

Who Is the Scottish Terrier?

Historic VIPs in our breed from the last 200 years can't be bested on their descriptions of the Scottish Terrier. Read and be charmed.

“The Scotch Terrier has a most acute smell and is very expert in forcing foxes and other game out of their coverts. It is the determined enemy of all vermin kind such as weasels, badgers, rats, and so forth.”—Samuel Bewick, *History of Quadrupeds*, 1822 (from *The Book of the Scottish Terrier* by Fayette C. Ewing, 1944 edition)

“He is of great service to man on account of his great hostility to rats, mice, polecats, and all such animals. He shows wonderful power in killing rats. The dog Billy is said to have killed one hundred rats in five minutes.”—*Penny Magazine* article on the Scottish Terrier, July 19, 1834 (from *The Book of the Scottish Terrier* by Fayette C. Ewing, 1944 edition)



“Scotch Terrier,” a real ratter, image published 1859

“These terriers are used where their small size, strength, courage, activity, and perseverance are called into action. The clever manner in which they deal with the largest and boldest of rats, and the rapidity with which they kill them, can scarcely be described.” Thomas Bell, *History of British Quadrupeds*, 1837 (from *The Book of the Scottish Terrier* by Fayette C. Ewing, 1944 edition)

“He is a Celt, and in all Celts there is an underlying sense of sorrow. But this tragic outlook on life is not the predominating characteristic. Its existence is almost concealed, but that it does exist gives to those who know him a feeling of security in that, whatever may befall, he will attune himself to the changes and chances of his human companion.” William McCandlish, *The Scottish Terrier*, 1909 (from *The New Scottish Terrier*, by Cindy Cooke, 1996)

“Hard as a diamond-tipped drill, thoroughly game to the utter extremity, bright as polished brass, true and lovable, Scottie with his odd little ways, is just the ideal dog.” William Haynes, *The Scottish Terrier*, 1915 (from *The New Scottish Terrier* by Cindy Cooke, 1996)

Ever Brave

“As a guard it is impossible to better him. He gives his warning, and if it passes unheeded, he shows very definitely that he is there and in charge. He is self-centred, deep-natured with a soul both for laughter and tragedy...There is nothing frothy or shallow in the nature of a Scottie. He never forgets—his heart may break with grief, but he will not yowl about it. He is absolutely honourable, incapable of a mean or petty action, large hearted and loving, with the soul and mind of an honest gentleman. Dorothy Gabriel, *The Scottish Terrier*, 1934 (from *The New Scottish Terrier* by Cindy Cooke, 1996)

“The inexperienced American may see Scottie only as a common dog; the Scotsman contemplates him with a knowledge of his work in mountain and valley, in storm, and sunshine; he has visions of ivory teeth, flying fur, and shining eyes; his ears hear the scuffle, the growl, the snapping teeth, in snow, in ice, and under ground.”—Fayette C. Ewing, *The Book of the Scottish Terrier*, 1944 edition

“He has the qualities of an aristocrat: reserve and the restraint of good breeding. He is a true Scotsman by nature, with stoicism in adversity, a lack of excitability...He lacks the hysteria that barks at nothing and bays at the moon in the ‘very witching hour of night.’”—Fayette C. Ewing, *The Book of the Scottish Terrier*, 1944 edition

“Some Scotties smile when pleased or trying to please; their smiles are obvious, with dark-whiskered chin and upper lip drawn wide apart and teeth shining white between. Some greet their owners with a smile, particularly when it is near the accustomed time for an outing; others smile when surprised or apparently embarrassed.” *Scottish Terriers*, a T.H.F. book, 1982, (excerpted from Mr. & Mrs. T. H Snethen’s *Pet Scottish Terrier*, 1956)

“The American novelist S. S. Van Dine, who at one time had a successful kennel of Scottish Terriers, wrote that the Scot is ‘one of the few dogs with whom human beings can actually argue.’ And how true that is. One can carry on a conversation with one’s Scot pal and it is not as one-sided as might be imagined, for the twitch of an ear, the expression in his eyes, and maybe a slight movement of the tip of his tail will tell you he has not only listened to every word you said but has understood.” Dorothy Caspersz, *The Scottish Terrier*, 1976

“A gentleman! This is perhaps the whole story. The Scottie is a gentleman. He is reserved, honorable, patient, tolerant and courageous. He doesn’t annoy you or force himself upon you. He meets life as he finds it, with an instinctive

philosophy, a stoical intrepidity and a mellow understanding. He is calm and firm, and he minds his own business—and minds it well. He is a Spartan and can suffer pain without whimpering, which is more than the majority of human beings can do. He will attack a lion or a tiger if his rights are invaded, and though he may die in the struggle he never shows the white feather or runs away. He is the most admirable of all sports, forthright, brave and uncomplaining. You know exactly where you stand with a Scottie; and if you are a friend, he is gentle, loving and protective.” From S. S. Van Dine, a famous mystery writer (1920s and 1930s) and breeder of Scottish Terriers, quoted in *The Official Book of the Scottish Terrier*, a T.F.H. book by Muriel P. Lee, 1994



Eng. Ch. Dundee, 1882

“He is the philosopher among dogs, aloof, reserved, dignified and very independent. He has the tact, unassuming self confidence, patience, tolerance and understanding of a true gentleman...As a discriminating judge of human nature he has few equals. He will weigh you up and either treat you with supreme indifference, or indicate by his manner that he accepts you.”—Dorothy Caspersz, *The Scottish Terrier*, 1976 edition

“...some people dub him obstinate, even perverse. But naturally such a wise dog has a mind of his own; he thinks for himself and he reasons things out, and if in his eminently commonsense view he considers you are in the wrong he can be as stubborn as only a Scotsman knows how.”—Dorothy Caspersz, *The Scottish Terrier*, 1976 edition

“There is much truth in the saying that one does not own a Scottie; one is owned by him...He is a sharp guard, giving alarm only when necessary, and will

defend his own house and garden, ever on the alert to tackle unwanted intruders like cats or vermin. One of his most pleasing qualities is the restrained use he makes of his bark.” D. A. Caspersz, *The Scottish Terrier*, undated Arco-Foyles Handbook (ca 1980s)

“The Scottie has many ways of expressing himself. He has a wide vocabulary and many will croon with pleasure or warble a greeting; then there is a warning bay when on guard; the excited yelps of the chase; the cheerful barks when at play; the sharp note of demand for perhaps a door to be opened or a water bowl replenished; the threatening growl when alerted; and a wide range of sounds for appropriate occasions.”—Betty Penn-Bull, *The Kennelgarth Scottish Terrier Book*, 1983

“With all his many merits, the Scottie has other traits which can be provoking. Chief of these is his stubbornness; he will hurry only slowly and the more the owner tries to hustle him the less cooperative he may become—he has four-wheel brakes and is quite prepared to use them. Anger will not help for he will collapse completely, shocked and hurt. Instant obedience and slavish subservience are not in his nature and are a betrayal of his inheritance. He is a king, a laird, a chief and will meet you as a friend and equal, but not as a servant or a menial.” Betty Penn-Bull, *The Kennelgarth Scottish Terrier Book*, 1983

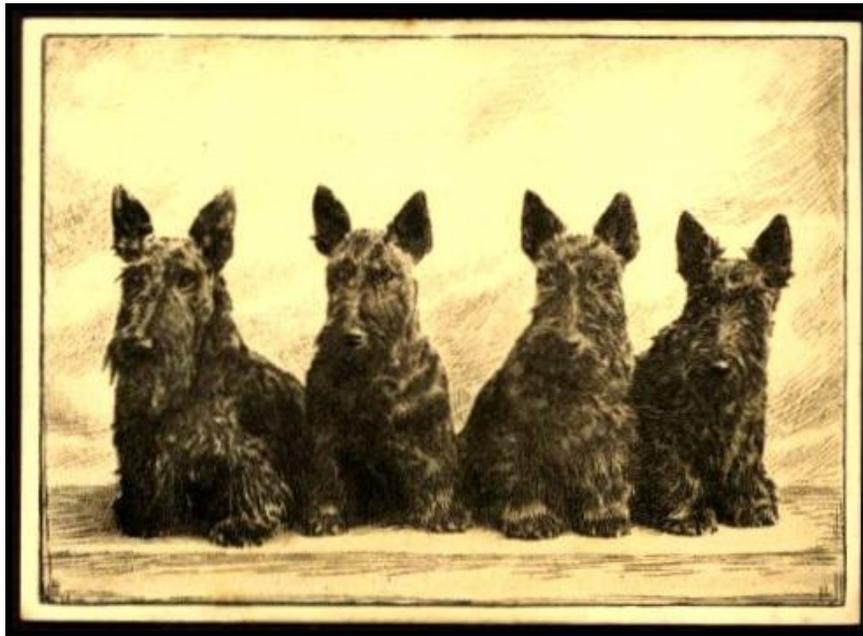
“The Scottie is no door mat of a dog. His independent spirit may try your patience at times, yet his strong desire for approval will win compliance with your wishes where harsh words and punishment will fail. To those who appreciate his unique character the Scottish Terrier is a friend and companion second to none.” *Facts about the Scottish Terrier*, Scottish Terrier Club of America pamphlet, 1985

“This Lovely Fire”

“His commanding presence, his unflinching gaze, his deep-rooted conviction that he is his own man; these are the attributes of the adult Scottish Terrier of proper type. Once witnessed, this attitude is hard to forget...

“You wonder, as you watch him gait and pose and stalk past his competitors, how could so much dog be packed inside that small package? Where did he get that indomitable spirit, from whom did he acquire this unshakable faith in himself?

“Without this temperament, this “lovely fire,” the dog is just another dog. The ‘cutey-pies’ that wag, and kiss, and wiggle their way into your heart, make friends for the breed and we thank God for them. But the dog that makes your spine tingle, that makes a lump come into your throat, who stands alone in his undeniable glory, is the typical Scottish Terrier.” (Preceding three paragraphs, Evelyn Kirk, from Scottish Terrier column, *AKC Gazette*, January 1985)



Four Scotties, 1930's Cigarette Card

“Temperament: The Scottish Terrier should be alert and spirited but also stable and steady-going. He is a determined and thoughtful dog whose ‘heads up, tails up’ attitude in the ring should convey both fire and control. The Scottish Terrier, while loving and gentle with people, can be aggressive with other dogs. He should exude ruggedness and power, living up to his nickname, the ‘Diehard.’”...then follows in boldface type, **“No judge should put to Winners or Best of Breed any Scottish Terrier not showing real terrier character in the ring.”** *American Kennel Club Standard for the Scottish Terrier*, 1993

“Scotties have been described in many ways and all the names fit the breed: lion-hearted, robust, alert, curious, scrappy, bright-eyed, intelligent, sturdy, courageous and adaptable. This is a breed with pluck and intelligence. They are sensitive to both criticism and praise. They are adaptable and if given good food, a bed and love, they can adjust to almost any living condition with little difficulty.” Muriel P. Lee, *The Official Book of the Scottish Terrier*, a T.F.H. book, 1994

Independent & Complex

“It’s too bad that as judges, you miss seeing the broad and complex character that is the Scottish Terrier. You miss out on the rolling eyes, the sighs, the smiles, the selective deafness and all of the other myriad aspects of Scottie behavior that both enslave and exasperate their breeders...The old English standard has these words, ‘The dog should look willing to go anywhere and do anything.’...What one should see is a confident, dignified, tough little dog who won’t back down from a challenge.” *A Study of the Scottish Terrier*, Scottish Terrier Club of America, 1999

“The Scottie’s courage sometimes works to his disadvantage. Scotties are incredibly stoic about pain, which can cause the inattentive owner to overlook serious illness.” Cindy Cooke, *The New Scottish Terrier*, 1996

“People who are blunt, plainspoken and otherwise not given to fancies tend to be attracted to the Scottish Terrier and then find themselves grasping for metaphors to describe the breed that has stolen their hearts.” Cindy Cooke, *The New Scottish Terrier*, 1996

“Scottie fanciers are the first to admit that their breed is not for everyone...Those who seek a more malleable companion will find his independent nature provoking. If, however, you can appreciate a dog whose every feature makes him perfect for his particular work, you will begin to appreciate his appearance. And then, if you can imagine him in his native land, with a crisp wind blowing around him, his eyes sparkling and his tail wagging gaily as he bounds across the rocky terrain, hurrying forward and then back to urge his slower master on, willing to meet whatever comes on his own terms, then you will see the splendid Scottish Terrier as he really is.” Cindy Cook. *The New Scottish Terrier*, 1996

Historic words of Scottish Terrier breed experts were excerpted from classic publications by Carole Owen for Texas Scottie Rescue Fund, Inc. Copyright 2018 Carole Fry Owen.