Congratulations on your

Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

You have decided to share your home and your heart with one of the most gentle and loving of dogs, the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel.

The ultimate companion, your Cavalier will enrich your life beyond measure. His quintessential temperament is that of a happy, devoted toy spaniel—tail wagging, and eager to please.

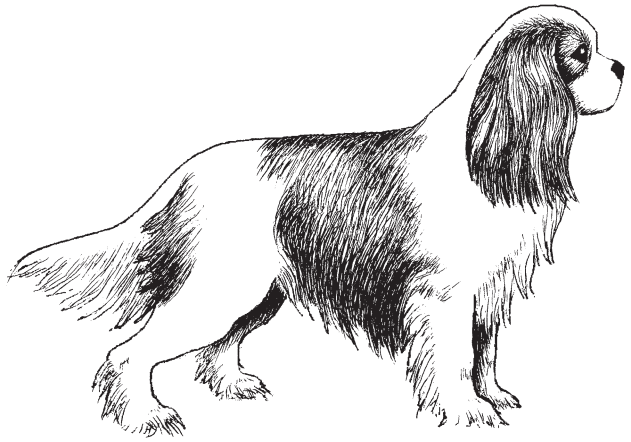
Early History

Toy spaniels were a part of court life in Europe as early as the fifteenth century, sometimes referred to as "comforter spaniels" as they snuggled on their owner's laps. They were immortalized in the art of Van Dyck, Titian, Stubbs, Landseer, and Gainsborough. But their association with the royal families of England has irrevocably linked their evolution to "that sceptred isle." The unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots and Charles I, Charles II, and the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough—all helped to popularize this charming little dog.

However, over the centuries the Cavalier was temporarily supplanted in public affection by the shorter muzzled, domed-headed King Charles Spaniel (a related but separate breed), and the Cavalier's ultimate survival was in some doubt.

In 1925, an American, Roswell Eldridge, became intrigued by the old Cavalier type as seen in many paintings and statues. He offered £25 at the UK Crufts Dog Show in 1926 for winners of Cavalier classes. This was a substantial amount in those times, and breeders accepted the challenge with alacrity.

After considerable effort, the Cavalier was saved for posterity, and in 1928 the UK Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club was founded. The first Cavaliers were sent to the USA in 1952. The breed has become increasingly popular, but it was not until 1996 that the Cavalier achieved full recognition by the AKC as the 140th AKC breed. The American Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club was established in 1993 and remains the parent club for the Cavalier in this country.



Cavalier Colors

Cavaliers come in four colors—*Blenheim* (chestnut and white), *Tricolor* (black, white, and tan), *Ruby* (solid red) and *Black and Tan*. No one color is better than or valued more than another—it is simply a matter of preference. The Breed Standard outlines these colors in more detail.

Cavalier Grooming

Despite their elegant, silky coats, the Cavalier does not require a great amount of care. Rather, he needs to be brushed out once a week so that "mats" do not form in his hair. A simple "pin" brush or a natural/nylon combination will work quite well. Do remember that the ears need to be kept clean inside so that they do not cause him any discomfort, resulting in scratching and mat formation behind the ear.

A sensible amount of bathing in a mild shampoo is advisable, but this does not have to be done weekly. For dogs who are not going into the show ring on a weekly basis, a bath every couple of weeks or so, or even once monthly, will suffice. If you use any "flea" shampoos, take special care—all of these preparations are toxic to some degree, including those labeled "natural." Consult your veterinarian before using.

Of course, as with any dog, attention to toenails—keeping them tidy for the comfort and sure-footedness of the dog—is necessary. If nail trimming is done from the time he is a puppy, your Cavalier will tolerate it quite well, though most dogs do not exactly relish the idea. A simple "guillotine" type of clipper will work nicely. If your Cavalier has dewclaws (those small accessory claws on the inside of the front legs), remember to keep those trimmed as well. Do trim in good light so that you do not cut into the vein that runs down toward the tip of the nail. If you do make a mistake, don't panic! It is always advisable to have some doggy styptic powder on hand to stop any mild bleeding if it occurs. It is

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not necessary to have dewclaws removed, but if this is done, it is a surgery performed by a veterinarian when the puppy is only 3-5 days old.

Cavaliers that are shown in AKC conformation events must not be trimmed and scissored—according to the dictates of the Breed Standard. Likewise, natural showmanship, never "topped and tailed" by the handler in the ring, is strongly advocated by the ACKCSC.

Housebreaking & the Crate

Your Cavalier puppy can be rather easily housebroken if you as his owner are willing to whisk him outside at frequent intervals—and always when he has consumed a meal, or awakes in his crate upon your return. Yes, one of the greatest aids in house training is the dog crate. A #200 Vari Kennel is an ideal size, as it will accommodate an adult Cavalier—you will find that your puppy will eventually learn to enjoy his crate as a respite from a busy household and a place to sleep peacefully.

We leave our young puppy in his crate when we depart the house—you will find that he does not wish to soil his own little "den." The crate also keeps him safe from household hazards such as electrical cords and poisonous plants. Far from being a cruel restriction of his activities, it acts in the best interests of his health and well-being, while allowing his owners peace of mind when they are not present.

Just as you would put your small child in a safety child seat in your car, remember to crate your Cavalier when riding in the automobile. It may save his life some day—riding on your lap is cute, but affords him no protection in the event of an accident.

Health Concerns

Your puppy's health-conscious breeder has probably had his sire and dam tested for inherited eye defects (juvenile cataracts among them) and cardiac mitral valve disease (MVD). However, remember that Nature is not infallible, and as your Cavalier ages he may be subject to certain health concerns.

Any heart murmur detected by your veterinarian warrants further investigation to rule out any potentially serious condition. Any clouding of the lens of the eye, or irritation, may warrant medication and treatment. Juvenile cataracts (an inheritable form) and "dry eye" are known to afflict the breed on occasion. Slipping patellas (a bone in the knee) can occasionally be a problem that is correctable with surgery. As with most mammals, the Cavalier is not immune to cancers in various forms. Do keep your veterinarian posted on any sudden change in your Cavalier's appearance or demeanor.

Often, the grooming session is a time when you as an alert owner can detect lumps or bumps that should not be there. Your own vigilance is often your Cavalier's best defense against disease.

The Cavalier must be a house pet and kept inside with the family. If this is not your lifestyle, please do not purchase a Cavalier. He wants nothing so much as to be with the people he loves. Extremes of heat and cold are not well tolerated by Cavaliers and owners must be vigilant to keep them sheltered as they would their own human family. Under no circumstances should they be left outside for long periods on sizzling summer days, nor should they be left in a hot car—heat prostration can occur with relatively little warning.

The American Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club

The ACKCSC was founded in 1993 and is the recognized AKC parent club for the breed in the USA. This organization and its members are dedicated to the welfare and betterment of the Cavalier. The Club offers many benefits of membership—a timely newsletter and general information on the health and well-being of your Cavalier. Competitions in conformation, obedience, agility, or other events are also outlined on the Club website:

www.ackcsc.org

The ACKCSC is active in Rescue of mistreated or abandoned Cavaliers.

Every year a National Specialty is held in the spring, and all interested in the breed are welcome to attend. Puppy referrals and a list of reputable breeders are also obtainable on the club website.

Recommended Reading

Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Breed Guide, published by the American Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club, 2002

The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, by Bruce Field (August 2001)

A New Owners Guide to Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, by Meredith Johnson-Snyder (December 1999)

The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel—An Owner's Guide to a Happy, Healthy Pet, by Norma Moffat (April 2000)

Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, by Ken Town (September 2000)

The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, by Margaret Workman (December 1999)