

The Miniature Schnauzer



With his bearded face cocked, and his large, expressive eyes reflecting his merry character, the Miniature Schnauzer is bent on bringing joy to his world. Actually, his lighthearted air belies his stolid Germanic origin and camouflages his tenacious devotion to his family

What Is A Miniature Schnauzer?

The Miniature Schnauzer is descended from the Standard Schnauzer and the Affenpinscher, a toy dog with a terrier-like attitude, with perhaps a dollop of Poodle thrown in. The Miniature Schnauzer inherited his ancestor's courage and resolve as well as the job of rat catching on the family farm.

Miniature Schnauzer Coat and Grooming

Miniature Schnauzers come in **salt-and-pepper** (hairs are banded with black bands towards the tips and white ones towards the body; some solid black and solid white hairs are mixed in); **black and silver**, and **solid black**. These are the only colors recognized by the AKC.

The breed has a double coat. The outer coat is hard and wiry, the undercoat softer and close to the skin. Furnishings, the longer hair on the legs and face, should be thick and not silky. The coat must be plucked or stripped to maintain the wiry texture. However, many pet owners elect to clip their dogs as stripping takes much time and effort. Thus many dogs that are actually salt-and-pepper colored appear to be light gray or silver. Whether stripped or clipped, the Schnauzer must be groomed frequently to prevent mats, particularly on the legs and in the beard.

The Breed Standard

The Miniature Schnauzer is a distinctive dog with a square body, wiry coat, and a rectangular head accented by bushy eyebrows and a luxurious beard ("schnauzer" is translated from the German as "muzzle" or "beard"). He stands 12-14 inches at the withers and weighs 15-20 pounds.

The Schnauzer body is square, with the height at the shoulders approximately the same as the length from the point of the shoulder to the point of the buttocks. The tail is docked to about three-quarters of an inch when the puppy is about three-to-four days old so that it will be clearly visible over the topline of the body when the dog is in proper coat.

Health and Temperament

The Schnauzer is generally healthy and hardy. Major problems include hereditary eye problems and urinary tract stones. The Miniature Schnauzer is a merry dog with a mischievous streak. He is very intelligent and highly trainable. His character can run the gamut from extrovert to timidity with strangers, but he generally enjoys a good game, likes well-behaved children, and adapts well to apartment living.

More and more Schnauzers are competing in the obedience ring and the little dogs often enjoy the challenge of agility training. Those who are interested in earning obedience titles will find a well-bred

Schnauzer to be a bright, perky obedience dog if he understands who is the boss in the relationship.

However, many Schnauzers are smart enough to take over the boss' office if they sense a weakness in the human head of the household. Once a Schnauzer sits in the CEO chair, it may be difficult to convince him to revert to being just another pack member.

He is a popular dog with pet stores, and pet store specimens can be high strung or otherwise poor specimens of the breed. If you want a healthy, happy Miniature Schnauzer that will be a part of your family for years to come, it is important to find a good breeder.

Responsible breeders answer buyers' questions, keep puppies they cannot place, allow bitches to recover sufficiently from one breeding before doing another, and take back any puppy that does not work out. They breed dogs because they admire their breed and want to contribute to its betterment. They guarantee their pups free of genetic diseases common in their breed and replace the pup if a disease should crop up. They consider the puppies they produce to be their responsibility for the life of that puppy, so they follow-up frequently to see what's going on. They evaluate their puppies as show and breeding quality or pet quality and sell pet puppies with a spay-neuter contract. Pet quality puppies are not deficient - they just may not meet the breed standard for size, color, coat type, bone structure, head type, etc. Many responsible breeders sell pet puppies at a lower price than show puppies.

Area kennel clubs are excellent sources of information about local breeders. Using newspaper classified ads to locate a breeder is a gamble. Few responsible breeders advertise in local classified ads because they have no trouble placing their dogs, sometimes years in advance. Therefore most breeders who advertise in these sections are amateurs who know little about their breeds.

When you decide the time is right for a puppy, spend at least as much time looking as you would in shopping for a new car or a special dress or suit. A puppy is a long-term investment, hopefully he'll be with you for 10-12 years or more.

A truly responsible and professional breeder cares where his puppies will grow up. Remember though, the really good breeders have a sixth sense about people. They will scrutinize your behavior with their dogs, the dogs' behavior with you, and the behavior and attitudes of your children. If the children are rowdy and disobedient, chances are your dog will be too, and the breeder may not want one of her dogs going to your home.

How Much Is That Puppy?

Puppy sellers come in several categories. They include **show breeders**, **puppy mill** or **commercial kennel breeders**, **pet shop retailers**, and **backyard breeders**.

Show breeders breed for correct type in accordance to the breed standard. Some of these traits are important in the long-term health of the dog. Show breeders take responsibility for certifying their males and females against problems inherent to their breed. Their efforts help minimize inheritance of potential problems by their puppies, which in turn will benefit the puppy buyer's wallet.

The prices of puppies from show dog breeders are higher than most newspaper classified ad puppies. These puppies come generally from parents that have achieved titles under the well-trained eye of an unbiased judge. Although these puppies sell for higher sums than others, their temperaments should remain stable. Breeders of show dogs generally offer health guarantees, an indication of a confident, well-considered breeding. The passion these breeders have for their breed helps them continue their journey to produce genetically sound dogs.

Puppy mills and **commercial kennels** are the main contributors to pet shops. Their goal is to produce lots of puppies for profit. Puppy mills may be raided by animal control for deplorable conditions. *Quality is not a top concern in this part of the industry.* Puppies are often sold to pet stores at wholesale prices and resold to the public at “show ” prices. The cost of overhead, especially mall rental property requires the store owner to charge exorbitant prices for their “products.” Compulsive buyers and the high degree of foot traffic support these establishments. These are seldom good quality dogs and often end up in shelters and breed rescue organizations. **DO NOT** buy a puppy from a pet store as most likely that adorable puppy's parents will live their entire lives in a small wire cage without human affection and companionship.

Backyard breeders are the main contributors of puppies. This term applies to all who breed with little knowledge of bloodlines, breed standard, or proper temperament and structure. Their breeding animals are not screened for potential inherent problems prevalent in the breed. They have not taken the time, money, or effort to insure anyone they are breeding better dogs than the next advertisement in the paper. “*Rare colors,*” advertised as unique, may be major faults according to the breed standard and may be linked genetically to health problems. There is a

reason that the AKC only recognizes three colors, Salt and Pepper, Black and Silver , and Black.

“*Excellent bloodline*” is nothing more than a family tree if the breeder has little or no knowledge about bloodlines. Many backyard breeders confess that they are not breeding show dogs and don't subject themselves to the show or performance breeders' rigorous attempts to eradicate health problems or to maintain proper type or temperament.

Puppies are like children – they are all cute. But they do eventually grow up to be adults. Choose a puppy with the potential to grow up healthy.