A Fresh Look at Faces

By Christi McDonald

From the AKC standard for the Brussels Griffon:
Jaws must be undershot. The lower jaw is prominent, rather broad with an upward sweep. **Nose** (...) extremely short, its tip being set back deeply between the eyes so as to form a lay-back. The nostrils large.
Photo courtesy Lorene Vickers Smith and the American Brussels Griffon Association.

From the AKC standard for the Japanese Chin:
Skull – In profile, the forehead and muzzle touch on the same vertical plane of a right angle whose horizontal plane is the top of the skull. **Nose** – very short with wide, open nostrils (...) upturned. **Bite** – The jaw is wide and slightly undershot.
Illustrations by Peggy Holladay from the JCCA Illustrated Standard, used with express permission of the Japanese Chin Club of America.

From the AKC standard for the Shih Tzu:
Muzzle – (...) never downturned. Front of muzzle should be flat; lower lip and chin not protruding and definitely never receding.
Nose – Nostrils are broad, wide and open.
Bite – Undershot.
Illustrations used with kind permission of the American Shih Tzu Club, from the ASTC Illustrated Standard.

The Pug breed standard says that the muzzle is "not upfaced," while "upface" is the ideal in the Brussels Griffon. The English Toy Spaniel is to have a nose "well laid back," while the Affenpinscher nose should be "neither turned up nor down."

What exactly do these terms mean, and how do they influence the breeds when looked at in profile? We decided to look at the AKC breed standards for seven Toy breeds and three Non-Sporting breeds that are considered brachycephlic, and have distinct profiles. Broken down, "brachy" means short, and "cephalic" means head; thus these are breeds that have a short distance from occiput to the end of the muzzle. The Toy breeds include the Affenpinscher, Brussels Griffon, English Toy Spaniel, Japanese Chin, Pekingese, Pug and Shih Tzu, and the Non-Sporting breeds are the Bulldog, French Bulldog and the Boston Terrier. The profile view of each of these breeds is very important and contributes to breed character.

To make accurate comparisons of each of these breeds in profile, we have included descriptions of muzzles, jaws and bites for these 10 breeds from their standards. In consideration for increasing concern for health and for breeders who want to make certain that they breed for characteristics that will not contribute to health concerns — i.e., that their dogs will not have difficulty breathing, for instance — we have also included relevant descriptions for nostrils, from the breed standards where they exist. We have also utilized several drawings that parent clubs have used in their illustrated breed standards, which provide very useful depictions of the profile that is ideal. For breeds where an illustrated standard is not available we have provided an illustration or photo of the breed, in profile where possible. I was not able to get an illustration for the Affenpinscher.

UPFACE OR NOT?

Several elements contribute to the profiles of these breeds, whether upface or not. First consider bites. Of the seven Toy breeds, four — the Affenpinscher, English Toy Spaniel, Japanese Chin and Pug — call for the bite to be "slightly undershot" — with the Pug standard specifying "very slightly" — while the Griffon, Peke and Shih Tzu simply say "undershot." (The Affen standard also says "A level bite is acceptable if the monkey-like expression is maintained.") Excepting the Pug, all of these Toy standards mention that the lips must cover the teeth, and all except the Chin standard specify that the teeth must not show when the mouth is closed — indeed the Affen, Griffon, Pekingese and Shih Tzu standards all say that the teeth "and tongue" do not show. Japanese Chin breeder and Toy authority

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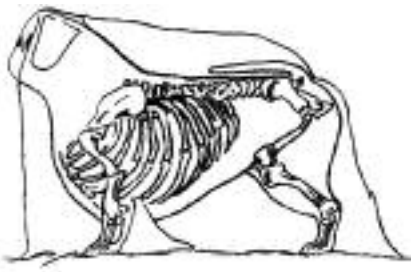
From the AKC standard for the Affenpinscher:
Muzzle – Short and narrowing slightly to a blunt nose. The length of the muzzle is approximately the same as the distance between the eyes. **Nose** – (...) turned neither up nor down. **Bite** – Slightly undershot.

From the AKC standard for the English Toy Spaniel:
Muzzle – Very short, with the nose well laid back... **Jaw** – Square, broad, and deep, and well turned up... **Nose** – Large (...) with large, wide open nostrils. **Bite** – slightly undershot; teeth not to show.
Illustration Tom Kimball.

From the AKC standard for the Pug:
The **muzzle** is short, blunt, square, but not upfaced. **Bite** – A Pug's bite should be very slightly undershot.
Illustration Tom Kimball.



From the AKC standard for the Pekingese:
Face – In profile, the face is flat. When viewed from the side, the chin, nose leather and brow all lie in one plane, which slants very slightly backward from chin to forehead. **Nose** – It is broad (...) Nostrils are wide and open rather than pinched. **Mouth** – The lower jaw is undershot and broad.
Illustration courtesy Pekingese Club of America.

From the AKC standard for the Boston Terrier:
The **muzzle** is short, square, wide and deep (...) The muzzle from stop to end of the nose is parallel to the top of the skull. The **jaw** is broad and square with short regular teeth. The **bite** is even or sufficiently undershot to square the muzzle. **Head faults**: Pinched or wide nostrils.
Photo by Thos. Fall, U.K., the Countess of Essex's imported Million Dollar Boy Blue.

Sari Tietjen affirms that this is also true for the Chin: "The Japanese Chin standard calls for the muzzle to be 'short and broad with well-cushioned cheeks and rounded upper lips that cover the teeth.' Although it does not specifically say that the teeth and/or tongue must not show, it is implied as a dog would not have the proper finish and look desired for the breed." The Pug standard does not address whether or how the lips cover the teeth, or whether or not the teeth or tongue may show, but Pug breeder and Toy judge Charlotte Patterson said, "The teeth or tongue should never show on a Pug when the mouth is closed. If they have the proper 'slightly undershot' bite they will never show teeth or tongue."

Thus the reality is that all of these Toy breeds, with the possible exception of the Affenpinscher, should have essentially the same bite: "the front teeth of the lower jaw overlapping the front teeth of the upper jaw when the mouth is closed," with neither the teeth nor tongue showing. (*The AKC Complete Dog Book,* 2006.)

THAT PRIZED EXPRESSION

AKC judge Lorene Vickers-Smith, who has bred both Pugs and Brussels Griffons, when asked to define the term "upface" based on the Pug standard requirement that the breed be "not upfaced," used the ideal profile of the Brussels Griffon as description: "What 'upface' means is that the chin sticks out and dominates the expression. Brussels Griffons are supposed to be 'upfaced.' We call it lay-back in Griffons and it is the prized and correct expression."

What really contributes primarily to the upface profile is the placement and "lay back" of the nose and the upturn of the chin. Both the Griffon and the ETS standards call for the nose to be laid back – meaning that the front of the nose leather is tipped toward the sky as opposed to being on a vertical plane — with an "upward sweep" and "well turned up" jaw, respectively. The Chin nose is to be "upturned" and his forehead and muzzle are on the same plane, while in the Peke, which has a truly "flat" face, the forehead ("brow"), muzzle ("chin") and nose leather are on the same vertical plane — in other words, without the upturn of the nose itself. The Shih Tzu standard says specifically that the nose is "turned neither up nor down" and the Affen nose also turns "neither up nor down." Thus we have three breeds that can be called "upfaced" — the Griffon, English Toy Spaniel and Japanese Chin — while the other four — the Affen, Peke, Pug and Shih Tzu — cannot be called "upfaced."

Simplified — if you laid a pencil on the profile of the Pug, the pencil would touch the forehead, nose and chin, with no "light" between. Indeed the same applies to the Peke, except that in the Pekingese that entire plane on which the pencil lies flat "slants very slightly backward from chin to forehead," while the Pug profile is somewhat more vertical.

BULLS AND BOSTONS

Although the Boston Terrier can be called brachycephalic with its "short, square, wide and deep" muzzle, in profile the muzzle, from the stop to the front of the nose, is parallel to the top of the skull, with no upturn of the nose. Likewise the bite is either even or just undershot enough to "square the muzzle," with no upturn of the jaw, giving the Boston a vertical profile.

The breed standards for both the Bulldog and the French

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From the BCA Illustrated Standard:
"When a straight edge is placed against the head in the furrow between the eyes, it should touch the tip of the lower lip, tip of nose, and top of head. This is called the 'layback' in Bulldogs and should be about a 45 degree angle."

Head Faults:

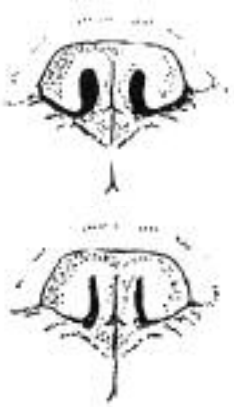
Incorrect Layback

Nosey

Dishfaced

Short Headed – Lacking Thrust of Jaw

From the AKC standard for the Bulldog:
Face and Muzzle – The face, measured from the front of the cheekbone to the tip of the nose, should be extremely short, the muzzle being very short, broad, turned upward (...) **Nose** – The nostrils should be wide, large (...) **Bite – Jaws** – "undershot," the lower jaw projecting considerably in front of the upper jaw and turning up.
Illustrations used with kind permission of the Bulldog Club of America, from the BCA Illustrated Standard.



From the FBCA Illustrated Standard:
Top, correct nares – Bottom, incorrect (pinched) nares.

From the FBCA Illustrated Standard:
"Correct lower jaw upturn."

From the AKC standard for the French Bulldog:
The **muzzle** broad, deep and well laid back (…) nostrils broad. The **underjaw** is deep, square, broad, undershot and well turned up. Illustrations used with kind permission of the French Bulldog Club of America, from the FBCA Illustrated Standard.

Faces, *Cont. from page 4*

Bulldog call for undershot bites, with the muzzle and the jaw to be turned up. The Frenchie standard repeats the phraseology "well laid back" in regard to the muzzle and its illustrated standard indicates the specific upsweep of the jaw. The Bulldog standard emphasizes that the bite is undershot with the lower jaw projecting "considerably" in front of the upper jaw. The illustrated AKC Bulldog standard, a wonderful document that brings every detail of the breed into sharp focus, calls the undershot jaw "the Bulldog's most unique physical characteristic," and affirms that it is a result of form following function, as this characteristic allowed a "lockjaw" hold on the bull's flesh when the breed fulfilled its original use of bullbaiting. Likewise the "well laid back" nose allowed the dog to breathe while keeping his grip on the bull, and the wrinkles of the forehead and face funneled the bull's blood away from the nose and eyes of the dog.

In the Bulldog, when the pencil is laid upon the profile it will touch the forehead, the tip of the lower lip and also the tip of the nose, but not the full surface of the nose. The ideal Bulldog profile is laid back to such a degree, in fact 45 degrees, that while the nose itself is not upturned, the lay back of the forehead and the "considerable" projection or "thrust" of the lower jaw give the breed that "upface" profile.

The French Bulldog standard calls for a "well laid back" muzzle, which gives the same affect as the well laid back "nose" in the Griffon and the English Toy Spaniel, and the "well turned up" jaw of the Frenchie also contributes to a profile similar to the upface Toy breeds.

PRESERVING OPEN AIRWAYS

Today the wide open, large nostrils called for in the Bulldog breed standard are important because they contribute to an open airway. Note that when different characteristics in the Bulldog are given a point value, the nose — with its requirement for "nostrils large, wide" — has the highest value of any item in the standard with six points.

Indeed, wide open nostrils and open airways are of the utmost importance to all brachycephalic breeds. Of the 10 breeds covered here, seven join the Bulldog standard in calling for large and/or open nostrils: the Brussels Griffon "large," the ETS "large, wide open," the Chin and Pekingese "wide" and "open" with the Peke standard specifying "rather than pinched," the Shih Tzu leaving no doubt by calling for "nostrils broad, wide and open," and the Frenchie "nostrils broad." The Boston standard, under head faults, lists "pinched or wide nostrils."

Again, in light of recent controversy about certain breed-specific physical traits that allegedly cause hardship for some purebred dogs, some fanciers are making concentrated efforts to begin rectifying any problem in their breeds. The Pekingese Club of America has made available on its website under "Pekingese Health" several articles on the subject of restricted airways, including "Brachycephalic Airway Syndrome" and "The Breath of Life" by Terill Udenberg, DVM, as well as other articles of interest on the subject. (Visit *www.thepekingeseclubofamerica.com.*)

A note from the writer: Illustrated breed standards are invaluable — irreplaceable — tools for a solid understanding of a breed. Those parent clubs that have put in the time and effort required to create a really good illustrated standard are to be commended. Others are mentioned above, but those of the American Shih Tzu Club and the Japanese Chin Club of America are also exceptional. Many other AKC parent clubs have also created very good illustrated standards. DR