

## Bull Terriers in Paintings and in Life

**A fancier reflects on the love of the bull terrier breed.**

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Through the years my travels have taken me far and wide across the Pacific. I've probably spent at least some time on just about every accessible island scattered throughout the vast ocean's archipelagos. In the end, however, I found I had to agree with authors Robert Louis Stevenson, Mark Twain and James Michener, all of whom agreed that of all the islands in the Pacific none surpassed Hawaii in sheer beauty and the temperance of its climate.

During the course of my many visits to Hawaii I have developed wonderful relationships with many of the island state's breeders and exhibitors. It was through Ginny O'Connor and her son, Bob Frost, that I eventually met Bull Terrier fanciers Larry and Kay Aki, who were as avid about Bullies as I have always been. As the months and years passed, the Akises and I exchanged our views and opinions on Bull Terriers.

My frequent trips to England enabled me to pass along those pearls of wisdom I had gleaned from the great Bull Terrier expert Tom Horner, my mentor in England, and from Winkie Mackay-Smith of Banbury fame here at home.

I know everyone is pretty well devoted to his or her breed of choice, but I have found that Bull Terrier lovers are beyond devoted it's almost an obsession. There simply is no other breed in the mind of a Bullie lover.

Although I've lived with many breeds in my long life in dogs, I fully understand this obsession, because the years I've spent with Bull Terriers have assured me that there is no other breed quite so unique. No other breed has the whimsical sense of humor as England's contribution to the bull and terrier cross the Bull Terrier.

This is truly ironic in that when I attended my very first dog show back so many years ago they hadn't even started numbering the years I experienced another first. It was seeing my first Bull Terrier.

Quite frankly, I wasn't sure that what I was looking at was all dog! It seemed to me that a pig had fallen into the canine gene pool and instead of drowning emitted that bizarre-looking creature. "Who would ever want one of those?", I remember thinking.

The years were to prove that the "who" was none other than myself. I've owned a number of Bullies over the years. For a while it seemed I couldn't go abroad without coming home with a living, breathing Bull Terrier souvenir a white and a colored bitch from Australia, a colored dog from South Africa, a brindle Mini from Germany. Just about all of them did well here. Winkie Mackay-Smith did me the honor of allowing me to co-own the exquisite young bitch I admired in the classes and who grew up to be the excellent producer, Ch. Banbury Bittersweet, ROM.