

The Keeshond...A Smiling Touch of Dutch

By origin, it is a member of the spitz family of dogs and is related to the Norwegian Elkhound, The Chow Chow, the Finnish Spitz and the Pomeranian. The Spitz breed is characterized by a long, dense coat, erect, pointed ears and a tail that curls over the back. The Keeshond takes its name from "Kees" a dog owned by Cornelius de Gyzelaar (Kees was the nickname for Cornelius). Gyzelaar was the leader of the Patriot Party in politically torn, 18th century Holland. Because Kees was Gyzelaar's constant companion, the dog became the symbol of the Patriot Party. The Pug was the official dog of the ruling opposition - the House of Orange. This decree occurred in 1572 after one saved the live of Prince William at the battle for Hermingny. The Pug woke up the sleeping prince by barking just before the enemy attacked. After the House of Orange successfully quelled a revolt by the Patriot Party, most Dutch no longer were eager to be associated with the rebellion of the defeated Patriot Party. Fearing for their own well-being, they abandoned their Keeshonden. A few farmers and barge captains kept their dogs. Unfortunately , the breed's safe haven aboard the barges was short lived. With the development of larger vessels, larger breeds could be accommodated aboard them. Thus the Keeshond population further declined to the point of near extinction by the early 19th century. The Keeshond finally enjoyed a revival in popularity in the 1920's at English shows were bred by J.D. van der Blom. Her dogs were the result of cross breeding between the Dutch Keeshonden and the German Wolfsspitze.



Among the characteristics that recommend the Keeshond is the sunny disposition that underlies their "smiling" expression, causing them to view everyone as their friend. Therefore, although they announce visitors by barking, they almost never are aggressive because they love to meet new people. Keeshonden are highly adaptable. They can live in almost any setting, but because they are compact, they adapt especially well to small spaces. While a daily walk of between 20 to 30 minutes is optimally desirable, the breed readily adjusts to the sedentary lifestyle of inactive owners. They are very intelligent and train very easily. Keeshonds require only a soft gentle correction due to their strong desire to please. Keeshonds live for their owner. They want to be wherever you are. They will follow you as you journey throughout the days routine. The Keeshond is appealing not only because of its "bred to be a companion" personality, but also because of its distinctive, elegant appearance. In particular, it has one of the plushest marked coats in all of dogdom. Colorwise, its coat is a mixture of cream, black and gray. The undercoat is pale gray or cream but never tawny (many wool spinners use this undercoat to spin wool for making soft clothing). The outer coat is tipped in black, creating an overall shaded effect. Its trademark "spectacles" are the result of markings and shadings around the eyes. A thick ruff at the neck, feathering on the front legs, trousers on

the hind legs and a plumb like tail give the breed a sumptuous appearance. From a practical point of view, its long, straight, harsh outer coat and thick downy undercoat effectively insulate the breed from all weather conditions. Weekly grooming of a Keeshond's fur with a pin brush and slicker brush is required to maintain a healthy coat and continued sumptuous appearance.

Potential owners should consider the following:

- - Are you willing to groom your Keeshond in order to keep shedding under control?
 - Are you willing to train your Keeshond to control excessive barking?

These are the two primary reasons cited for abandonment by owners.

Unless barking is under control, a person who resides in an apartment complex definitely is not the right type of owner.

You must want to be a companion to your dog. When Keeshonds do not get enough attention, they're destructive like any lonesome dog.

Kenneling is not recommended. Keeshonds are house dogs that require touching and cuddling and social contact with their owners.

Keeshonds are bred solely to be a companion. Those who have neither the time nor inclination to make their dog an integral part of their lives should think twice before adding a Keeshond to their families.