

## Meet the Breed: The French Bulldog

**At rest, at play and in the ring, this crowd pleaser displays an undeniable joie de vivre.**

*Kim Campbell Thornton*

Lulu paraded down the Boulevard de Clichy. She was going to work with her mistress, Moulin Rouge star Mistinguett, as she did every evening. Lulu was a star just as much as Mistinguett. This is why the famous artist Toulouse Lautrec had put her in one of his paintings, *Le Marchand des Marrons*. It wasn't every French Bulldog who could say that!

Lulu is apocryphal, although Mistinguett did indeed have a love for the "bouldogge Francais," but she exemplifies the breed's lively, charming nature and love of attention. In their heyday--the late 19th century and early 20th century--French Bulldogs were the favorite of the Parisian bohemian set: the belles de nuit (beauties of the night), artists, writers such as the novelist Colette, and wealthy Americans doing the grand tour.

### A Modest Beginning

The Frenchie, as it's nicknamed these days, didn't start out living the louche life. It didn't even start out in France. A toy variety of the Bulldog existed in the mid-19th century and became popular among laceworkers in Nottingham, England. They kept the little bulldogs as companions and as ratters in their workrooms. But with the rise of the Industrial Revolution in England, the lacemakers found themselves out of work. Many of them moved to northern France, where their skills were still appreciated, bringing their beloved dogs with them. There, Frenchies were just as popular among shopkeepers and other members of the working class for their small size, distinctive appearance and rapping abilities.

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