

## Bringing Home a Papillon

**Get acquainted with this fluffy breed and whether or not it's easy for owners to groom.**

*By Kathy Salzberg*

**Q.** I am thinking of getting a Papillon puppy. I am wondering if they shed hair very badly. The main small dog I have had is the Pekingese and I know they shed really badly — but they are so loveable! Could you please advise me about the shedding? I can't seem to find an answer anywhere.

**A.** Papillons are happy little dogs; perfectly suited to live anywhere from a small apartment to a country home. They are quite happy indoors and also like to go out to play, but because of their small size — only 8 to 11 inches tall and dainty in build — you need to keep an eye on them.

Papillons are smaller, faster, and more active than your beloved Pekingese, so larger dogs can mistake them for prey. Although outgoing and confident in character, you need be careful if they mix with larger dogs, whether at a doggie day care center, training class, or out for a stroll with you, so they won't be accidentally injured.

From a grooming standpoint, they require a lot less upkeep than Pekingese and don't shed as much, either. Because they don't have an undercoat, they don't need a lot of grooming, but should still be brushed and combed on a weekly basis.

The hair on their skull, muzzle, front of forelegs, and hocks of rear legs lies smooth and close and they have beautiful feathering on the chest, undercarriage, culottes, and back of their forelegs as well as an abundantly plumed tail. The breed must be either parti-colored or white with patches of any color. However, it is those ears that gave this dog its name. Erect and heavily fringed, they do resemble a butterfly: "papillon" in French.

Throughout the years, they have had many names — Dwarf or Continental Spaniels, Little Squirrel Dogs, or Belgian Toy Spaniels. Papillons had large drooping ears — the Spaniel or Spanish type — back when they were the darlings of French and Spanish noblewomen during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Over time, an erect-eared type emerged and the "butterfly dog" became all the rage on the continent. The drop-eared variety is still around; sometimes both types are born within the same litter. It's known as the Phalene, which means "night moth." In the United States, they are shown together as one breed.

Interchangeably called Continental Toy Spaniels, they were often seen in portraits of royalty and nobility, depicted by such artists as Rubens, Rembrandt, Van Dyke, and Fragonard. Madame Pompadour and Marie Antoinette are among the aristocratic ladies who owned Papillons. France's King Henry III carried his to court in a basket.

Intelligent and versatile, Papillons excel in performance competitions and as therapy dogs. If you are interested in adopting an older pup or retired AKC champion, check out the Papillon Club of America's website at [www.papillonclub.org](http://www.papillonclub.org). Like most AKC breeds, they also have their own rescue group.