

# Comparison

## *Yorkshire Terrier*

## *Australian Silky Terrier*

## *Australian Terrier*



*by Anne Tureen*

These three breeds have common ancestors in the Skye, Clydesdale, Waterside and Paisley Terriers. These early types of terrier were brought over to Australia by visitors or emigrants during the early 1800's and were developed there independently of the UK. The Silky Terrier returned to England a few decades later and mixed with the Yorkshire then both were brought back and forth between the two countries until their respective standards began to define the breeds more clearly. Thus the Silky and Yorkshire Terrier are quite closely related, while the Australian Terrier, though there may have been some mixing with the Silky at the beginning, should be considered a branch from the same tree which, however, took a direction all his own, early on.

The FCI standards for these breeds gives us a "snapshot" of the breed with some defining characteristics in the paragraph 'General Appearance'. The Yorkshire is described as: "very compact, and neat conveying an important air". The Silky is: "compact, of medium length, substance, well groomed". The

Australian is: "sturdy, rather long, alert, sound, untrimmed". Thus, we see a crescendo in substance. There is also a gradual shift of the level of refinement. While the Yorkshire has an air of importance and must be "neat", the Silky need only be well groomed, much less of the perfect picture compared to the Yorkshire. Then we have the Aussie, whose every adjective describes a working dog. Note that all three breeds are competent ratters, a Yorkshire Terrier would probably leap from his silken cushion to catch a rodent if he ever happened to see one, in fact, I know of one that went missing for several hours in a country drainpipe after having escaped for some venatorial adventure. However, from the time of Mary Foster circa 1860, the Yorkie has been embraced by elegant ladies as a "gold and blue" treasured companion whose priority in life is to be beautiful. In the ring today the evaluation of the coat ranges from 49 to 51 percent of the total dog according to the priorities of the judge. Ever practical, the Australian breeders satisfied their desire for a beautiful pet with the Silky main-



taining a balance with practical concerns. An example of this is the presentation of the head in the FCI Standard images above. Rather than the elaborate topknot with a red bow, the Silky is presented by knowledgeable breeders and handlers by combing the head back and to the side. This is a direct continuation from early show practice which is also shared by the Skye Terrier today, (another branch from the early types). Another difference in presentation is that the Yorkshire coat trails slightly on the ground surface but the standard of the Silky specifies that you "should allow daylight to be seen under the dog", very practical.



The standards define the desired size of the dog in terms of weight, (Yorkie 3.2kg, Aussie 6.2kg) and height (Silky dogs 23-26 cm, Aussie dogs 26 cm). Weight for the Silky merely stated "in proportion to height" and the Yorkie has no cm value, but in early standards we can find 9in (22.8cm). This clearly shows a range of size, from the small Yorkie to the slightly larger Silky and the largest of the three, the Aussie. In all three breeds, the cranium must be flat, but there is an interesting difference in stop. The Silky must have a "defined but moderate" stop and the Aussie "slight but definite". The Yorkshire Terrier standard is silent concerning stop. While the facial region of the Aussie is equal in length to the cranial region, the Silky muzzle is described as "slightly shorter" than the cranial region, while the Yorkie vaguely states, "not too long" Should we interpret that as 3:5?

The neck of the Aussie is described in terms which you might expect of a Working Terrier "good length, slightly arched, strong..." The Silky has "medium length, refined and lightly crested..." while the Yorkshire simply emphasizes "good reach". This difference between the Yorkie and Silky is again brought forward in the General appearance of the Yorkie which must





have "carriage very upright". Thus, while both dogs are rectangular, the Yorkie could give the overall impression of a square dog due to the slightly longer neck carried high. The eye is also quite different. While the Silky is closer to an earth dog expression, "small, oval...never prominent" the Yorkie is closer to the toy group, "medium, placed to look directly forward". This is coherent with his role as a companion who must communicate love and understanding to his mistress. Technically speaking, we could assume that the eye placement in the Yorkie is sub-frontal (80-75° from the horizontal plane) while the Silky is semi-lateral (75-60°). The Aussie eye is very similar to the Silky. While the ears of the Yorkie and Silky are set high, the Aussie has them "set on moderately wide".

Under the point 'Body' we find clear distinction from the "compact" Yorkie to the "moderately long" Silky and finally the "Long in proportion to height" Aussie. All topline must be level. The Silky and Aussie are more angulated dogs, both with a stifle "well turned" and the hock joint "well bent". The Yorkie has a "moderate" turn of stifle. Like classic terriers the tails must be set on and carried high in the Silky and Aussie, though the Yorkie does not mention the set on, it is described as "carried a little higher than level of back".

Now we come to the highest order of the day, the coat. No doubt, this is the most distinguishing characteristic between the Aussie and his two cousins. The Aussie has a "harsh, dense, straight" coat which should be about 6 cm long with a good undercoat. He comes in two varieties, either Blue, steel blue, dark grey blue with rich tan markings, or "clear sandy or red". The first variety must have the markings "on face, ears, underbody, lower legs, feet,



*A Scottish-bred Yorkshire*

*Photo • The grooming style for the head was originally typical of the Skye, Yorkshire and Silky, though the Yorkshire has since move to the topknot with bow*

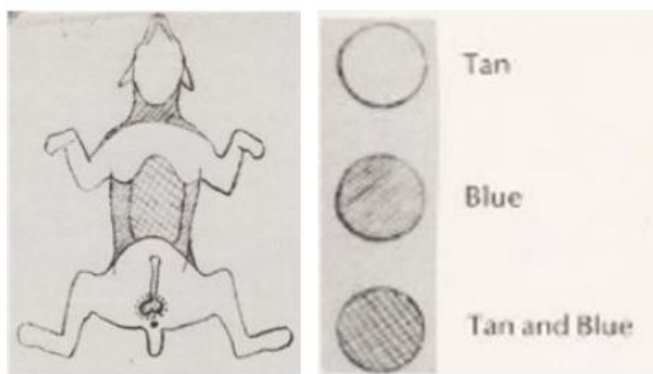
around vent". The second variety must not have a white star or white anywhere, which is unusual for a solid colored dog.

The Silky texture is described as "flat, fine and glossy". His color can be "all shades of blue and tan...the richer the better". Silver and white are not acceptable; Blue on the tail is to be very dark. The division of these colors is: Tan on ears, cheeks and face, then on the limbs from carpal joint to ground and hock joint to ground, blending slightly up the crinal edge



of the rear legs as far as the stifle (breeching). The cranium can be either blue or tan, then only blue from base of skull to tail.

The Yorkie also has glossy silky texture. The entire head is "rich golden tan", also found on the chest. The legs have the same rich golden tan, which in the hindquarters is no higher than the stifle. The rest of the dog is dark steel blue, (silver blue unacceptable). These interesting images from *The Complete Yorkshire Terrier* show the color division of blue and gold. In their seminal book, the Bennett sisters of Wildweir



kennel point out that also in the Yorkie the tan can be found from under the arms along the vent and even the underside of the tail, the brisket mixed blue and tan. In their drawing, they have shown what the standard describes and what the coloring really is.

Both the gold and blue are expected to be of a more saturated tone at the base of the coat and lighter toward the tips. "The base of the hair shaft is a darker shade of the coat's dark blue color and this darker shade will show at any parting down to the skin."

The authors point out that breeders can never agree exactly how and when the Yorkshire puppies mature into their adult coloring because this is different for every blood-

line and even between individuals of the same bloodline. Regarding puppy coat texture, a wire coated puppy may acquire the correct silky texture when the black turns to blue between five and nine months of age. Concerning abundance, they observe that puppies with thin and sparse hair will grow long thick correctly colored and textured coats as adults. Woolly or cottony coats in older puppies with pale cream colored legs and the colors intermingled at the sides of the head will never develop the clear golden or steel blue colors correctly. Also, a puppy of 3 or 4 months with light tan and silver blue will never develop the correct coloring. However, some coarse white hairs among the blue in a puppy will most likely fall out. Finally, some puppies go through a brief stage with a brownish cast to their coat, which reflects a hormone imbalance and usually goes away completely.

While these three dogs are true terriers and close cousins, each occupies a unique corner of the dog world. Small ratting Terriers were a necessity during the 19th century, and we find that they are still necessary today since their numbers are high in the registries of most countries, especially those of the classic Yorkshire Terrier.