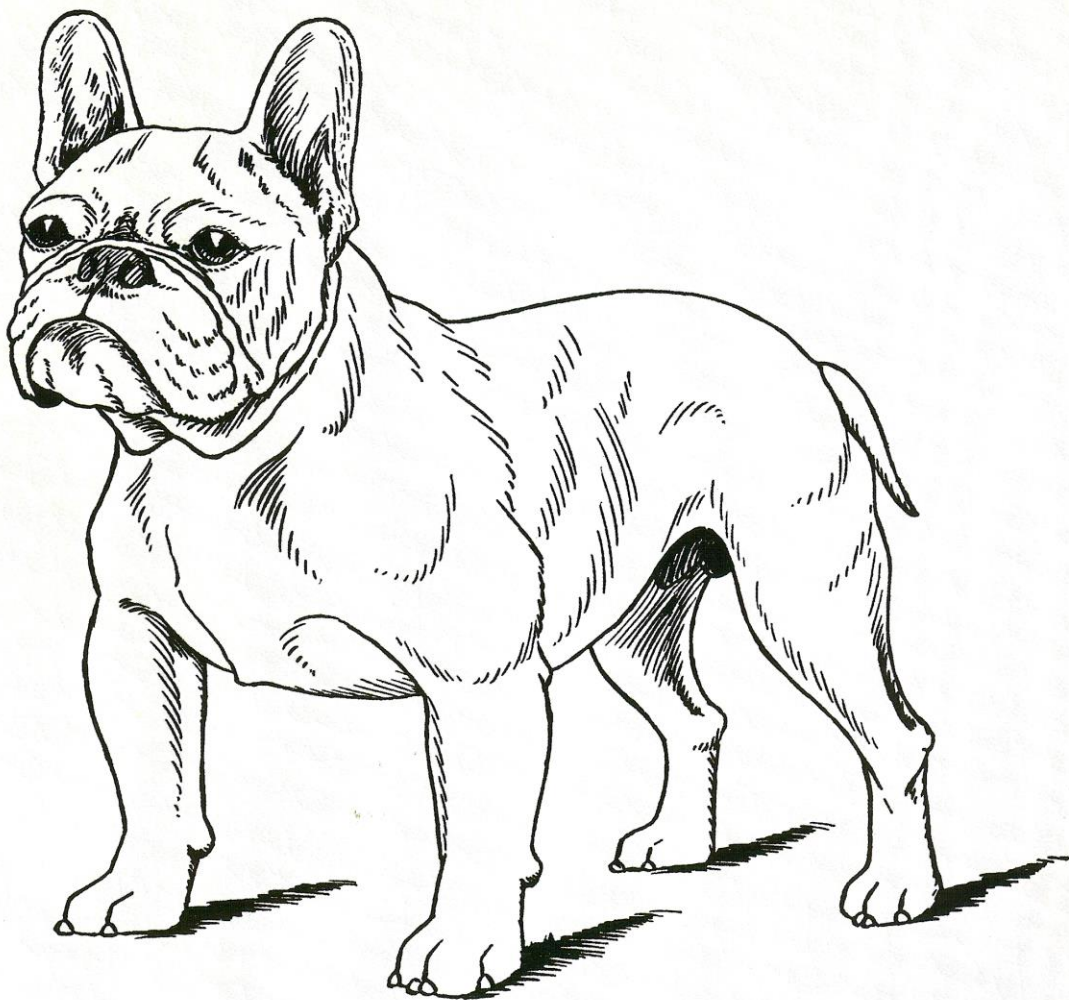


THE FRENCH BULLDOG



July 2022

French Bulldog

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament, and appearance of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function with soundness essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be mindful of features which could be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed.

Last updated: 01 Dec 2021

- **General Appearance:**

Sturdy, compact, solid, small dog with good bone, short, smooth coat. No point exaggerated, balance essential. Dogs showing respiratory distress highly undesirable.

- **Characteristics:**

Full of courage, yet with clown-like qualities. Bat ears and short tail characteristic features of the breed.

- **Temperament:**

Vivacious, deeply affectionate, intelligent.

- **Head And Skull:**

Head square in appearance and in proportion to dog's size. Skull nearly flat between ears, domed forehead. The skin covering the skull and forehead should be supple enough to allow fine wrinkling when the dog is alert. Well defined muzzle, that can clearly be viewed in profile, broad, deep and set back, muscles of cheeks well developed. Stop well defined. Lower jaw deep, square, broad, slightly undershot and turned up. Nose black and wide, relatively short, with visibly open nostrils and line between well defined. Lips black, thick, meeting each other in centre, completely hiding teeth. Upper lip covers lower on each side with plenty of cushion, never so exaggerated as to hang too much below level of lower jaw.

- **Eyes:**

Preferably dark and matching. Moderate size, round, neither sunken or prominent, showing no white when looking straight forward; set moderately wide apart and on the same level as the stop.

- **Ears:**

"Bat ears", of medium size, wide at base, rounded at top; set high, carried upright and parallel, a sufficient width of skull preventing them being too close together; skin soft and fine, orifice as seen from the front, showing entirely. The opening to the ear canal should be wide and open.

- **Mouth:**

Slightly undershot. Teeth sound and regular, but not visible when the mouth is closed. Tongue must not protrude.

- **Neck:**

Powerful, well-arched, of moderate length.

- **Forequarters:**

Legs set wide apart, straight boned, strong, muscular and short.

- **Body:**

Cobby, muscular and well rounded with deep, wide brisket and ribs well sprung. Strong, gently roached back. Good cut up. The body while broader at the shoulders should narrow slightly beyond the ribs to give definition to the relatively short, thick, strong, muscular loin.

- **Hindquarters:**

Legs strong, muscular and relatively longer than forelegs, with moderate angulation. Absolute soundness essential. Hocks well let down.

- **Feet:**

Small, compact and placed in continuation of line of leg, with absolutely sound pasterns. Hind feet rather longer than the fore-feet. Toes compact; well knuckled; nails short, thick and preferably black.

- **Tail:**

Undocked, set low. Thick at root, tapering quickly towards tip, preferably straight and long enough to cover anus. Never curling over back no carried gaily.

- **Gait/Movement:**

Free and flowing. Soundness of movement of the utmost importance.

- **Coat:**

Texture fine, smooth, lustrous, short and close.

- **Colour:**

The only correct colours are: Brindle; Fawn; Pied;

Brindle – Colour pattern caused by a mixture of black hairs and fawn hairs. White markings permitted provided that brindle predominates. Eye rims, eyelashes and lips black.

Fawn – Clear, self-coloured fawn with or without a black mask. White markings

permitted, provided that fawn predominates. Cream and red shades less desirable. Eye rims, eyelashes and lips black.

Pied – Brindle Pied: White predominates with brindle patches. (The brindle as defined above). Fawn Pied: White predominates with fawn patches.

Whites are classified with peds for show purposes.

In peds, eye rims, eyelashes and lips should preferably be black.

Any white in the above colours should be clear with no ticking or spots.

All other colours highly undesirable, including solid black, black and white, black and tan, mouse, grey/blue, liver/chocolate and all patterns of these colours.

- **Sizes:**

Ideal weight:

Dogs 12.5 kgs (28 lbs)

Bitches 11 kgs (24 lbs)

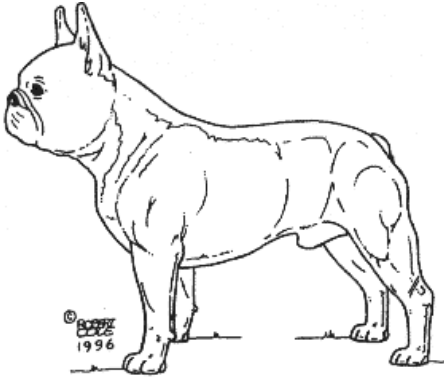
Soundness not to be sacrificed to smallness.

- **Faults:**

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog and on the dog's ability to perform its traditional work.

- **Notes:**

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.



Judging the French Bulldog

by Liz Davidson

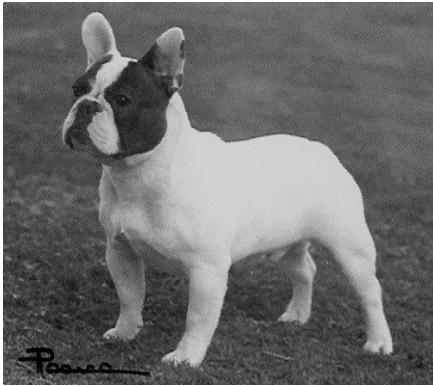
When judging the French Bulldog, there are three impressions to look for when the dog first enters the ring:

- The first and one of the most important is **balance**. The ideal French Bulldog should be balanced, both standing and in motion. The Standard describes balance in this breed as "*No point exaggerated, balance essential*". So balance, not exaggeration, is the first impression of a correct French Bulldog.



- Secondly, whether male or female the frenchie should be "**cobby**". The first sentence of the Standard describes cobbiness as "*...Sturdy, compact, solid, small dog ...*". The dog should have a compact body with roach back, a large squarely formed head, broad front, wide and well-rounded spring of rib, tuck up of the loin, and hindquarters relatively narrow in relation to its forequarters.

It has a substantial amount of bone for a dog of its size. It should never appear rangy or appear too far off the ground. Neither should the dog look like a barrel with four peg legs. Remember balance and add to it, cobby.



Correct, well-balanced & cobby



Incorrect, lacks substance



Incorrect, bulldoggy, coarse and overdone

- The third impression is sex-specific and is vital to judging the breed with knowledge. The male and female French Bulldog should convey their gender characteristic in type (not merely the genitals). The male should give the obvious impression of masculinity. The female should give the obvious impression of femininity. If you need to take a close look to decide, you have a dog substantially lacking correct breed type.



Comparison of dog (left) and bitch (right)

Head and skull

The head of the French Bulldog is an important breed feature. Breed Standard revisions eliminated the point breakdown which had been in place since the breed's development. The original Standard listed a total of 100 points, of which the head comprised 40.



Always remember that the correct head piece will form an obvious square as you look at the dog front on. Here are some points to check on examination:-

- The skull nearly flat between the ears and the forehead slightly domed.
- The head itself will be large but in proportion to the size of the dog. The head of the bitch will be smaller than the dogs' but still large for her size and still square from the front view.
- Symmetrical wrinkling on the forehead showing facial expression.
- Well defined stop.
- Well defined muzzle – broad, deep and set back, can clearly be viewed in profile.
- Well defined cheeks and good fill under the eye. (The dog should never be so cheeky or snipey as to change the overall square structure of the head.
- Underjaw – square, broad, slightly undershot and turned up.
- Teeth and tongue should never protrude.
- Nose – **must be black** with visibly open nostrils.
- Lips – **always black**. Upper lip covers lower on each side with plenty of cushion and must not hang too much below level of lower jaw.
- Judge the head both front on and in profile.

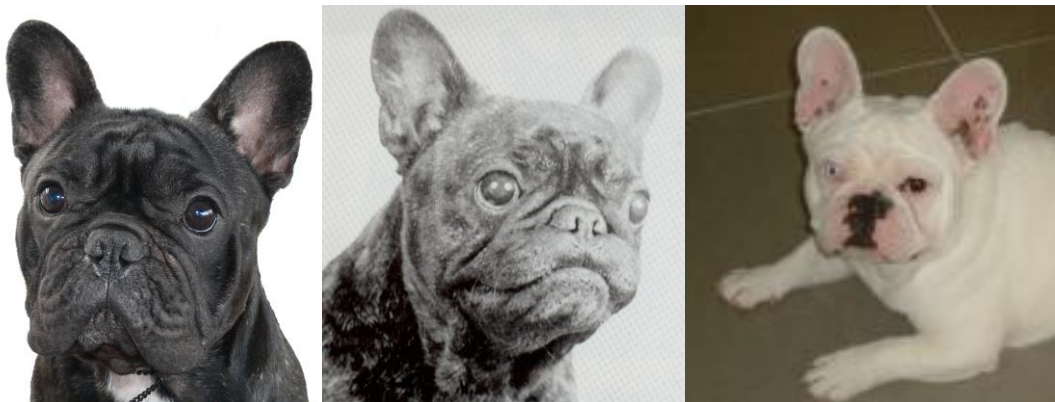


Same bitch – acceptable front view with square head – good ears

Side view incorrect – down-faced with nose well below centre of eyes -

- To fully appreciate this breed in the show ring, judges should learn to assess **correct expression**. Those who have studied the history of the breed, bred for years and love these dogs, all agree that the soul of this dog is conveyed through his expression.

The soft melting expression of the French Bulldog is achieved by correct head shape, ear set, eye shape and eye colour. The eyes are round, almost luminous, never bulging, showing no white when looking forward and the darker the colour the better. Ideally the rims should always be black. However in the case of peds, missing eye rim pigment may be forgiven in good specimens of the breed. Eyes are set far apart across the forehead in a forward, almost human-like manner. The eyes must never be close together, must never be too small, obliquely set or almond shaped. Mean, narrow or “piggy expressions” are so foreign looking that they cannot be admired nor condoned in any way by breeders or judges.



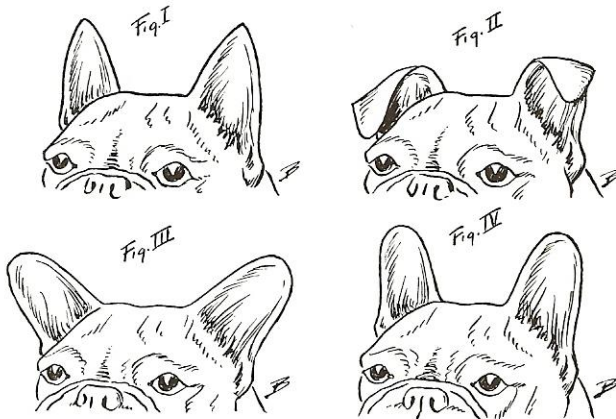
Correct eye shape and colour

Incorrect, bulging and showing white around the eye

Incorrect, eyes of different colour

Bat Ears – hallmark of the breed

The ears of the Frenchie contribute considerably to the alert and curious, sweet expression we so desire. The most serious fault of all is the low set ear that hangs off the side of the head. No dog can appear alert and curious with ears which appear to be growing out of the side of his head. Such ears lack mobility which also detracts from expression.



Ears should be medium in size and set on at 11 and 1 o'clock.

Fig I Incorrect, ear tips are pointed

Fig II Incorrect, ears not erect

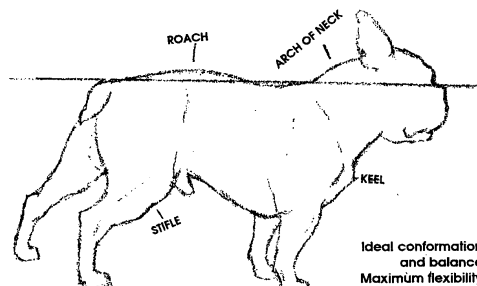
Fig III Incorrect, badly set

Fig IV Correct ear shape, size & set

An alert Frenchie is continually moving his ears, together and one at a time and when bringing them forward on the correctly shaped skull, the impression is breathtaking. This dog says everything with his ears than cannot be said with his eyes. Remember ... poorly set ears lack mobility and destroy correct expression. When judging re-assess the ear set when the dog is on the ground and in a natural state.

Neck Roach and Tail set – typically one accompanies the other.

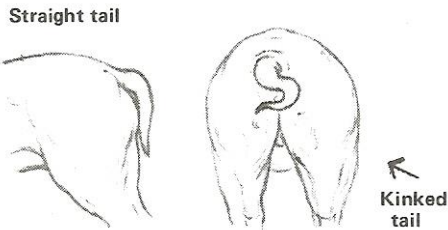
- A “stuffy” appearance is not desired and a short or non-existent neck is not conducive to health or overall symmetry.
- The roach is never exaggerated and starts just after a small dip behind the shoulders and carries in a slight arc over the loins where it falls again dropping off in a curved finish into the low tail set.
- A low tail set is hard to distinguish from just a very short tail. But the low tail set is low and follows a



Ideal conformation
and balance
Maximum flexibility

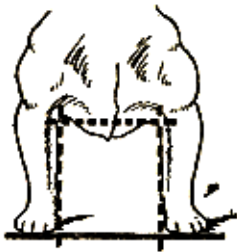
curving sweep over the croup. A flat topline is often accompanied by a high tail set.

- The French Bulldog born with a natural screw tail should never be docked – a docked tail is a disqualification point. An important breed characteristic, the tail is short generally between 1-3 inches in length, thick at the base and tapering to a fine point. Tails are often very kinked or “screwed” and should be long enough to cover the anus. Tails should never be carried above the line of the back.



Forequarters

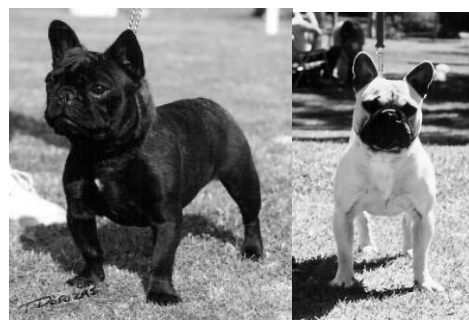
The Frenchie should have good width of chest. A front that is too narrow is not in balance with other aspects of French Bulldog structure and does not allow for the breadth of chest desired.



The space between the front legs, the chest and the ground should be nearly square. To exhibit this characteristic the forelegs must be widely placed, well formed, of proper length and musculature with good formation of the shoulders and elbows. Shoulder angulation is moderate. The pasterns are straight and the feet are only slightly turned out.



Correct forequarters



Incorrect - fiddle front Too high in leg

Hindquarters

To be the active, athletic dog it should be, a Frenchie must be sound. Strong muscular hindquarters are required to provide the necessary drive for good movement. When seen from the rear the legs should drop from the hips to the ground with the stifle and feet turned slightly outward. From the side the Frenchie should exhibit moderate angulation.

The most common defect in the hindquarter may be straight stifles. Hocks of this conformation are usually weak and create a stilted gait in the rear. Double jointed hocks should be heavily penalised.



Correct moderate angulation

Incorrect straight stifles

Feet

A compact, muscular heavily boned dog such as the French Bulldog should have sound, compact, well-padded feet to support its weight. The foot is of medium size, well split up with high knuckles. Weak pasterns and splayed toes are both unattractive and unsound.

Overall size – the Standard allows for dogs up to 12.5 kgs with bitches up to 11 kgs. Some small, squatty dogs are over the ideal weight and some tall, rangy ones are well under it. Whatever your personal size preference may be, remember **balance** is far more important. Judges are often confused by classes consisting of large, over the standard specimens. Another confusing class is one that contains very small dogs except one who is well within the weight limit but appears huge next to the others. Don't steer clear of good specimens that are "iffy" in size. A good specimen deserves your recognition.

Coat texture

The Standard mentions coat texture specifically as an important breed characteristic. The short, smooth, brilliant coat texture and smooth, soft, loose skin are shouting important messages to the judge (i) that the dog is

in good health, well fed and properly groomed, and (ii) that the dog is free of thyroid problems. The coat and skin may be more difficult to assess in the lighter coloured dogs. It is only the brindles who really shine, coat-wise. A tough, non-resilient skin and hard, wiry coat which is stiff in texture are symptoms of neglect or poor health.

Colour – the colour or markings of the dog should never be a consideration in any competition because no colour or colour pattern is favoured over any other in the breed Standard. The only discrimination should be those colours listed in the Standard as highly undesirable

Acceptable colours include all shades of brindle, fawn (red and cream shades less desirable), white, brindle and white (pied), and fawn and white (pied).

Unacceptable colours – solid black, black and white, black and tan, mouse, grey blue, liver/chocolate and all patterns of these colours.

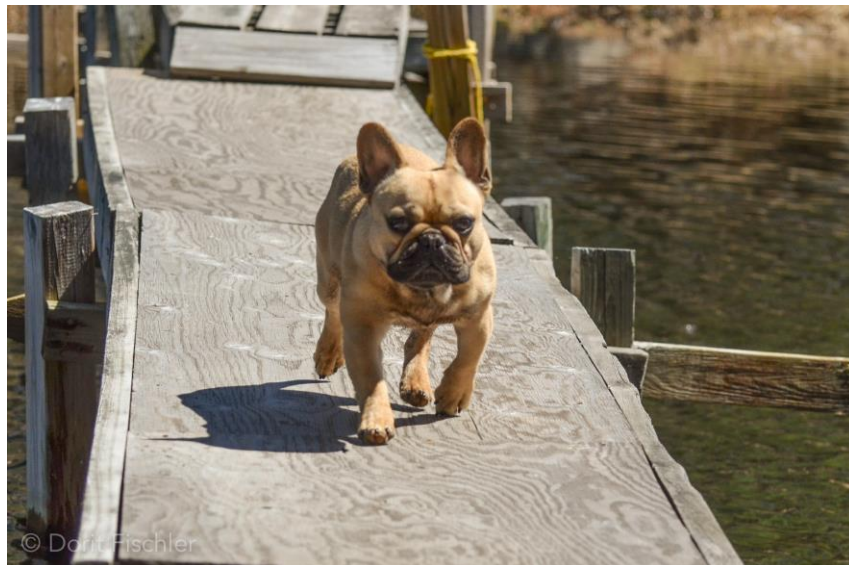
Black means black without a trace of brindle. Please remember to check the coat closely. French Bulldogs may appear to be black but provided some coloured hairs are found, the dogs are classed as brindle and should not be penalised.

Movement

The standard describes movement as *“Free and flowing. Soundness of the utmost importance.”* However, the American breed standard has a more explicit description which says *“Correct gait is double tracking with reach and drive; the action is unrestrained, free and vigorous”*.



Because the French Bulldog has a broader front than rear, the hind feet track inside the steps of the front. A well-constructed frenchie should have great freedom of movement, with good reach and drive.



Temperament



“Full of courage, yet with clown-like qualities. Vivacious, deeply affectionate, intelligent.”

These words describe him perfectly. French Bulldogs make wonderful companions and these characteristics should be apparent in his expression and demeanor.

Hopefully some of these details will remain with you as you continue in your judging career. The French Bulldog is truly difficult to assess without thorough knowledge and understanding of its unique and remarkable features.

To quote Tom Horner *“Judging is both an art and a science: it is an art because the decisions with which a judge is constantly faced are very often based on considerations of an intangible nature that cannot be recognised and assessed without some artistic sense. Such things as type, quality, expression and balance cannot be described adequately in exact terms; they have to be recognised intuitively. It is also a science because without a sound knowledge of a dog’s points and anatomy a judge cannot make a proper assessment of it whether it is standing or in motion.”* [Take them round please The Art of Judging Dogs by Tom Horner published in 1975]

References:

Breed Standard Extension:

<http://frenchbulldogclubnsw.asn.au/resources/FBCNSW%20Breed%20Extension.pdf>

French Bulldog Club of NSW Inc: <http://frenchbulldogclubnsw.asn.au>

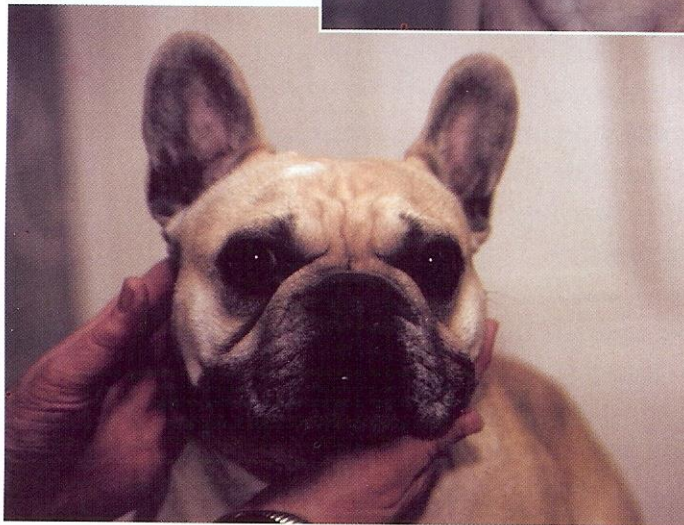
Good Judgment the New Judge’s Guide to Dog Showing and the Showing

by Peggy Grayson 1997 Kingdom Books England

Judging the Bull Breeds

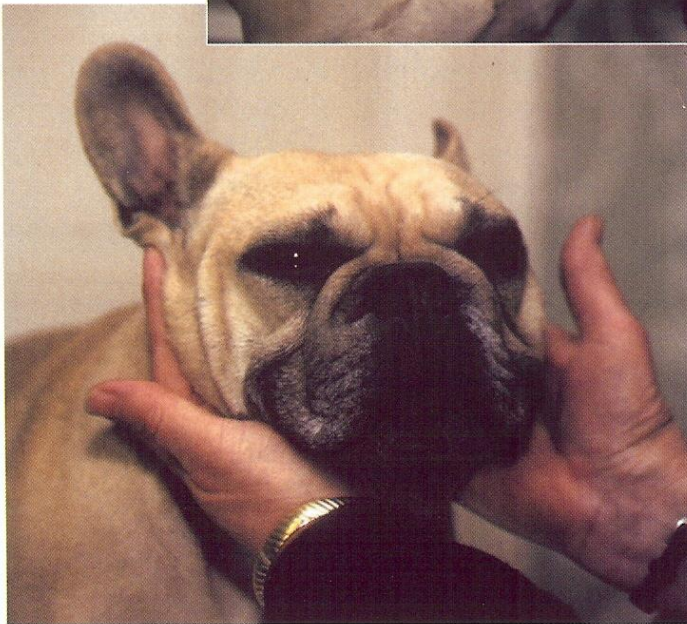
The bull (*brachycephalic*) breeds have many characteristics in common in head properties, width of chest and general make and shape. The French Bulldog illustrates how these breeds should be judged.

- 1. The first impression of the head, looking at expression and the ear carriage.**



- 2. Checking eyes and packing under them, looking for wide open nostrils and well fitted flews (lips), which should not hang too loose or hang below the jaw line.**

- 3. Feeling depth of stop and flatness of skull between the ears.**



- 4. Hands feeling width of underjaw and steadying head ready to check jaw and dentition.**

Judging the Bull Breeds



5. The correct method of handling the mouth of the brachycephalic breeds. Place both hands under the lower jaw and use the thumbs to flip up the flews to reveal not only the teeth but the all-important jaw line on either side. It is quite impossible to judge whether the jaw is wry or not merely by looking at or feeling the front teeth.

6. Feeling depth and width of chest, checking legs are straight, and feet the right shape.





7. Feeling the neck and shoulder line, depth of rib and cut up. Next check the hind limbs and bend of the stifle.

9. Last look at the rear, checking for straight hocks. This chap is standing rather too wide behind.

