

# The Chinese Shar-Pei

## An Introduction For AKC Judges

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# Welcome!



# Breed History

## Ancient breed

- Originating in the Village of Tai Li in Kwang Tung Province
- Existed in southern provinces since Han Dynasty (200 B.C.)
- Statues of dogs resembling CSP date to this period
- 13<sup>th</sup> century manuscript refers to wrinkled dog with characteristic of CSP



# The Name Shar-Pei

Literally translates to “sand-skin”

Loosely translated “sand-paper-like coat”

Refers to two distinct qualities of CSP coat

- shortness
- roughness

Plural (No plural in the Chinese language)

Shar-Pei, same as singular **NOT** Shar-Peis



# Why the unique body shape?

The function of the Shar-Pei as a guard dog required this profile. Imagine a dog's body language. A dominant dog has a highly raised tail, head held high, scowling expression. The old standard actually stated a "warrior like stance" There is no need for the Shar-Pei to be the aggressor as the stance said "don't mess with me".



# What were they bred for?

- Utilitarian
- Hunting
- Guarding
- Fighting
- Herding
- Used as food
- used as clothing

Most likely an out-crossing of breed(s) of that time. Possibly a common ancestor of the Chow. No one knows for sure.

Occasionally a long coated Shar-Pei will result. They are called a bear coat which is a major fault due to coat length.

# Even today the Shar-Pei exhibits strong instincts to:

- Hunt
- Guard home and livestock
- Herd
- Track





# VERSATILITY

The breed today enjoys many roles

**Show dog**



**Obedience**



**Agility**



**C  
o  
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**Therapy**





# Why the wrinkles?

It is believed the wrinkles were an asset to a fighting dog

- ✓ Increased skin allowed them to turn on attacker
- ✓ The dark pigment in the mouth was thought to ward off evil spirits.
- ✓ Skin contains a heavy mucous (mucin) that promotes healing and quick sealing of a wound.
- ✓ The short coat has barbs at the end of the guard hairs that attackers avoided.
- ✓ Shar-Pei were not successful as fighters, as they were no match for the bigger breeds. It was also said they didn't have the heart for it.

# Cultural Revolution

狗

1964 HKKK

- Hong Kong, Republic of China
- Registered by Hong Kong Kennel club (1968)
- Mao Se Tung ordered the slaughter of all dogs
- A few remained in the remote farms
- Arrival in U.S. circa 1966
  - American Dog Breeders Association: 10/8/70
  - Matgo Law's article in Life Magazine "Save the Chinese Shar-Pei"
  - Evidence in old stud books of Chinese Fighting Dogs being here in the 60's



# **Chinese Shar-Pei Club of America CSPCA**

- Founded 1974**
- First National Specialty 1978**
- AKC Miscellaneous Breed 1988**
- Accepted in Non-Sporting 1992**
  
- Many of the early dogs can still be traced in pedigrees today.**



# Progress of last 30 years

- World's rarest dog in 1971 with 6 living specimens (Guinness)
- 29,263 registered when accepted into AKC Miscellaneous Class (5/4/88)
- Nearly 70,000 when accepted into AKC Stud Book (8/15/92)

## Standardization of breed type

- Size
- Style
- Pigmentation
- Heads
- Structure
- Improvement of temperament

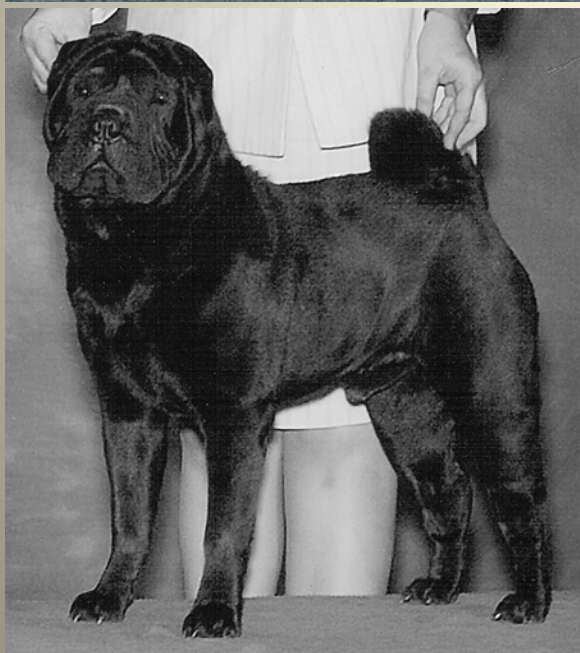


# General Appearance



An **alert, compact dog of medium size and substance; square** in profile, close-coupled; the **well proportioned head slightly, but not overly large for the body.** The **short, harsh coat**, the loose skin covering the head and body, the small ears, the "**hippopotamus**" **muzzle shape and the high set tail** impart to the Shar-Pei a unique look peculiar to him alone. The loose skin and wrinkles covering the head, neck and body are superabundant in puppies but these features may be limited to the head, neck and withers in the adult

# GENERAL APPEARANCE



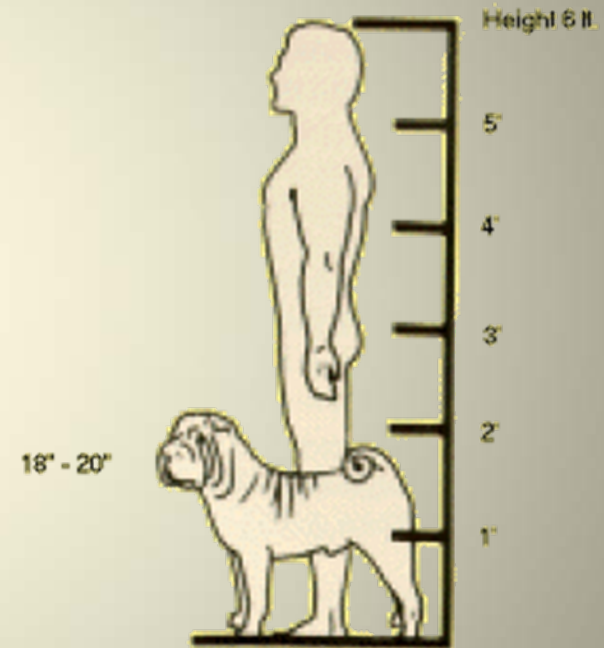
# Size and Proportion

## Size

The height is 18 to 20 inches at the withers. The weight is 45 to 60 pounds. **The dog is usually larger and more square-bodied than the bitch but both appear well proportioned.**

## Proportion

The height of the Shar- Pei from the ground to the withers is approximately equal to the length from the point of breastbone to the point of rump.



# Head

**Head** - Large, slightly but not overly, **proudly carried** and covered with profuse wrinkles on the forehead continuing into side wrinkles framing the face.

**Eyes**- Dark, small, almond-shaped and sunken, displaying a **scowling expression**. In the dilute colored dogs the eye color may be lighter.

**Ears** - Extremely **small** rather **thick**, equilateral **triangles** in shape, slightly rounded at the tips, edges of the ear may curl. **Ears lie flat** against the head, are **set high, wide** apart and forward on the skull, pointing toward the eyes. **The ears have the ability to move.** A *pricked ear is a disqualification.*

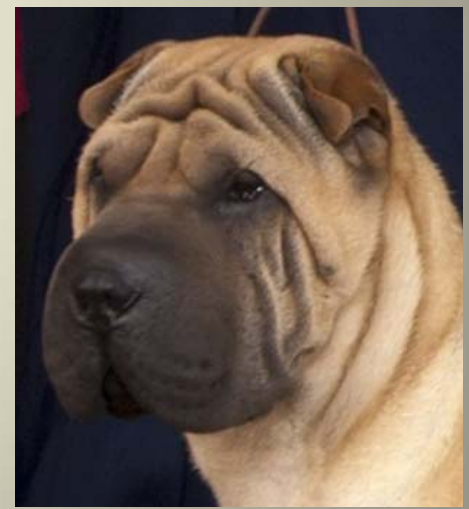


Classic Shar-Pei Scowl



# Head Examples

Note consistency of wrinkles framing face, head wrinkles, ears pointing towards eyes, deep set almond eyes and abundant dewlap. Older dogs may have less padding on the muzzle which is not to be penalized.



# The Body



A Shar-Pei is to be square and compact.

Watch for length of body as compared to its height. Do not reward 'too long' or 'too short' backed.

The short, harsh coat, the loose skin covering the head and body, the small ears, the “hippopotamus” muzzle shape and the high tail set impart to the Shar-Pei a unique look peculiar to him alone.

The loose skin and wrinkles covering the head, neck and body are superabundant in puppies but these features may be limited to the head, neck and withers in the adult.

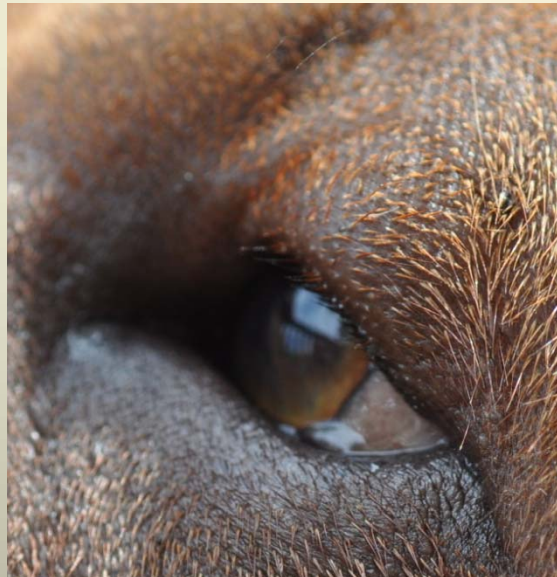




**Eyes** - *The Chinese Shar Pei standard calls for a deep set eye and scowling expression, it is important to reward dogs that exemplify those qualities and appear to have healthy eyes. Probing eye inspections are discouraged and will most likely cause the dog to tightly close their eyes! The eye should be free of squinting, ectropion, entropion, discoloration, or excessive weepiness.*

*The eye is best viewed with a HANDS OFF approach.*

If you as a judge think that you will be able to see evidence of entropion surgery, you may be mistaken. Some dogs with desired, well placed, natural creases and good eye conformation have been wrongly penalized. Be aware that it is difficult to see evidence of entropion surgery unless a very poor outcome resulted.





**Ears** - curled on left, flat on right. One type is not preferred over the other. The set is the focus. Ears are extremely small, rather thick, equilateral triangles.

Ears are extremely small, rather thick, equilateral triangles slightly rounded at the tips.

Ears lie flat against the head, are set wide apart and forward on the skull, pointing toward the eyes. The ears have the ability to move.

**Pricked ears are a disqualification**

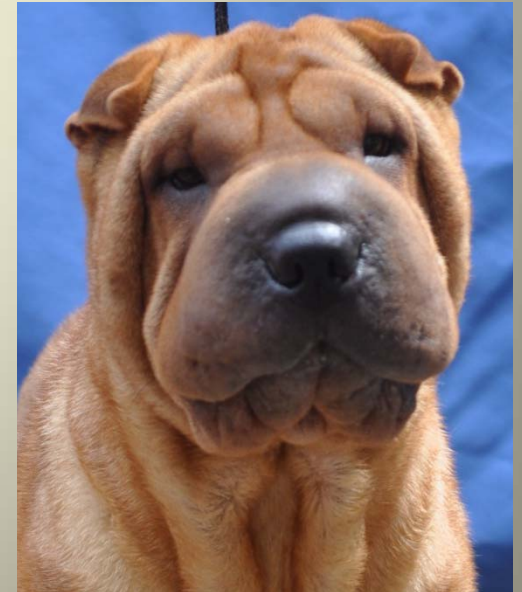


Correct ear set can best be assessed when the dog is fully alert. When the dog is alert, the ears should lie flat against the head. The ears can be quite mobile, and be used independently to locate sounds. They are the eyes in the back of their heads. A Shar- Pei should never be faulted for mobile ears. Even if ears are mobile they should return to correct positioning when alert and listening.

**Mobile Ears are Normal**



**Ears pointing  
Towards eyes**



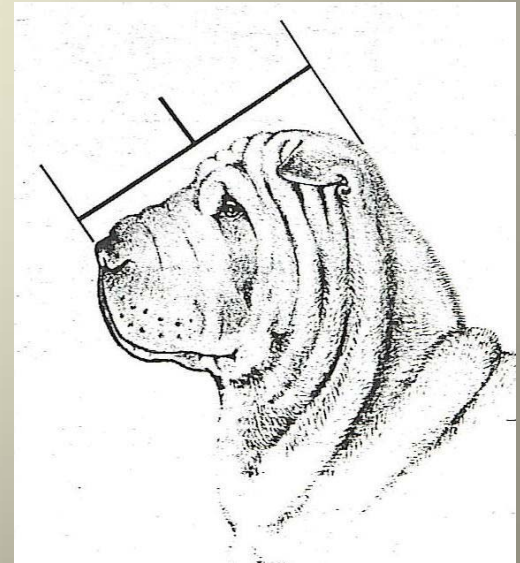
# ■ Skull

Flat and broad, the stop moderately defined

# ■ Muzzle

One of the distinctive features of the breed. It is broad and full with no suggestion of snippiness.

The length from nose to stop is approximately the same as from stop to occipital bone.





# Nose

- Large and wide and darkly pigmented, preferably black but any color nose conforming to the general coat color of the dog is acceptable.
- In dilute colors, the preferred nose is self-colored.



- Darkly pigmented cream Shar-Pei may have some light pigment either in the center of their noses or on their entire nose.



- The lips and top of the muzzle are well padded and may cause a slight bulge at the base of the nose.



# Mouth

Solid bluish-black is preferred in all coat colors except dilute colors, which have a solid lavender pigmentation. Below is non-dilute on the left and dilute on the right.

- **A spotted tongue is a major fault.**
- **A solid pink tongue is a disqualification.**



Non dilute  
mouth pigment



Dilute  
mouth pigment

# Scissor Bite



It is suggested the judge allow the handler to show the bite, mouth and tongue

**Deviation from a scissor bite is a major fault.**

*There is no mention of full dentition in the currently approved standard*

Tongue colors may lighten due to heat stress; care must be taken not to confuse dilute pigmentation with a pink tongue!

**Pink spots on tongue are a major fault**



# Neck, Top line, Body

**Neck-**

**Medium length, full and set well into the shoulders.**





# **Top line** - dips slightly behind withers and rises slightly over the short, broad loin

- Not a sway back
- Not a “saddleback”
- No roaching
- No dropping of top line at base of tail

## **Chest**

- Broad and deep
- Brisket extends to the elbow, rising slightly under the loin
- Proportion - The height of the ground to the withers is approximately equal to length of point of rump

# Top lines



## Back

**Short and close coupled**

**Croup Flat**

**Base of tail set extremely high**

**Clearly exposes an up-tilted anus**

# **Top lines should not go level when moving**

Judge the top line twice; standing still AND moving



# Tail

- The high set tail is a characteristic feature of the Shar-Pei
- Thick and round at base
- Tapers to a fine point
- Curling over OR to either side of the back
- **Absence of a complete tail is a disqualification**



# Correct Tails and Sets

The degree of curl is a non factor. The tail set and the fact that it is over OR to either side of the back should be the focus.



# Forequarters

## Shoulders

- Muscular, well laid back and sloping
- Forelegs - when viewed from the front, straight, moderately spaced, with elbows close to the body When viewed from the side, the forelegs are straight Top of withers to point of chest should be approximately equal as should point of chest to point of elbow. This is best felt on the dog in order to properly locate these landmarks. If the shoulder angles are correct proper front movement will most likely occur.



# Hindquarters

- Muscular, strong, and moderately angulated
- Metatarsi (hocks) are short, perpendicular to the ground and parallel to each other when viewed from rear
- Hind dewclaws must be removed
- Feet, compact



# Coat

**The extremely harsh coat is one of the distinguishing features of the Shar-Pei**

- Straight and off-standing on the main trunk of the body but generally lies somewhat flatter on the limbs
- Appears healthy without being shiny or lustrous





# Coat Length

- Acceptable coat lengths may range from extremely short (“horse coat”) up to the “brush coat”; never to exceed one inch in length at the withers
- **A soft coat, a wavy coat, a coat in excess of 1” in length at the withers or a coat that has been trimmed is a major fault**
- The Shar-Pei is shown in its natural state

# Horse Coat



- *The “brush coat,” while not as short as the “horse coat,” should have harsh texture.*
- *Although “Shar-Pei” means “sandy coat,” the “brush coat” (up to one inch in length at the withers) is as acceptable as the “horse coat.”*
- ***One coat should not be preferred over the other***



# Brush Coat



Wooly look of a brush coat puppy



# Color

## **Only solid colors are acceptable**

- A solid colored dog may have shading, primarily darker down the back and on the ears. Any pattern is a DQ. You should not be able to follow a line of demarcation between colors or variation of color. This can be seen on the chest in a butterfly pattern, or on the legs.
- The shading must be variations of the same body color (except in sables) and may include darker hairs throughout the coat.
- ANY solid color is acceptable.

Normal  
Shading



# Some Correct Shar-Pei Colors

**Red fawn**



**Blue**



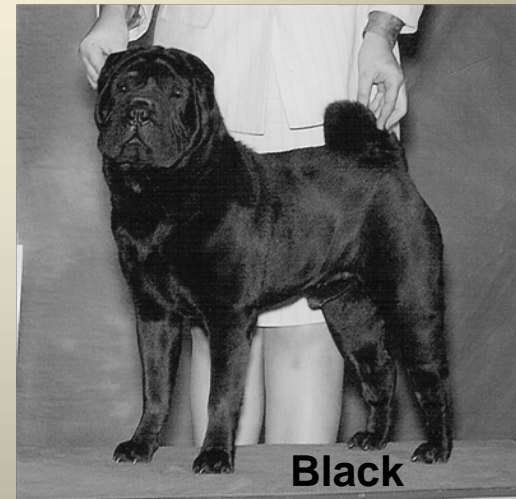
**Red**



**Fawn**



**Silver Sable**



**Black**

# Colors

Cream, note black pigment  
Apricot *dilute* NO black pigment.

Pigmented Cream



Apricot Dilute



# Dilutes

- The eye color may be lighter (but not blue or green).
- The tongue/flews/mouth may be solid lavender.
- **Tongues may lighten in heat or stress (panting) take care not to confuse a lightened lavender tongue with a pink tongue.**
- Body pigmentation will be self-colored.



Dilutes will have self colored pigment and  
**NO** black pigment



# DQ's in Color

**The following colors are a disqualifying fault:**

- Not a solid color, i.e., albino, brindle, parti-colored
- *If you can follow a line of demarcation between two colors it is a parti-colored dog*
- Spotted, including spots, ticks and roaning
- Tan-pointed pattern, including Black & Tan and/or saddled patterns

# Understanding Sable

- Sable is an accepted color in the Shar-Pei
- Our standard defines the Sable Shar-Pei as:
- ***A lacing of black hairs over a lighter ground color. TWO separate colored hairs – one black and one a lighter color (not white). The coat color is UNIFORM over the body, neck, head and legs. Very little variation.***
- Please note that this differs from the standard definition of a sable which describes black TIPS on a lighter colored hair.

# Sable compared to a patterned



**Correct Sable – note even color**



**Not a sable – note saddle pattern**



# Gait

- The movement of a Shar-Pei is to be judged at a **trot on a loose lead**.
- The gait is free and balanced
- Feet tend to **converge on a center line of gravity\*** when the dog moves at a vigorous trot
- The gait combines good forward reach and a strong rear drive.

\* *Not to be confused with single track*

Proper movement is essential.  
Shar-Pei should be gaited on a loose lead at a trot.



# Correct coming/going

Converging on a Center Line of Gravity





# Temperament

Regal  
Alert  
Intelligent  
Dignified  
Lordly  
Scowling





# Temperament

- Sober
- Snobbish
- Essentially independent and standoffish with strangers
- Extreme in devotion to family
- Due to their function as a guard dog they are not to be welcoming to strangers  
Don't feel offended by their "snubbing you" they are being a Shar-Pei!

# The Best Approach



Due to the deep set eyes and framing of the eyes by wrinkles, the Shar-Pei has limited peripheral vision and can be startled if approached from the top.

A Shar-Pei should be approached from the front.

# Major Faults

Deviation from a Scissors Bite

Spotted Tongue

A Soft Coat, a Wavy Coat

A coat in excess of 1"

at the withers

A coat that has been trimmed

# **Disqualifications**

- 1. Pricked ears**
- 2. Solid pink tongue**
- 3. Absence of a complete tail**
- 4. Not a solid color**



# Tips for Judges

- Always approach from the front. Never approach the breed from above. Due to limited peripheral vision they don't see your approach.
- Please have a gentle confident touch.
- **Do not try to pry the eyes open. The best way to examine the eyes is to not touch them!!!**
- Do not expect a terrier type expression, ignoring you is actually proper Shar-Pei temperament.
- Check coat texture by sliding back of hand across the top line from tail to shoulder.
- Some Shar-Pei have a tight lower lip, this makes examining the bite very difficult. It is preferable to ask the exhibitor to show the bite.
- The Shar-Pei is NOT simply a head breed.
- Keep in mind the word **balance**.
- They are “standoffish” with strangers.
- Judge at a trot on a loose lead.

# Thank you for attending!

The end...

