

TERRIER GROUP

One of the most important duties of a breed club is the creation of the breed standard. From the AKC website:

“Knowledge of any pure-bred dog, ring champion or pet, begins with its standard, a written description of the ideal specimen of a breed. Standards describe perfect type, structure, gait, and temperament of the breed—the characteristics that allow the breed to perform the function for which it was bred.”

A key word here is *perfect*. It is generally accepted that no perfect canine specimen exists. However, this fact does not dissuade breeders from spending the greater part of a lifetime trying to produce one.

From that same article on the AKC website, written by Bud Boccone (May 26, 2021), I learned:

“The Pyrenean Shepherd standard, at 1,943 words, is a *Moby-Dick* of breed standards; in contrast, the 226-word Greyhound standard is a veritable haiku,



Glen of Imaal Terrier

leaving lots of room for interpretation.”

The Glen standard in comparison falls somewhere between those two, with 806 words. Some of the original Glen club members who worked on the Glen standard in the late 1990s are still active in breeding and showing today.

Out of 31 AKC recognized terrier breeds, 15 have disqualifications (DQs) in their standards. The breeds with the most DQs are the Russell Terrier and the Parson Russell Terrier, with

six each. The Rat Terrier has five. Seven terrier breeds have only a single DQ, and 16 have none at all.

There are no DQs in the Glen breed standard. There are three characteristics which are designated “undesirable.” These are: (1) full drop or prick ears; (2) bottlehead or narrow foreface; and (3) over-trimming (in relation to grooming). The standard says, “Light eyes should be penalized.” Under the description of the “Neck, Topline and Body,” the words *well-muscled* or *muscular* appear a total of six times. At the same time, overall balance and moderation are stressed.

As the GITCA prepares for the 20th anniversary of our AKC recognition in 2024, we will take note of where we started and how far we’ve come. The Glens who were around when our standard was being written are gone. How have breeders done over the last 20 years? Are we still breeding close to that standard, or are there deviations developing

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that we should address? Are judges interpreting it correctly when making their placements? Could small changes in the descriptions make it easier for everyone to understand?

The standard is our road-map. It points us in the direction we need to go. We are not breeding perfect dogs yet, nor will we ever, but it sure is a fun and interesting journey.

Where will this big dog on short legs be in another 20 years? I hope I'm around to find out.

—Jo Lynn,
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Glen of Imaal Terrier Club
of America

Irish Terriers

WHAT MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME

“E ven money?”
I glanced from the venerable Wax Waneforth to the ingénue couple, straddle-legged puppy in tow, making their way under the grooming tent toward him.

I shook my head in disbelief at what he predicted,

then shifted my neck to a vertical nod. “You’re on.”

After a *gee-shucks* self-introduction to the great Mr. Waneforth, the novices finally got around to what they had come for: a genuine Wax Waneforth assessment of their puppy.

Wax bowed his body forward and pulled his bushy eyebrows together in a fierce, contrived peer at the pup. He was stalling for time, and I knew it. My heart sank as soon as the novices began to speak.

“We already know his



Irish Terrier

COURTESY LYNDIA BEAM