



**Barbet Club GB**

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## Barbet Illustrated Breed Standard

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# Barbet Club GB

## **An Illustrated Guide to the Barbet Breed and Kennel Club Breed Standard With supporting notes and images.**

Written and compiled by Novaforesta Barbets, with assistance  
and thanks to the Barbet Club of Sweden, and to those who  
have given permission for their photos to be used.

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# Introduction

The Barbet is fundamentally a working breed, specialised for flushing and retrieving in water. The traits and characteristics inherent in the breed need to be maintained so that it can continue in this role.



# Breed History

The exact origin of the breed is not known, and today there are many different historical interpretations about where the breed originates from, and it is with great commitment that the historical provenance is discussed.

The Barbet is described in literature as being very old, and is mentioned in writing since the 16th century. Some claim sources back to the 7th century. Barbet has sometimes also been called Griffon d'Arret a Poil Laineux (laineux = woolly). In Europe in the 14th century there were several water dogs, which had many different names.

Over the centuries, several water dogs have spread over a large part of Europe. The name barbet is probably a general term for a dog that was characterised by a woolly coat with curls that had a soft and social manner and could work in water.

It has been used throughout history to retrieve hunters' arrows, worked as herding dog, tracking dog, royal hunting dog, guard dog, truffle dog and was used as a retriever by the French navy in the 19th century. In the literature, reference is made to both smaller and larger specimens of barbet. Some were better suited to guarding homes and livestock, while others were mainly used for hunting small game. However, the breed became primarily a tracking, flushing and retrieving dog when hunting small game.



Le Grand Barbet from 'Histoire naturelle' By Buffon 1784



Barbet d'arret 'Les races françaises de chiens d'arret.' By James de Coninck 1891



# Development

A first breed description was written in 1894 in France.

The Barbet's ability to navigate difficult terrain such as marshes and water when hunting is described.

Furthermore, this medium-sized breed is described as strong, robust, and intelligent; with the ability to work independently as well as being a searching and retrieving dog. In the early 20th century the breed began to lose popularity as hunters began to demand more specialised hunting dogs, and after World War II there were very few registered barbets in France. What remained, however, were unregistered individuals, as well as old photographs and oil paintings.

When breeding resumed some breeders wanted to continue breeding medium-sized dogs and breeding with a focus on

the breed's utility characteristics. At the same time, a breed was started in which large poodles were crossed, and the barbet type came to change. (Crossbreeding has also taken place with Spanish and Portuguese water dogs).

Starting in the 1980s, two different lines came to be dominant for the development of the breed. One line came to represent tall barbets with curly fur, while the other line represented smaller dogs whose coat had looser curls. At the beginning of the 2000s, the population amounted to about 500 in the world.

Breeders began to cross these lines between themselves and within the present day Barbet the influence from both lines can be seen.



Les Chiens Barbets. From La Mosaïque, Paris 1834



Water Dog by Reinagle 1845



Le Barbet from Le chien: son histoire, ses exploits, ses aventures, 1938

# General Appearance



*A dense covering of curly hair and a distinctive beard which gives the breed its name.*



*Rustic, medium size, athletic with balanced proportions.*



*Substantial head and bone.*

# Characteristics and Temperament

## Characteristics

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- > Hardy gundog with well developed senses
  - > Intelligent and energetic
  - > Undesirable - Aggressive or overly shy
- 

## Temperament

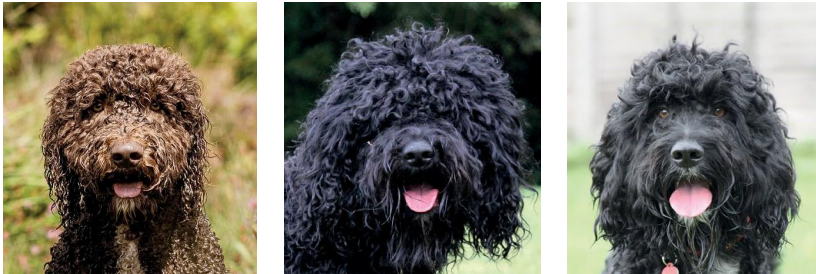
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- > Responsive, loving, loyal and sociable, with even disposition.
- 





# Head and Skull



- 
- > Strong, wide and large.
- 
- > Skull rounded and broad, occiput not prominent, well-defined stop.
- 
- > Head planes parallel. Muzzle square, slightly shorter than skull and fully covered with hair. Beard well furnished, length in keeping with overall coat.
- 
- > Nose large, with well opened nostrils, fully pigmented, in harmony with coat colour.

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## Points to consider:

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The skull part must be round and wide.

The fur on the head should hang down towards the bridge of the nose.

The moustache should cover the entire muzzle.

The muzzle must be clearly square, broad and short.

The beard should be long.

The lips must be thick and pigmented. Lip edges should be black or liver brown.

The lips must be completely covered by long fur. The stop must be marked.

Undesirable - lack of defined stop, narrow and fine head

Nose: little or no pigmentation. Nostrils: narrow

Lips: thin, little or no pigmentation.

Sparse hair.

# Eyes

> Medium size, round, expressive, dark hazel to dark brown in colour.

> Fully pigmented eye rims harmonising with overall coat colour, fawn dogs having brown or black pigment.

## Points to consider:

On the liver brown and light dogs, a slightly lighter eye colour is accepted.

The eyes should be round, not almond-shaped

Picture number 2 shows eyes that are too light.

1.



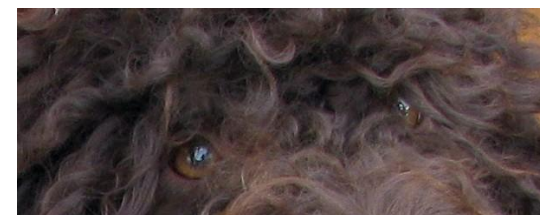
2.



3.



4.



# Ears

- > Long, flat and wide, covered entirely by long hair. (See image 3)
- > Set at, or slightly below, eye level.
- > Ear leather extends beyond corner of mouth, with hair extending past the nose. (See images 1)

1.



2.



3.



## Points to consider:

Notice that the ears should be set at eye level or below.

High set ears should be considered a undesirable.

Regardless of overall trim the ears should be well covered with hair extending beyond the leather.

\*The shaved example would not normally be presented to a judge but gives an example of what should be 'felt' for. (See image 2)

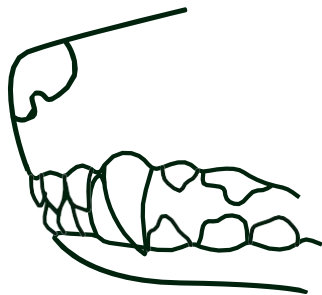


# Mouth

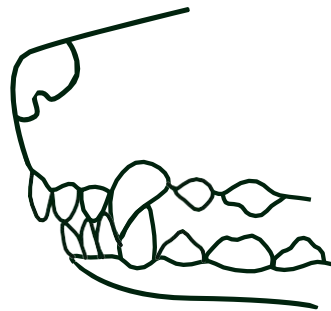
- > Jaws strong with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.
- > Lips thick and fully pigmented, with tight flews.



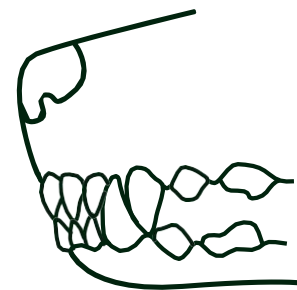
**Scissor Bite**



**Overshot Bite**



**Level Bite**



**Undershot Bite**



# Neck

> Short and strong



## Points to consider:

It is important that the neck has sufficient power and strength to carry game and wildfowl.

Also note that the standard says short neck, which emphasises that the breed should not give an elegant impression.



# Forequarters

> Shoulders oblique, upper arm sloping, strong and muscular.

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> Forearm straight and well boned.

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## Points to consider:

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Straight shoulders and thin upper arm are undesirable.

The angle between shoulder blade and upper arm should be 110-115 degrees.

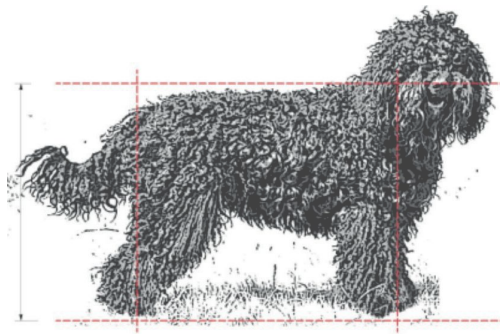




# Body

- > Firm level top line
- > Length of body, from point of shoulder to point of buttock, slightly greater than height at withers.
- > Well-developed, broad, deep chest reaching the elbows.
- > Ribs rounded but not barrel shaped. Loin slightly arched, short and strong.

\*Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.



## Undesirables:

- Narrow chest
- Top line hollow or roached
- Loin long and weak
- Croup straight
- Extreme inclined tuck up



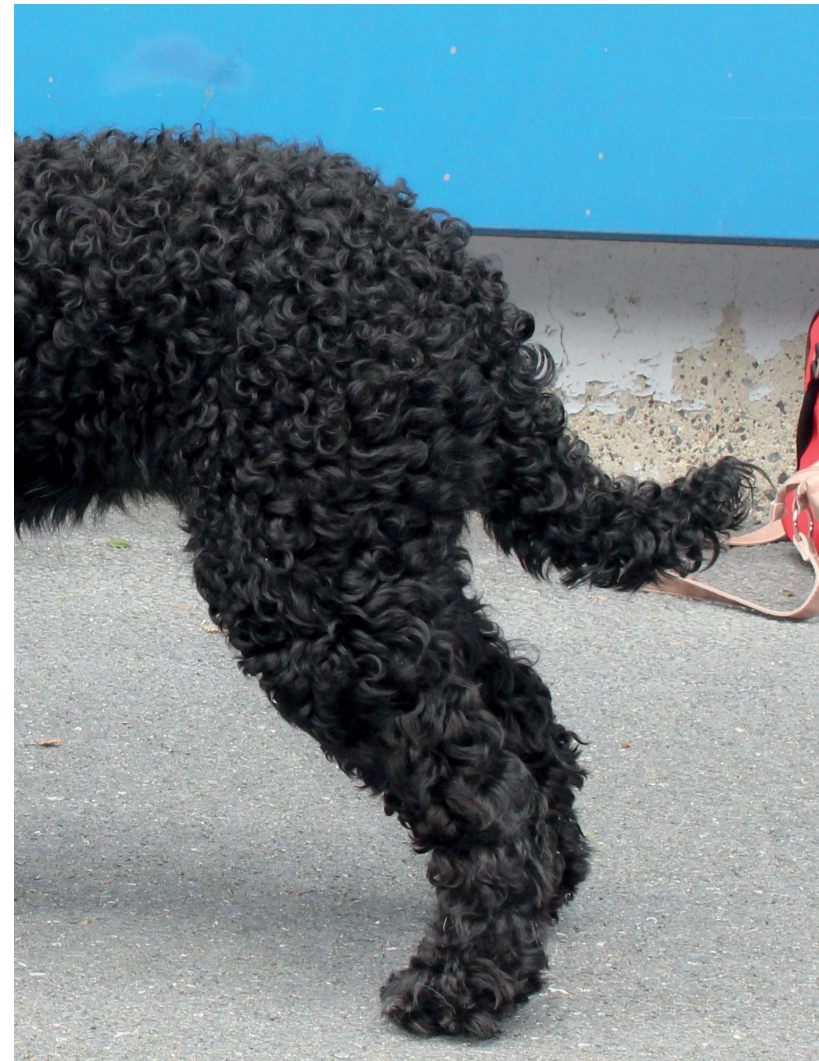
# Hindquarters

> Moderately angulated with low hocks (See image 2)

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>Rear pasterns upright. (See image 1)

1.



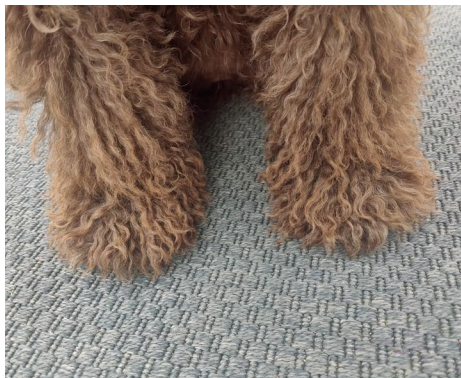
2.



# Feet

- > Round, broad and covered with hair.
- > Well padded.
- > Feet should be facing forwards and not be turned inwards or outwards (See images 1 and 3 for good examples and Image 2 for feet turned outwards)

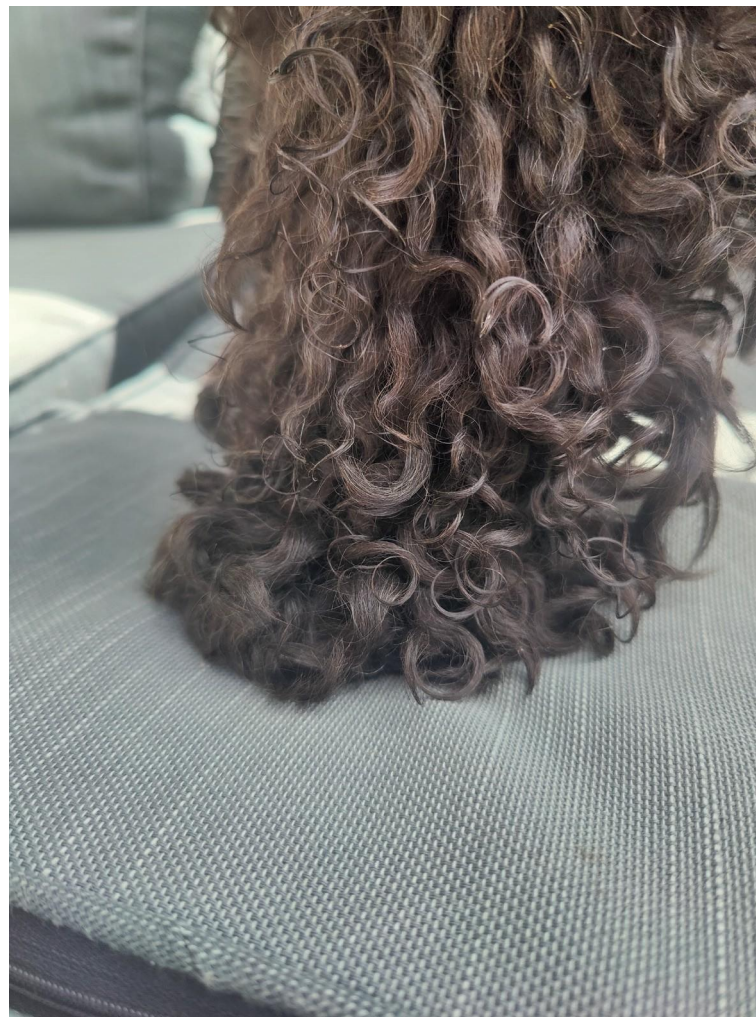
1.



2.



3.





# Tail

> The end of the tail is carried slightly above the horizontal in motion. (See image 1)

> Low set, reaching the hock and forming a slight hook at the tip. (See image 2)

> Never curved or curled over the back. (See image 3)



1.



2.



3.

# Gait / Movement

> Easy, powerful, balanced movement with strides of medium length.

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> Topline remains level.

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# Coat

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> A defining characteristic.

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> Hair is profuse, water resistant and covers the whole body evenly with thick, natural curls ranging from large and loose to small and tight.

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> Skin is thick.

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> The coat can be presented in different lengths.

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> Working clip acceptable provided there is enough length that the texture and curl can be seen.

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## Points to consider:

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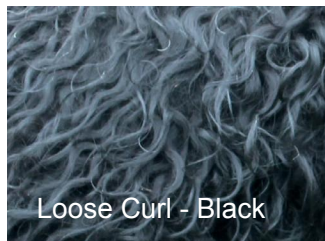
The skin must be thick enough to provide protection from the natural working environment.

Coat undesirables - not curly, not woolly.  
Short hair. Wiry hair, straight coated.

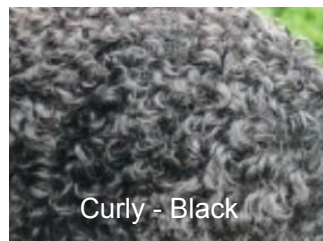
Stylised trimming should be penalised as rustic appearance must be maintained.



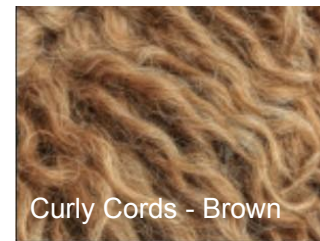
Curly - Fawn



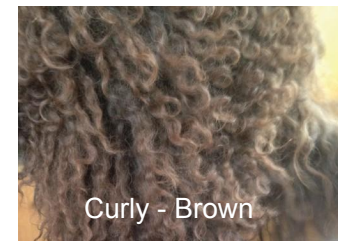
Loose Curl - Black



Curly - Black



Curly Cords - Brown



Curly - Brown



# Colour

- > All shades of black, grey, brown, and fawn, with or without white.
- > Solid white or white with markings in one of these colours.
- > Any other colour or combination of colours unacceptable.



## Points to consider:

Colours that previously existed in the history of the barbet and that appear now are included in the standard.

New colours and colour designs that have not previously occurred historically or that arise as a result of cross matings are not included or desired.

Regardless of colour, the shade present should be uniform across the whole body.

## Unacceptables

Black and brown

Brown and tan

Brindle

Tri-colour

# Size

> Dogs 58-65cms (22<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-25<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>ins);

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> Bitches 53-61cms (20<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-24ins).

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> With a tolerance of +/- 1cm.

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## Points to consider:

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When competing, dogs that are within the standard range for wither height, are to be considered equal from the height aspect. It is essential, however, that the barbet should be a robust and rustic dog with a well-functioning body for hunting work.

In 2006 a maximum height of 65cm for dogs and 61cm for bitches was added to the existing minimum heights.



# Summary

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The Barbet is a long haired gundog and has a coat that gives protection in all weathers.

Although the breed is so much more than just a coat, specific breed type is also important, and a barbet should be recognisable close up or from a distance.

They are a sensitive breed and it is vital that the hair on the head does not obscure vision, as it is important, not only for the dogs working ability, but also its welfare as a companion dog.

The coat is shown in as natural a state as possible and should be clean and free from mats. The coat should be able to be parted to show the skin.

The Coat constantly grows so may need trimming, but the result should still be natural/rustic.

The coat should retain curl, it is not blown out straight and sculpted into a style.

No part should be shaved, other than for sanitary trimming.

The Beard: The Barbet has a distinctive beard, with a fully coated muzzle and chin , another breed specific trait.

Weight: The weight should be in proportion to the height of the dog.

The breed has a generous height acceptance range, therefore overall balance is important.