

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BARBET

THE FRENCH WATER DOG

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Devoted, intelligent, responsive and clownish, the Barbet is the newest addition to AKC's Miscellaneous class. An archetypic water dog of France, the Barbet is a rustic breed of medium size and balanced, moderate proportions. Defining characteristics are his profuse coat of long, dense, curly hair, distinctive beard and long, sweeping tail. Remarkably agile, the versatile Barbet has been used as a water retriever and excels at many performance events. As a companion, the cheerful Barbet is a delight.

HISTORY

Long considered the foundation of several breeds including the Poodle, Bichon Frise, Newfoundland and Briard, the Barbet shares relatives with the Portuguese and Spanish Water Dog. "The Barbet was first a gundog and then a waterdog, but a gundog and waterdog

that influenced so many other breeds that it's regarded as a major contributor to French canine patrimony," states dog writer Susi Szeremy. "Its long history reaches to at least the 16th century and while other countries had their waterdogs, they weren't called Barbets, a name that in France was the generic word used to designate any long haired dog with a beard (*barbe*) before it became the official name of a breed of French dogs. Where did they come from?" Susi concludes with a shrug of her shoulders, "It depends upon whom you ask. One source maintains that the Barbet was developed from North African herding dogs that arrived in Europe with the Moors and returning armies in the 7th and 8th centuries. The dogs spread throughout Europe and they caught on. By the 16th century, Henry IV of France was water fowling with them." Nearly extinct after the World Wars, the Barbet has been resurrected



via crosses to other waterdogs and enjoys a dedicated following across Europe and North America. An SCC standard was first written in 1894 and the Barbet was accepted by the FCI in 1954. The Canadian Kennel Club recognized the breed in 2006 and AKC's Foundation Stock Service began recording pedigrees in 2007. Enthusiasts across America celebrated the arrival of 2017 as the Barbet entered AKC's Miscellaneous class.

