

should not drip to the ground. We should always be aware that there is a dog under that hair, and enough of him should be visible so that we can tell at a glance what his proportions are, where his tail-set lies, and how much neck and leg he has. Yes, we feel with our hands to corroborate what our eyes have seen—but we should not have to use our hands as the *only* way to detect what we want to know.

Jeanie Montford, well-known breeder from Australia, perhaps said it best recently in an e-mail:

"I love long coats too, but some have so much you cannot see the outline of the actual dog, its topline, etc., and have hair growing in every direction. I have judged some of these in recent years! Yes, show people generally work on the coats to present them straight and smooth, but quite often the poor pet owner who might have a brother or sister or relation of that super show dog will have trouble coping with their pet's overly profuse coat. Friends of mine have a grooming shop, and I see lots of pets (not necessarily neutered ones) in there matted up and needing to be clipped off. There are certainly some Cavaliers who are not 'easy care' or 'low maintenance'!"

It is also important to note that the Cavalier has no undercoat—the breed has a single coat only, unlike double-coated breeds such as the Lhasa Apso and the German Shepherd. Sometimes there is some fluff underneath—usually dead hair that combs out easily. Or maybe it is the incorrect coat of a Cavalier who is wanting in that aspect—but it is never "double."

The correct coat lies mostly flat, with a silky feel to the touch. In the show/pet dog, exhibitors coax those stray wavy hairs flat, but in the pet dog who is not so pampered, you will usually see a slight wave, especially over the hip area. I have always thought it adds to the "natural" look so desired in the breed, and the wave varies quite a bit from dog to dog.

It is just another example of how subjective it sometimes is to interpret

what seem to be fairly straightforward words from our breed standards. In the meantime, Cavalier breeders are very pleased to have dogs requiring no trimming whatsoever while showing off their natural good looks. —Stephanie Abraham, [landmarks.properties@snet.net](mailto:landmarks.properties@snet.net); American Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club website: [ackoc.org](http://ackoc.org)

## Chihuahuas Elements of Type

"Are all those dogs the same breed?" When walking into the Chihuahua show ring, you'll see a variety of dogs who are so visually different, it's no wonder judges are having a hard time choosing the best dog of the day.

Because interpretation of the standard leaves a lot of leeway to the individual breeder, we must breed for *type*. By doing so, we would see less variance in our dogs.

Coat, head, movement, silhouette, and character are some of the elements of type as described in our breed standard.

On these points:

**Coat** "should be of a soft texture, either flat or slightly wavy, with undercoat preferred." Today it appears that the long-coated Chihuahua is "preferred" to have a very full and heavy coat, straying from the original intent of the standard. One dog will have a full, heavy coat, while the dog next to him may have a flat or slightly wavy coat. This tends to confuse judges and ringsiders alike. Sometimes the dog of better conformation, soundness, and type is overlooked for a luscious coat.

**Head** is defined as having a "well-rounded, 'apple dome' skull with a saucy expression." To some, the head is the all to end all, while to others it simply sits at the top of the neck. The correct head highlights the dog, and the expression projects the essence of what we look for in our Chihuahuas. It's the first impression and the final brushstroke in painting the picture of a Chihuahua.

**Movement** is to be swift, with firm,

sturdy action and good reach in front equal to the drive from the rear. From the rear, the hocks remain parallel to each other and the footfall of the rear legs follows directly behind that of the forelegs. There is no hackney gait or high lifting mentioned in our standard.

Many believe that a toy dog cannot move like a sporting dog. Over the years, quality breeders have made huge improvements in the structure of their dogs, and indeed, a Chihuahua can and does move with grace and ease around the ring. This correct movement denotes correct conformation, yet it goes unrewarded at times for a pretty face in a fur coat.

**Silhouette** is the physicality of the breed. It is everything that is required by the breed standard. An accomplished groomer can hide a multitude of sins, creating an illusion. A correct outline should denote correctness in parts, so it is important to be sure that what we are looking at is real.

**Character** is the sum total of the dog's mental and physical characteristics. It's the immediate impression of the dog at first sight. It is expressed in not only what the dog looks like but also in how it conducts itself. Breeders need to develop an ability to recognize the ideal Chihuahua character in order to establish a vision of excellence for the breed.

"The pendulum of type swings to and fro, but those remaining true to the standard triumph in the end." —

Virginia (Jenny) Hauber, [virginiajhauber@yahoo.com](mailto:virginiajhauber@yahoo.com); Chihuahua Club of America website: [chihuahuaclubofamerica.com](http://chihuahuaclubofamerica.com)

## Chinese Cresteds "Any Color or Combination of Colors"

I recently arrived at a show with a young Chinese Crested I'd entered. Since she was new to the show ring, I arrived early, planning to give her some time to acclimate to the new environment.

She was sitting on her grooming table when another exhibitor came over to see her and bring an offer of