

THE SCHIPPERKE

The Schipperke, pronounced “skip-er-key”, is a faithful little watch dog, active, mischievous, impudent and very alert. The breed originated in the Flemish provinces of Belgium, and from the very beginning he served as a companion and guard dog for the tradesmen and barge captains of the provinces. He acquired his name because he was known primarily for his services on the barges and canal boats. In Flemish, Schipperke means “Little Captain.”

In appearance, the Schip is very distinctive, resembling no other breed closely. It is a small thickset, cobby, black, tailless dog, square in profile, having a distinctive coat which includes an outstanding ruff, cape and culottes. All of these form the unique silhouette.

The Schipperke, one of the hardiest of all small dogs, is equally at home in the country or in a small city apartment. In spite of its small stature, he is by no means considered a “toy” breed. While usually an excellent ratter, the Schip is not a powerful fighter, although he can hold his own with most dogs of his weight and will tackle anything in defense of his household or of his master. When it comes to guarding his family, home or possessions, he has no idea of the limitations of his size. Essentially the Schip is a guard dog, completely devoted to the family, and by nature, suspicious of all strangers. They are lively, busy little dogs, continually occupied with what is going on around them, careful of things given them to guard, very kind to children, always curious to know what is going on behind closed doors or about any object that has been moved. The Schipperke is usually a long-lived dog for a small breed. It is not rare for them to live to be fifteen or sixteen years of age and older.

Now that you have decided you want a Schipperke, your problem is to select the right one for your circumstances. Can you afford a potential champion, or do you just want one that can be your companion? You may want to show your Schipperke, or if it is a female, you may want to raise a litter of puppies. If so, *SELECT THE BEST YOU CAN AFFORD*. It costs no more to feed and care for the best, and your rewards will be far greater.

Whether you are buying a Schipperke as a pet, for breeding, or for show you should make sure you are dealing with a reputable breeder. Generally you should be prepared to pay at least \$600.00 for a healthy, worth-while pet and much more if you are after a dog with highly desirable bloodlines and temperament, suitable for breeding and/or showing. A good breeder stands behind what they sell and will replace or in some cases, refund the purchase price, defective animals.

In either case, you should expect a sound, healthy dog, but remember that if you are buying a pet, it is NOT suitable as breeding or show stock. Just because a dog is AKC registered does not mean that it is show quality. This is true of all breeds of dogs. Usually breeders will sell their pet puppies at very reasonable prices. They can and do get much higher prices for the ones more closely matching the Standard of Excellence. In general, quality begets quality, meaning that top quality bred to top quality stands a far better chance of producing top quality than vice versa. Do not buy a Schipperke with the intention of making money on puppies. Schipperkes average only 3 to 5 puppies per litter. It costs a lot of money to properly raise a litter to a marketable age and because Schips are relatively unknown, the market is rather small. You must be prepared to keep the puppies that don't sell for as long as it takes to find them proper homes.

To locate a reputable breeder, contact:

Schipperke Club of America Breeder Referral Chair: Charles Harris, charlesh123@comcast.net, 248-770-2038

Consider a Rescue Schip as your companion. The Schipperke Club of America, Inc. has a listing of many of the rescue groups on their website at <http://schipperkeclub-usa.org/schipperke/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Rescue-Organizations1.pdf>