

MALTESE STANDARD

(In South Africa)



APPEARANCE: *Smart, white-coated dog, with proud head carriage.*

CHARACTERISTICS: *Lively, intelligent, alert.*

TEMPERAMENT: *Sweet tempered.*

HEAD AND SKULL: *From stop to centre of skull (centre between forepart of ears) and stop to tip of nose, equally balanced. Stop well defined. Nose black. Muzzle broad, well filled under eye. Not snippy.*

EYES: *Oval, not bulging, dark brown, black eye rims, with dark haloes.*

EARS: *Long, well feathered, hanging close to head; hair to mingle with coat at shoulders.*

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

NECK: *Medium length.*

FOREQUARTERS: *Legs short and straight. Shoulders well sloped.*

BODY: *Well balanced, essentially short and cobby. Good spring of rib, back level from withers to tail.*

HINDQUARTERS: *Legs short, well angulated.*

FEET: *Round, pads black.*

TAIL: *Feathered, carried well arched over back.*

GAIT/MOVEMENT: *Straight and free-flowing, without weaving. Viewed from behind, legs should neither be too close nor too wide apart.*

COAT: Good length, not impeding action, straight, of silky texture, never woolly. Never crimped and without woolly undercoat.

COLOUR: Pure white but slight lemon markings permissible.

SIZE: Height not exceeding 25 cm from ground to withers.

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 and its effect on health & welfare of the dog

NOTE: Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum

Origin of the Maltese

The Maltese was developed in Italy. It is said to have miniature spaniel and poodle blood and is thought to have been descended from a Spitz type dog found among the Swiss Lake dwellers and was selectively bred to obtain its small size. There is also some evidence that the breed originated in Asia and is related to the Tibetan Terrier; however, the exact origin is unknown. The dogs probably made their way to Europe through the Middle East with the migration of nomadic tribes. Some writers believe these proto-Maltese were used for rodent control before the appearance of the breed gained paramount importance. It descends from dogs originating in the Central Mediterranean Area. The Maltese was first recognized as a breed in Malta, where they received their name. They were once known as "The ancient dog of Malta". The breed was owned by royalty all over the world. Women carried them around in their sleeves and slept with them in their beds. They were first brought to England by Crusaders returning home from the Mediterranean.

Part-colour and solid colour dogs were accepted in the show ring from 1902 until 1913 in England, and as late as 1950 in Victoria, Australia. However, white Maltese were required to be pure white. The Maltese is a small breed of dog in the toy group.

More Info

Characteristics include slightly rounded skulls, with a finger-wide dome and black nose that is two finger-widths long. The body is compact with the length equalling the height. The drop ears with long hair and very dark eyes, surrounded by darker skin pigmentation (called a "halo"), gives Maltese their expressive look. Their noses can fade and become pink or light brown in colour without exposure to sunlight. This is often referred to as a "winter nose"¹ and many times will become black again with increased exposure to the sun.

The coat is long and silky and lacks an undercoat. The colour is pure white; although cream or light lemon ears are permissible, they are not regarded as desirable. Also, a pale ivory tinge is permitted. In some standards, traces of pale orange shades are tolerated, but considered an imperfection.

Adult Maltese range from roughly 2.3 to 5.4 kg, though breed standards, as a whole, call for weights between 1.8 and 3.2 kg. Height: Dogs 21-25cm. Bitches 20-23cm. There are variations depending on which standard is being used.