry mouth.



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NECK: *Moderate length, slightly arched.*

An attractive arched neck of the correct length, flowing from the skull into a level back, helps considerably in providing a picture of beauty and elegance, both standing and on the move. The neck needs to be sufficiently long for the head to be carried proudly, high, which contributes to the elegance, and also enables true, unrestricted, stylish front movement. If the neck is too short the Cavalier looks stuffy and heavy around the neck and shoulders and loses much of its elegance. Too short a neck is often accompanied by too straight shoulders, and the dog not only looks unbalanced but movement usually suffers as well. Whilst the arched topline of the neck should flow in a graceful line, similarly the lower neckline should also be 'clean' with the skin fitting snugly at the throat.

The need for the neck to be of 'moderate length and slightly arched' is of course not just for aesthetic reasons. The area around the arch of the neck is the anchor point for many muscles, ligaments and tendons - the arch acts similarly to the keystone in an archway and is the strength point. The moderate length also permits rather longer muscles than would be possible in a short, stuffy neck. These rather longer muscles contribute to better movement because longer muscles tire less quickly than short, heavy ones. The length of the neck obviously needs to be in balance with the remainder of the Cavalier.

FOREQUARTERS: *Chest moderate, shoulders well laid back; , straight legs moderately boned.*

The chest needs to be moderately wide and in balance with the overall size of the particular Cavalier. Sufficient chest and body width is needed to provide ample room for the heart and lungs, and for the front legs to be appropriately distanced from each other.

Some dog experts rate shoulders as being the most important part of any dog. This is not surprising as correct shoulders can give so many positive benefits. I have mentioned earlier the importance of correctly angled shoulders in order to obtain a good reach of neck, flowing outline, balance and natural long-striding movement.

It is generally agreed a good lay back of shoulder blade (or scapula) is required. But what does this mean and how is it measured? This matter needs to be considered carefully as substantially differing views have been expounded. Let us first consider what the breed standards state. An earlier British Standard, believed to have been introduced in 1948 or 1949, stated 'shoulder not too straight'. But the current British Standard states 'shoulders well laid back'. However the USA Standard states: 'Shoulders - should slope back gently with moderate angulation.' We are not just concerned with semantics; because there are now two quite differing views of the correct lay back of the shoulder.

In the past many respected authorities, including R.H. Smythe, MRCVS, McDowell Lyon, and Lawrence M. Kalstone, stated categorically the correct inclination of the shoulder blade should be 45 degrees to the ground. Faulty, i.e. too upright, shoulders were said to be angled at 55 to 60 degrees to the ground. There was general agreement about these so called 'facts'. For instance Lyon in *The Dog in Action* emphatically stated that a shoulder blade angled at 45 degrees was much more efficient than one of 60 degrees. He said the 45 degree blade is longer and wider with larger supporting muscles. It gives far better lift, length of stride and therefore better locomotion generally, which is less fatiguing to the dog. If there is strong drive from behind, i.e. from the rear legs, as required in the Cavalier, then the front assembly, of which the shoulder blade is the foundation, has to be able to accommodate this rear drive and respond to it. Lyon states the 45 degree shoulder can work much more effectively than the 60 degree shoulder.



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Lyon advised not to underestimate the importance of correctly laid shoulder blades in small dogs (like Cavaliers), making the point that they are vital to every dog for efficient comfortable movement. Consider also that a Cavalier jumping from a chair receives more concussion to its joints, relatively, than a horse jumping fences in the Grand National.

Lyon suggests that when assessing the slope or angle of the shoulder blade one should feel the raised ridge in the centre of the blade and relate this as an angle to the ground.

But in 1983 Rachel Page Elliott's book *The New Dogsteps* appeared. It was an impressive, persuasive publication as the author had used ordinary x-rays and cineradiography (moving x-rays) in her observations. She made the point that measurements of angles can vary, depending upon which bone prominences are used for measuring, and that placing the legs in slightly different positions can affect the angles. Nevertheless, she clearly stated the 45 degree slope of the shoulder 'is only a myth' and that such 'a position would be a mechanical impossibility to the dog's function'. She provided what many feel is convincing evidence for her assertion. Mrs Elliott describes the correct angle of the shoulders as 30 degrees off a vertical plane, which of course means 60 degrees off the horizontal. This angle had previously been described by many as being too upright, resulting in the shoulder being considered faulty and inefficient in its functioning.

Previous writers had also stated that the angle between the shoulder blade and the upper arm (or humerus) should be about 90 degrees. Mrs Elliott's conclusion regarding the shoulder blade being more upright has an effect on the angle between the shoulder and the upper arm. I believe many breeders and judges would welcome further studies being made as Mrs Elliott's well researched evidence has created some confusion regarding what is the correct lay back of the shoulder blade.

We can still say, however, that shoulders must be of good length, laid back and inclined towards each other at the top. The shoulder blades almost come together at the withers, but do not touch.

The upper arm, which is the next bone down from the shoulder, is also vitally important and needs to be of good length and well laid back i.e. not too upright. If a dog has the correct length and angle of both shoulder and upper arm, it is likely to have well placed elbows that do not protrude, and the forelegs will be well under the body. This not only results in a good tight front, and usually straight forelegs, but also in optimum weight distribution.

Shoulders which are too straight can result in a dip behind the withers, thus spoiling the topline. This is because upright shoulders do not give the necessary support to the vertebral column. Wrongly angled shoulders and upper arm, and too short a forearm, can result in a stilted, shortened stride in front movement, even reaching a high stepping hackney action in the worst cases. Where there is slackness of the elbows, the dog when moving is likely to resort to pinning, or occasionally to throw its feet the other way i.e. outwards. When a dog is too short in the back this is often accompanied by upright shoulders, and occasionally by too much barrelling of the ribs which can push out the elbows.

The pastern is the lower part of the leg just above the foot. It should be strong, straight and supple, thus facilitating a proud upright stance when motionless, but also assisting a positive driving movement. Pasterns act as a kind of shock absorber, cushioning the impact of each step. If the pastern is weak and bent, the dog is said 'to be down on its pasterns'.

The legs should be straight with the feet facing the front, and neither turned in nor out. The bone should be moderate - that is, not thin and spindly like a chicken, nor thick and heavy as in a Clumber Spaniel but a nicely rounded moderate bone that is appropriate to the Cavalier's size.



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BODY: *Short-coupled with good spring of rib. Level back.*

I have already mentioned the importance of a correct topline. From the flat skull comes the graceful arched neck, which ideally then flows into a perfectly level back. The level back should be maintained when both standing and on the move; it should not dip or roach in any way. Nor should it slope from withers to the tail.

The length of the back should be well proportioned to the other parts of the body, particularly the neck, so that it all seems to fit together in a balanced way. Short-coupled refers only to the loin, that small part of the back between the ribs and the pelvis. The croup is that part of the spinal column from the last vertebra of the loin to the first of the tail. If the pelvis is at a correct angle of about 30 degrees this permits longer muscles from it to the stifle, and also allows the rear leg to swing well backwards, both of which assist in producing the required drive from behind. A bitch may often be forgiven if she is slightly longer bodied, for this is helpful when she is in whelp, since it allows more room for the puppies.

There needs to be a good spring of rib, but this does not mean a wide barrelled shape. Nor is slabsided acceptable, as this reduces space for heart and lungs and also looks very unattractive. It is the happy medium which is required.

The USA Standard gives further helpful information by stating: '... Back level, leading into strong muscular hindquarters. Slightly less body at the flank than at the last rib but with no tucked-up appearance.'

HINDQUARTERS: *Legs with moderate bone; well turned stifle- no tendency to cow or sickle hocks.*

The moderate bone called for is the happy medium between the too thin and spindly, and the too thick and heavy. Either of these extremes would look out of place on a Cavalier and would therefore be untypical. Once again we need to be thinking of balance and proportion, as related to the total Cavalier. The bones and their alignment which make up the hindquarters can easily be seen in the drawings towards the end of this section. The pelvis is the uppermost bone in the hindquarters group. It needs to be broad and very slightly sloped. If it is narrow it may result in hind movement being rather close.

The stifle in the hindquarters is of similar importance as the shoulders in the forequarters. A well turned stifle, with well developed muscle on the thigh, greatly assists in producing the required strong driving rear movement. A nicely turned stifle also makes a useful contribution to the shape and attractiveness of the Cavalier, particularly in profile. Conversely, a straight stifle gives a rigid wooden appearance to the hindquarters, and this is often borne out by weak, short stepped movement which does not flow.

An important part of the stifle joint is the patella. An occasional problem arises in most small breeds, including Cavaliers, with what is described in various ways as slipping patella, patella luxation, slipping stifle or stifle dysplasia. W.A. Priester (1972) found that small breeds (under 9 kg adult weight) had a twelve times greater chance of encountering the problem than large dogs. The patella, or kneecap, is a small bone which runs in a groove and moves up and down as the leg is straightened or bent. Dislocation occurs when the patella slips out of the groove, often because the groove is abnormally shallow. Dislocation is painful to the dog. The dislocation can be corrected 'temporarily by manipulation but often recurs. A more permanent solution is possible by corrective surgery. The defect is hereditary. Therefore stock with this defect, or those suspected of carrying the gene, should not be used for breeding. As the defect usually appears at about ten months, i.e. before a dog reaches the age for breeding, there should be no problem in avoiding breeding from afflicted stock, be it dog or bitch. A straight stifle can be a contributory cause to a slipping patella.



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HOCKS - Some disagreement arises over the correct terminology to use in describing that section of the rear leg which corresponds in humans to the ankle down to the heel. Many dog breeders use the word 'hock' to describe the whole section. However some, including Geoffrey Corish and Rachel Page Elliott, feel that 'hock' should only be used to describe the bony joint or protrusion, and that the length below should be described as the rear pastern. The Kennel Club, in its 'Glossary of Terms', relates the pastern to the forelegs only.

Having pointed out the differences over terminology I propose, with a little reluctance, to use the word 'hock' to describe not only the bony joint but also the section below, down to the heel. I am prompted to do so for two rather compelling reasons: (1) this is the most commonly accepted usage in Britain; and (2) the Breed Standard refers only to hocks, not hock joints and rear pasterns. (In fact the British Breed Standard for Cavaliers makes no mention of pasterns, front or rear.) Hocks should be straight and short from hock joint to ground. It is often said that hocks should be 'well let down', and this term is actually used in both American Standards. When moving and viewed from behind, the dog's hocks should move straight and parallel to each other, with no tendency to cow or bow hocks. Cow hocked describes when the hock bony joints turn inwards towards each other with the feet turning outwards. Bow or sickle hocked is when there is an inability to extend the hock joint on the backward drive of the hind leg with a resultant shuffling motion, and the hock bony joints turn outwards away from each other with the feet turning inwards.

A sickle hocked dog, as the description implies, usually stands with its hocks bent under it, rather than their being upright and vertical.

Lack of angulation at the stifle is often matched by a lack of appropriate angulation in the hock joint, and then movement suffers considerably from the combined faults and may result in 'plaiting' or 'knitting'.

There is an old saying that if they are made right, they will move right. The late Florence Nagle, who was an expert in breeding livestock as well as dogs, once said: 'I can get a head in one mating but hindquarters and fronts take generations - guard them with your life once you have them.' Several years ago the then President of the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club raised a specific matter which concerned her, i.e. some people keeping Cavaliers in cages, and asked 'I wonder if this is perhaps why we see so many bad hindquarters, bad movers and dogs down on their pasterns.' I cannot recall hearing of any responses to the President's expression of concern. I believe keeping any dogs in cages for much of their lives is wrong in principle and, thankfully, I believe it does not happen too often with Cavaliers. Confinement in cages may adversely affect movement, but there are many Cavaliers who do not spend much of their time in cages but who move badly, simply because they are made incorrectly.

FEET: *Compact, cushioned and well feathered.*

Feet should be compact, rounded and neither catlike nor hare-footed. They should be well cushioned, which simply means they should have thick, springy pads. If a puppy has small, black pigmented areas on its pads it often means that, if a Blenheim, it will have good nose pigment and rich coat colouring in its adult life. The toes should be arched. Flat open feet can be hereditary, or caused by faulty care.

If nails get overlong they need to be clipped as walking on such nails can make the feet splay out, which is very difficult to correct. If most of a dog's exercise is done on a hard floor, this may well keep the nails rubbed down. However many experienced breeders believe that exercise runs should not be of concrete or paving slabs because, although easy to keep clean, they have two serious disadvantages. First, they encourage the feet to 'splay' out, and, second, as rain and urine tend to stand on concrete or slabs, even if on a slope, the feet of Cavaliers often develop a quite pronounced pink or



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fawn stain. This stain detracts from the ' appearance required in the showing, and once acquired it is very hard to eradicate. A much better base for the runs is 3/4" cleaned granite to a depth of 6"-8", which ensures that moisture quickly drains off the surface, thus avoiding the staining. The small loose stones also help to keep the feet compact.

Excess hair between the pads should be clipped, as otherwise it becomes bulky and makes movement uncomfortable. This is particularly required when snow is on the ground because the dog can find it difficult trying to walk on four 'snowballs'. Feet and legs should be well feathered. In some breeds judges pay some attention to feet, but this rarely seems to happen with Cavaliers.

TAIL: *Length of tail in balance with body, well set on, carried happily but never much above the level of the back. Docking optional. If docked no more than one-third to be removed.*

The tail should be a continuation of the spine, coming off level or slightly below the back. The angle at which the croup and pelvis are set will have an effect on the tail set. 'Well set on' simply means correct placement of tail on the body. Some dogs that carry their tails too high tend to have too straight stifles. The poor angulation of the hindquarters results in the tail being too highly set, and therefore carried 'gaily', i.e. too high.

The prevalence of gay tails concerns me greatly. I much prefer the clarity and preciseness of the USA Standard on this matter. It simply states 'Set so as to be carried level with the back'. The English Standard, on the other hand, is woolly and vague. What does it mean when stating 'carried happily but never much above the level of the back'? Different people could argue that 20 degrees, 30 degrees or even 40 degrees above the back all conform to the Standard. Twenty-five years ago tails, with very few exceptions, were invariably swished absolutely level with the back, and how much nicer it looked than the present-day gay tails, flag-pole tails or even curled over tails. These tails spoil the topline, look awful in profile and revolting from the rear - the term 'monkey bummed' is often politely employed, with a rather cruder description used on occasions.

One judge recently expressed what many had been thinking when she said 'I detest the choking and cowing that goes on to try and keep the tail low, Why don't you just breed for it? It is quicker and kinder in the long run!'

The problem is now so widespread that it is often necessary, when judging, to award prizes to dogs carrying their tails too high. If one fault judged on this issue and ruled out all the gay tails, there would be very few dogs left in some classes. The problem is also present overseas and is now one that needs urgent and close attention by breeders. It could also be very helpful if one breed club would undertake to research the problem.

These days there are a very small number of Cavaliers appearing in the show-ring with wry tails i.e., held more or less permanently over to one side. Lyon says this is because one of the two lateral's muscles which activate the top side of the tail is weak, He also says, more worryingly, that it is usually 'safe to conclude that muscles which are not functioning correctly at their terminals are not doing any better along the spinal column', and cautions to 'beware of any type tail that is not normally characteristic of the specific breed'.

Regarding the length of tail, the practice of docking up to one-third has been gradually less used over the years. Molly Marshall of the Karma prefix advertised as long ago as 1955 her 'undocked' wholecolours, The probability is that in recent years only a very small proportion have been docked. Some would say it is outmoded. What this suggests is that some, possibly many, of Cavaliers are now naturally producing 'correct' length tails in balance with the body, thus obviating the need for docking. Susan Burgess stated 'Crisdig tails certainly became shorter over the years'



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GAIT/MOVEMENT: *Free moving and elegant in action, plenty of drive from behind. Fore and hind legs move parallel when viewed from in front and behind.*

Lillian C. Raymond Mallock in her book *Toy Dogs*, published in 1915, wrote:

'The movement of Toy Spaniels in the show ring at the present time is notoriously bad.'

Whilst judges still criticise the movement of Cavaliers from time to time, I believe our breed has made greater improvement in this respect, since separate registration in 1945, than have King Charles Spaniels. Nevertheless, we now need to try and further improve the movement of Cavaliers, so that we draw nearer the better moving breeds.

The Cavalier in motion should show a good length of stride and move with drive. Movement needs to be stylish and carried out in a smooth, flowing manner. It needs to be done economically with not too high a stride, instead reaching out and covering the ground well, and it should prove effortless to the dog. When the dog is viewed moving away, the Standard requires that the hocks should move straight and parallel with each other and show plenty of drive and follow through to the rear. In profile the movement will show the length of stride, head carriage, neck and topline, tail carriage, overall balance, and whether the dog is 'free moving and elegant in action.' Any high stepping action, or pacing, will be easy to see. When the dog is approaching the judge, the Standard again requires that the legs should be straight and parallel, with no signs of waving elbows, pinning or paddling. Movement in fact provides a graphic illustration of conformation. I find it surprising, therefore, that the otherwise fairly comprehensive USA Standard says so little about gait, whereas the American Standard describes fully what is required.

In recent years a different view, supported by strong photographic evidence, has been expressed as to what constitutes correct movement. This is considered in the next chapter.

COAT: *Long, silky, free from curl. Slight wave permissible. Plenty of feathering. Totally free from trimming.*

The Breed Standard requirements for coats are simply expressed and easily understood. The USA Standard is a little more detailed but basically, covers the same points. It does, however, state 'very soft to the touch', which most would infer from 'silky', in the English Standard.

Coats have undoubtedly improved. In the past there were more curly coats and these were often of a coarser texture than the required 'silky' feel. There also used to be much more colour 'ticking' or flecking in coats. This applied particularly to tricolours, but also to some Blenheims. Heavy ticking detracted from the appearance, and the present day clearer markings are much more pleasing to the eye. Also in the past muzzles were often spotted, sometimes quite heavily, but now they are usually quite clear, which complements the clarity of the body markings. But we must remember, as one prominent judge frequently reminds us, that a few spots on the muzzle are of little significance. I have in fact heard the purchaser of a pet puppy say, 'Oh I'll have the one with the beauty spots. Aren't they cute.'

The coat is an important feature of the breed. It should be richly coloured, fine, soft, straight and silky, and with profuse feathering which provides an attractive frill to the lower outlines. The chest has a frothy ruff and the legs, undercarriage and tail have their attractive hanging fringes. Additionally, the coat should be finished with a sheen to further enhance the visual impact. A well made typical, happy Cavalier, in full coat, is a picture to cherish.



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There are four important factors which contribute to a really good coat:

1. BREEDING. Some lines are noted for their excellent long coats of correct texture. Joan Winters' Kentonvilles always seem to be well coated. It must be a built-in factor in her line.
2. CORRECT FEEDING. Well balanced meals containing all the necessary elements are essential. If a Cavalier is fed a diet deficient in certain essentials, then its coat will not be at its best.
3. REGULAR GROOMING. Daily grooming is advisable. This ensures the coat never gets into a bad state.
4. CONDITION. Assuming a dog does not have a skin disease, then its coat indicates its inner well being. A dog that is happy and is regularly exercised will be fit, content and alert, and this shows in its coat. On the other hand, a dog that is unfit, listless and bored because it receives very little attention or stimulation is very unlikely to have a good coat. Condition and coat go together.

Most coats do not develop fully until about eighteen months. Bitches tend to drop some coat at each oestrus or 'season', and , when they have had a litter they lose nearly all their coat and usually do not regain full coat for about nine months. Dogs generally carry more coat than bitches. As a Cavalier reaches the veteran stage sometimes, but by no means always, the coat may become a little wavy. Regarding trimming the Standard is quite explicit: 'Totally free from trimming'. The only trimming that should be done is underneath the foot between the pads, and this is for the comfort . of the dog. In 1928 the committee when drawing up the Standard felt that 'as far as possible the dog should be guarded from fashion, and there was to be no trimming. A perfectly natural dog was desired.

Colour

Whilst nicely broken markings contribute greatly to the picture presented by a tricolour or Blenheim, one has to appreciate that whole colours, as their name implies, do not have the advantage of well broken markings with which to impress. Many judges, in fact, are not too concerned if a Blenheim or tricolour is rather heavily marked, giving greater consideration to such matters as type, conformation, balance and soundness. On the old Standard of Points only 5 out of 100 were allocated to colour.

Conversely, whole colours (rubies and black and tans) should be whole colours. I have heard this said repeatedly, and that any white markings should be penalised. But there is an opposing view that a few white hairs on the chest of a whole colour is such a minor blemish that it should not be heavily penalised for it. One can say that whole colours with such small white blemishes are now hardly ever seen at championship shows. This. may be for one or more of three reasons:

1. Most whole colours now come from long lines of solid whole colour breeding, and therefore white patches appear much less frequently than previously when parti-colours were in the lines.
2. The quality of whole colours has improved considerably in the last decade.
3. Judges do, in fact, penalise heavily any white patches.

The Standard merely says 'white marks undesirable'. It is important to remember that Blenheim and ruby puppies are born much lighter coloured than their eventual adult colour. Most puppies have a fluffy teddy bear coat which is often shed at different ages -some at around three months, others at about ' the time they change their teeth, i.e. four to five months.



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BLACK AND TAN: *Raven black with tan markings above the eyes, on cheeks, inside ears, on chest and legs and underside of tail. Tan should be bright. White marks undesirable.*

Whilst raven black is required, the breed has several, almost imperceptible, different shades of black. The black should be a dark blue-black and not a black tinged with brown. It is interesting that Mrs Lytton in her book published in 1911 said she had 'come across an authentic case of two blue and tan puppies bred from black and tan parents'. She also saw a dull blue and tan puppy. Although it did not live to maturity, she 'kept its skin as a curiosity'

What varies rather more is the richness and brightness of the tan. Some are a yellowy gold and give an unattractive wishy-washy appearance. Where there is a rich deep and bright tan, it contrasts brilliantly with a sparkling black sheen and makes a pretty picture.

RUBY: *Whole coloured rich red. White markings undesirable.*

As the only Cavalier with just one colour, rubies are at a disadvantage visually to the other three colours. It is therefore important for the ruby to have the 'rich red' glowing colour called for in the Standard. Molly Marshall stated in 1962: 'The new born ruby (i.e. one or two days old) should look like a fresh peeled chestnut - smooth, glossy and rich red - no hint of gold.' If a ruby is out of coat it often looks lighter than its true colour, and therefore there are special reasons for not showing an out of coat ruby.

BLenheim: *Rich chestnut markings well broken up, on pearly white ground. Markings evenly divided on head, leaving room between ears for much valued lozenge mark or spot (a unique characteristic of the breed).*

Speedwell Massingham, when describing the colour of Ann's Son of 1927, said 'a lightly marked red-gold and silver Blenheim'. The colours of the Blenheim are today described as rich chestnut and pearly white. If one considers the colours of some pearls then the use of 'silver' to describe Ann's Son is more readily understandable. Today's use of 'pearly white' emphasises the white should not be a staring, washing powder white. In those Cavaliers where the white really is pearly, one can see an occasional silvery glint, especially in bright sunshine. Some years ago there was a rather vigorous argument as to what 'rich chestnut' colour actually meant. In the show ring were some of a very deep colour - some said mahogany, others said liver. Other dogs being shown were at the opposite extreme, very much lighter, and I heard them described as lemon-orange and yellow straw. Discussion then progressed as to what 'chestnut' actually referred to - was it a horse, or a nut from a tree, and if a tree which type of chestnut tree? It was all very interesting for a while! The two extremes of colour now seem to have slipped away and everyone appears reasonably satisfied with the Blenheim colouring we have. The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club recently advised that the rich chestnut required is that of a horse, not that of a 'conker' from the chestnut tree.

The lozenge mark or spot is not vital in an individual Cavalier, but it is important that the breed tries hard to retain the lozenge. After all, it is unique, and therefore something to be cherished. Lytton in her book of 1911 said 'The spot should be cultivated in the Tricolour as well as in the red and white.'

TRICOLOUR: *Black and white well spaced, broken up, with tan markings over eyes, cheeks, inside ears, inside legs and on underside of tail.*

Before 1973 the section of the Standard relating to tricolours was worded as above but concluded with 'Black and White: Permissible but not desirable', However, since 1973 black and , whites have not been acceptable as a recognised colour.



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I believe a tricolour is the most difficult colour to breed. To produce a high quality, typical Cavalier with the three colour markings in all the right places takes some doing. For the person who can produce an absolutely top quality, well bred, nicely broken tricolour dog of good temperament and health, there is a small fortune waiting in stud fees.

There is no dog that looks more attractive than a nicely broken tricolour with rich and bright tan in all the correct places. The colour combination of black and contrasting white, highlighted by small patches of tan, neatly placed, takes some beating. Even tricolour puppies in the nest, shortly after birth, when they have been licked dry by their mum, look fabulous. It is important that the tan be rich and bright, otherwise some of the colour combination is lost. Pale yellowy tan looks weak and insipid and spoils the picture.

I find when judging that there are now very few tricolours with tan on the inside of the legs as called for by the Standard, and this is largely ignored by most judges. What is often referred to by judges is the lack of tan under the tail. This is an important feature when viewing the tricolour moving away.

Ticking in a tricolour looks unattractive and fortunately is now rarely seen, whereas twenty years ago it was quite prevalent, with ' some tricolours being heavily flecked. The colour section of the Standard concludes: 'Any other colour or combination of colours highly undesirable.'

SIZE: *Weight - 5.4-8 kgs (12-18 lb). A small well-balanced dog well within these weights desirable.*

When helping to form the Breed Standard in 1928, Amice Pitt and the other breed pioneers envisaged a glamorous, sound dog with moderate bone and weighing about 15-16 lb as the ideal size to aim for, i.e. a true toy spaniel.

But there have always been some difficulties in keeping Cavaliers within the Standard weights. This seems rather surprising when one looks back to the early history of the breed as Cavaliers descended from King Charles Spaniels, which are smaller than Cavaliers. Also Ann's Son, who was used extensively at stud in the late 1920s and early 1930s was said to weigh only 13 lb. Incidentally, the Standard minimum weight was 10 lb until 1968, when it was raised to 12 lb. Even so, one sees very few Cavaliers weighing between 12 and 14 lb. From writings and photographs it seems that, in the early days, many Cavaliers were well over 18 lb. Why should this have been so? Was it because of the influence of the larger Marlborough Blenheim type, or possibly that other larger breeds were used in an effort to improve Cavalier stock? Such breeds would obviously introduce additional size.

Whatever the cause, size has been something of a problem throughout the history of Cavaliers and remains so today, but possibly to a lesser degree than previously. Nevertheless, it is apparent that a problem still remains when one considers the data from a weighing survey at three recent shows. A total of 296 Cavaliers were weighed, including 78 aged 6 to 12 months and 72 aged 12 to 18 months, making a total of 150 under 18 months. These have been omitted from the following figures because many aged from 6 to 18 months will still be growing or filling out. Therefore, for those aged 18 months and over the weights were:



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Weight in Pounds - Ounces Ignored

	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	Total
Dogs			1	7	6	20	7	6	2	8	1	1	3	1				63
Bitches	1		5	16	15	19	10	5	3	4	2	1	1				1	83
Total	1		6	23	21	39	17	11	5	12	3	2	4	1			1	146

In summary, 22 out of 63 dogs (or 35%) were 19 lb and over while 17 out of 83 bitches (or 20%) were 19 lb and over. The 12 lb and 28 lb bitches were both veterans. The percentages of those above 18 lb show that we ought not to relax in our efforts to keep the Cavalier a true toy spaniel. It is often said that, whilst being concerned about Cavaliers which are well above 18 lb, we should be equally concerned about weedy specimens which do not have sufficient substance or bone. This is obviously true, because a Cavalier must be typical of the breed. However, in my experience there are far fewer of the weedy types than the heavyweights. I believe we have to take care that attractive typical Cavaliers of a smaller type, weighing about 15 lb, are not frowned upon, simply because they are somewhat smaller than many in the show-ring. The truth is that 15 lb is mid-way in the Standard weights and is something we should all be aiming towards, rather than being content with heavyweights well above 18 lb. The Standard says '5.4-8 kgs - (12-18 lbs). A small well balanced dog well within these weights desirable.' Both American Standards state 13-18 lbs and also give guidance as to height, stating 12-13 inches at the withers.

In an article in 1961 Amice Pitt mentioned 'the heaviest Cavalier on record being 40 lbs and the lightest 4 lb'. Have we at the present time any challengers to this Goliath and miniature? Hopefully not!

FAULTS: *Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree.*

Every dog, even a champion, has faults. Of course a champion will meet the requirements of the Standard much more closely than a non-winner. But no dog will fulfil each and every requirement of the Standard, because the perfect dog has not yet been born.

The Standard itself is only a rather sketchy guide to the ideal Cavalier. It is not a precise, detailed blue print. It is therefore important for Cavalier enthusiasts to increase their knowledge, and thus be able to understand and interpret the Standard correctly. This book should be helpful in that respect.

As we know, there are four colours of Cavaliers, but the Standard makes no differentiation between them, except on the particular markings expected in each colour. In all other respects from head to tail, the expectations on the four colours are exactly , the same. '

In judging, the overall dog has to be considered, to see which. one most nearly matches the Standard. Some faults will be of a more serious deviation from the Standard than others.