

Scottie Column 8-17

“Windows to the soul...”

“I just love it when they look up at you so sweet!” A comment no Scottie owner or breeder wants to hear about their dog. Yet in discussion about our breed with future judges or those simply new to the breed that it will be said. They mean it as a positive observation or complement yet they don’t understand by saying that they are far from describing correct expression of our beloved die-hard.

In educating Judges on a proper exam of our breed, we often warn them not to lock eyes. Instead look quickly for the dark almond eye and leave, as they may see it as a challenge to their presence and stare you back down or worse. We like the fact that our breed will peer at you from under their brows. In fact, that is why most of us will bait their head downward upon return from the down and back. We don’t want them looking up to you with a smile. If they do then it is not correct and should not be rewarded.

As a group, Terrier people take great pride in the expression of our dogs. With a few exceptions, most call for a varminty look. Keen, intelligent or piercing are words that many of the standards use when trying to explain a Terrier’s expression. These are tough working dogs that kept the home and farm clear of unwanted vermin. A stranger walking up to the farm was not to be greeted with kindness and a smile but rather a judgmental stare that says, “try me if you dare”.

That insolent look is what endears us to our Scots. We relish the fact that they will stare you down if you let them. We like that they draw a line in the sand and look at intruders with contempt to see if they are good enough to cross. This breed was bred with intent to hunt vermin as large as a badger. Not something a soft sweet pup is going to do but rather a hard bitten clever hunter will.

A fiery spirit is why we truly believe when we look into their eyes we are looking into the window to their souls. We see a tough and fiercely loyal companion that will stand by our side to the end. A companion that will watch our back and not let others join unless they deserve to be there. A partner that will keep the home and hearth clear of pesky invaders.

Whether they are puzzled trying to figure out where that mole just disappeared or demanding their favorite snack it is all summed up in that expression. Soft round pleading eyes will never convey their tough independent nature. They never give up and you will never see defeat echoed there. Even until their very end that bright intelligence gleams through, and it is what we are always left with in memory.

Everything you ever want to know about a Scottie comes from that first glance they give us. We understand in that moment the personality and spirit that pup will bring to our home. That wise look we see letting us know they have chosen to share their life with us is a reason we cherish and adore them.

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