

**Barbet with a capital B for Barbet, the breed.**

**FCI standard no.105 2006**



### **Breed Type:**

***Here's a short definition of breed type: "that collection of specific characteristics which, when taken together, separate one breed from another" (Patrick Ormos, "The Importance of Breed Type", American Kennel Club Gazette, December 1991, p. 72). For example: Breed type enables us to tell the difference between the Poodle, the Barbet, the Portuguese Water Dog and the Puli.***

Courtesy: <http://www.poodlehistory.org/PSHOW.HTM>

Key words: French rare breed, rustic dog, water, marsh, hunter, gentle companion.

### **1. Definition: small b for a generic dog with a beard and a long coat:**

According to the DICTIONNAIRE ETYMOLOGIQUE RT HISTORIQUE, by Larousse. 1964, the definition of the word barbet dates back as far as 1540 for a dog, "homme barbu" and "chien barbet". There were no breeds defined yet, only types of dogs, according to the work they performed and their coats. The word barbet has different definitions.

**barbet:** common word generic description for a dog with a long coat, a beard and a mustache regardless of its size or color.

**barbette, bar-bichon, barbichette** (female-little beard), **barbone** (big beard)...all derive from the same root: **barbe** in French, meaning beard, 1540. At that time, it had nothing to do with the Breed!

However:

**B**arbet: proper name designates the breed with a standard from 1886, ratified in 1894. Also called Vieux Barbet, Griffon Barbet, Barbet d'arrêt. A gundog/pointer, who can swim extremely well.

<http://www.linguee.fr/francais-anglais/search?source=auto&query=chien+courant>

<http://www.linguee.fr/francais-anglais/search?source=auto&query=chien+d%27arr%EAt>



Tenture dame à la licorne, circa 1500. Cluny museum. Paris, France



LES LIVRES DU ROY MODUS ET DE LA REINE RATIO, B Bousmanne. Bibliothèque royale de Belgique

Furetiere: Edition 1690

#### CHIENS

Barbets, sont chiens fisés qui chassent le nez bas quand le gibier fuit et le nez haut quand il demeure. Ils l'arrêtent sur terre et dans l'eau. Leur principale nature est de rapporter et ce sont les plus fidèles chiens du monde qui ne veulent connaître qu'un maître et ne le perdent jamais de vue. On les appelle aussi chiens à gros poil.

Trevoux Edition 1752

#### BARBET, ETTE f - m et p

- chien à gros poil et frisé qui va à l'eau et qu'on dresse à la chasse des canards : ce qui fait qu'on l'appelle aussi canard et la femelle canne (longioris atque crispi villi canis). On tond les Barbets et de leur poil on fait des chapeaux. Voyez chiens.

MOUCHE et PLUTONNE : c'est le nom de deux Barbettes de renom qui sont vos très humbles servantes (Mercure de Fce Février 1732)

Recherches effectuées par Madame RIPERT.

Curly dogs, retrievers, loyal. Dogs with a big coat (dense) 1690. Poodles.  
Duck dog, they are shaved and hats are made of their coat. Poodles.  
Mouche and Plutonne :poodles in 1732

French references to the barbet, generic word, go back to the 1500's, but we are talking about a similar dog as the Poodle. ONLY France calls it a barbet. Grand, petit, regardless of size and type, any dog with a beard and a long coat is a barbet, as in the JB Oudry paintings depicting a barbet/Poodle. These dog types were eventually put into groups and given breed names. One of the barbet types became a Caniche/Poodle, a bichon, a Löwchen, etc...

In the 1860's, kennel clubs were being created and dogs classified into groups. The first dog show took place in 1863.

Many breeds were being perfected for different types of work. Griffons worked in marshland, swamps and ponds which were numerous all over France, Belgium and the Netherlands and game was plentiful.

How to explain as simply as possible and in what language first (French or English), briefly, the history of the Barbet d'arrêt, gundog/pointer in France? We are talking about the period since the mid-1850's or so, when we can be pretty sure the Poodle was a Poodle (chien cane=> caniche, from canard= duck=> duck dog, chien cane), and a barbet still existed as a rustic farm dog with a long coat who was a possible cross between a pointer and a herding dog from the northern countries (that would possibly explain why M Le Houelleur, de Floirac kennel, looking for new blood, crossed a Bouvier de Flandres with a Braque d'Auvergne). That may also explain the resemblance between the English Water Spaniel and the Barbet d'Arrêt.

The barbet, generic type of dog with a long wooly coat mixed with gundogs such as the Griffon Korthals. Baron Korthals was working on "his Griffon", and he used barbet blood, most likely for the undercoat the barbet had, for protection in water.

(An interesting anecdote, in 1970, in a litter of Griffon Korthals, born in the south of France, near the Pyrénées, there was a Barbet. Interesting how nature works after one hundred years).

Emmanuel Boulet's Griffon had barbet blood, too. Much of this breed work was going on near the north of France, and across borders the now rare Smousbaard profited from barbet blood. Also, at that time, Sigismund Freiherr von Zedlitz-Neukirch created the Pupdelpointer.

In 1886, the Barbet was finally given its breed name and a standard was written for it by J de Coninck.

There is barbet blood in the Briard and the Beauceron and several other breeds...This information is also well documented.

The Barbet was in the 7<sup>th</sup> FCI/SCC group of hunting gundogs/pointers (until 1986 when he was moved into the 8<sup>th</sup> group of waterdogs and water retrievers).

## 2. The Poodle and the French confusion:

The Poodle history project references Mrs Rosa Engler's book( among others) and the information about Munito, the poodle as he is named in most countries and barbet as he is named in France. This is an example of how references to the Barbet breed as opposed to the "chien barbet", generic compound noun for any dog with a beard and a mustache, have misled people into thinking it was the same dog. The Barbet standard was written for a gundog/pointer, not a dog that looked like a Poodle.

Below left: Munito and on the right another Poodle from Germany with its very characteristic grooming which the Barbet breed has never had. The Poodle seems to have originated in Germany, or Russia. It just "happened" to become French in the 1930's! The Germans were extremely angry about this, as you can well imagine since they had had clubs around the Poodle and were promoting it (along with the UK).



PONIES are sometimes mocked because their thick, woolly coats are often clipped into lined styles. During certain periods of history at the Innis and Fencer were at logarithmic British circusmen regularly perched on the English as bright, conspicuous, as momentary buildings and the kind of French in pricing people. Foodies' playful indifference, high stepping action and musical attitude for walking on their hind legs also made them adopt circus performance in the days when dogs appeared as such shows, and contributed to the idea that they are not a 'season' breed. In fact, like certain other breeds with dress,

## Munito

Zwischen 1814 und 1818 war der Pudel Munito die große Attraktion. Er zeigte seine Zaubertricks in London und Paris. Auf Plakaten, die auf Munitos Vorstellungen hinwiesen, konnte man folgendes lesen: »Dieser wunderbare Hund kennt das Alphabet, er kann Wörter kopieren und rechnen. Er kennt alle Spielkarten und er kann dem Zuschauer jede gewünschte Karte holen. Er spielt Domino und er zeigt noch viel mehr.«

Munito stammte aus Mailand und wurde von einem Holländer ausgebildet und vorgeführt. In „Educazione del Chiene“ (1866) beschreibt E. de Tarade, wie Munito arbeitete. Er spazierte in einem Kreis von Karren, bis er das Zeichen seines Meisters hörte. Das soll ein feines Klicken der Fingernägel gewesen sein. Beim Erörtnen dieses Zeichens blieb der Vierbeiner sofort stehen und er nahm die vor ihm liegende Karte auf. Munito muss sehr gutes Gehör gehabt haben, denn er hörte das entsprechende Zeichen auch dann, wenn sein Trainer die Hände in die Rocktasche steckte.

Je citerai pour mémoire le chien Barbet "MUNITO", qui a fait les délices de nos jeunes années. En 1829, on exhibait à Londres, deux Barbets qui, assis gravement sur une table, se faisaient un écarté aussi rapidement que deux joueurs de profession. Les tarots étaient étalés devant eux, et chacun à son tour touchait la carte à jouer de sa patte droite. Je laisse à mes lecteurs le soin de deviner le procédé employé par ceux qui avaient donné à ces chiens cet admirable talent de société. Quoiqu'il en fût, cela plaisait à nos contemporains. C'est aussi aux Barbets que l'on enseigna l'art chorégraphique, et les clowns de nos cirques, les saltimbanques de nos places publiques et des foires départementales n'ont affaire qu'avec ceux de cette race."

Résumons ce qui est dit sur le Barbet dans le livre de Monsieur RIVOIL : c'est un chien laid et disgracieux (tous les goûts sont dans la

Between 1814 and 1818.... Munito, the Poodle, and Munito, the barbet.

### 3. The "re-incarnated" Grand barbet era 1980-to date:

In the 1970's, a Jean Claude Hermans owned a poodle and did some research on the breed and its ancestors and found the Barbet, a Griffon which had very few SCC/LOF registrations. As for other breeds there were few births after the wars, which did not mean they were extinct. At the same time, in the south of France, Mrs Pêtre whose father, Dr Vincenti along with M Le Houelleur were dedicated to the Barbet d' Arrêt breed, decided to start breeding again...the rest is history that I have already written about. They Ayme brothers, too along with Miss Postigoand M Sequela.

M Hermans decided to recreate a type of dog with a long coat, a mustache and a beard called a Grand barbet in 1750. This dog from 1750 is the one which became the Poodle as most countries state in their own dog history. This dog would be of his creation and perfection and could be called the Hermans Barbet. He called himself the *father of the Barbet*. He was going to cross poodles by selecting backwards until he reached his objective. How is that scientifically possible? He tried and tried and tried. He managed to make mostly black, extremely tall very curly dense coated dogs. They looked like Poodles.

Promoting a type such as the Grand Barbet from 1750, defying the standard written for a Barbet d'arrêt by modifying it 3 times since 1986 to adapt to production. To many foreigners, not all,

there is a difference! To some Barbetiers, unaware of the history of the breed, a Grand Barbet is still a barbet! How is that possible after almost 300 years!

All the historical Barbet breed and hunter colors were disappearing. The coat of these dogs being extremely thick, difficult to deal with, type of coat very different from the Griffon coat, very easy to manage and keep long as stated in the standard. He based all of his breedings on their coat, never their utility as a waterdog, gundog or retriever. He was not a hunter.

Problems arose between breeders working with a Griffon type dog according to the standard and the others working with Poodle stock. Being in Paris, an SCC judge and close to the top, he empowered himself to make all decisions about the breed's future.

As president of the breed club he created in 1980, M Hermans oversaw and approved all of the dogs being confirmed in France as corresponding to breed type and methodically refused confirmation of any dog not corresponding to the type he had decided on. He decreed that the breed was extinct( which could only happen after 50 years of no SCC registrations). The SCC received many complaints from dog owners and goodwilled breeders. The only way to get around this and keep the breed alive was to go underground and use real Barbet blood, but changing the names of the genitors and making "homemade" pedigrees. This went on for years and years and this is the reason that we can, once the pedigrees are sorted out, on both "sides", rebuild the lines through the many colors the Barbet had in its lines and still does, luckily and the morphology still corresponds to that of a medium-sized gundog.

What M Hermans had managed to accomplish in 15 years was to transform a 100-year old hunting dog breed into a big standard shaved Poodle. The dog was taller and taller and had nothing more to do with the hunter the Barbet d'arrêt was. The irony of this transformation which went totally unquestioned by higher authorities and even judges of the breed in France, was based on the fact that no one knew the history of the Breed Barbet and not one would be interested...



Grand Barbet by Buffon 1760    Newton Fielding: English Water Spaniel (1830's)

This dog was 45 to 55 cms tall, like its counterpart without "hair on the face", the Spaniel. The English Water Spaniel is now extinct. The last ones in France were seen in the 1930's. Many only still use this portrayal of a barbet as *unique* reference to a generic dog with a beard and curls when the Barbet breed has a rich history of its own! A lot of information is available for one who looks for it. Not many seem to be bothered about the past, roots and function and that is how breeds deviate! The Barbet is no exception, alas.



#### 4. Vieux Barbet / Griffon d'arrêt 1886 -to date:



Pilote, circa 1890.



Tails were clipped, in the 30's to resemble the Griffon Korthals and often they were confused. On the right, Barbet Marquis, journal l'ELEVEUR, 1934, above right. In the 30's the Barbet was mostly white and black. The coats above are curly, wooly and long! The coat grows down, not out.

## LE BARBET

Le nom de barbet, qu'on donnait il y a trois siècles à tous les chiens couchants à long poil, a été remplacé depuis par celui de *caniche*, dont l'étymologie est évidemment *canard*. Longtemps *cane* désignait le barbet mâle, et *caniche* la femelle. Mais le barbet n'est pas un caniche, le chien d'avougle.

Par certaines aptitudes pour la chasse, le barbet tient un peu de l'épagneul et du griffon, et beaucoup du caniche par son aspect et sa conformation.

Comme l'épagneul, ce chien est issu du chien de berger du Nord. Avec le temps, les croisements et le climat, le barbet est devenu ce qu'il est de nos jours.

Je ne crois pas que l'espèce soit bien fixée; ce qui m'autorise à le penser, ce sont les différences qu'on rencontre fréquemment chez elle. A l'exposition des races canines de 1863, on a primé le barbet *Lowe*, à M. Favre. Ce chien avait une tête qui ressemblait un peu à celle d'un petit terre-neuve, seulement les oreilles étaient plus longues et plus fournies de laine, mais le museau, un peu allongé, était presque nu; de longs poils ne recouvraient pas les yeux, ainsi que cela a lieu chez presque tous les barbets.

Le chien barbet, tel que je le connais, est de moyenne taille, assez fort pour rapporter un lièvre; son corps, en entier, est recouvert de laine longue qui lui retombe devant les yeux. Les oreilles sont longues, moins longues cependant que celles du caniche; quoique très trapu, il est plus haut sur jambes que le chien d'avougle. Le pied est gros et large. Les yeux, enfoncés dans une tête ronde, lorsqu'on les aperçoit sous les poils qui les cachent, ont une expression étrange qui révèle beaucoup d'intelligence et de bonté.

Je n'ai jamais regardé les yeux si pleins de dévouement d'un caniche ou d'un barbet sans me sentir attiré vers lui, sans lui faire une caresse.

### LES CHIENS d'ARRET, de La Rue, Cherville, Bellecroix 1863

*The historical reference used by M Le Houelleur, Floirac Kennel that at 8 weeks a Barbet should be able to carry a rabbit. If the Barbet were a square dog high on his legs...he would fall over carrying a rabbit...gravity calls!*

How to explain how it happened? Not many seem to be interested in the (recent) history of the breed, only in the fact that it is a rare breed. Well, now it is.

How to explain that in the dog world outside of France (and inside, even) there is/was very little information about the breed. Most dog books mention very briefly a gun/pointing dog, and an old breed that has a long history going back to the 1500's and that is about it.

The Barbet, gundog was "vegetating" in France as many hunters used English breeds and in France some locals used their Barbet to hunt out of habit, but without ever considering really doing anything in particular with the breed. Certainly not paying to have them registered or have them exhibited at dog shows. That was not the objective!

There were Barbets all over France as seen in newspaper clippings, sometimes advertising litters for sale, but not too often as they made the dogs for themselves and their friends (and still do).

M Hermans managed to make very tall dense coated dogs and had turned a gundog/pointing dog into a poodle. The rustic dog was just about gone....just about, but not completely.

## 5. What does the future hold from the past?

It has been an uphill battle to have the males reproduce from the old line type. A lot of international cooperation has led to births and colors coming back, while working on morphology (including health), character and natural ability.

As of quite recently, by comparing photos of dogs, it is becoming easier to rebuild lines and colors back to basics of the Vieux Barbet below. At this point in time in 2012, there are now only 4 pure Barbets left on earth. The females have reproduced and the males? They are, now.

The French breed club has no archives and has never been interested in the survival of the breed until very recently.

A few of us have decided to cooperate on a Barbet history project to make available as much information as possible as early as 2012. I started on my own, but there is so much information that it is overwhelming to work on alone.

<http://chiensdeau.free.fr/BarbetenBresse/articles.php?pg=art157>

It is not easy to work with the Hermans line as there are very few photos and mostly black dogs, albeit a few whites coming from poodle ancestry. That has never been an objective of mine as the ones who promote it would have that information.

My first "Barbet" came to me in 2001.

I had started doing research informally because I like history. Not because I am a historian, nor do I claim to be, or even a real breeder. I just think it's a great dog. I have 6 under my roof and 2 that I own for reproduction, in Switzerland where they have been forbidden to reproduce. I try to help in the survival of the breed by having an occasional litter of Vieux Barbets. They can't be mass produced because there aren't enough around!

In 2003, 2004 I started asking questions (I never have stopped) and remember having information available to people in 2005 at the club specialty show. Someone said, "you must write it down and make it available"...well, I started and have never stopped that either.

In 2006, I began to write on internet about the Barbet and more and more people contacted me to get information. Why me? I spoke English and there was not much to be found anywhere other than the usual Grand barbet references from 1750. Almost the Middle Ages!

How to understand the evolution of the breed or how the word Barbet/barbet had such an impact? By interviewing as many people as possible, searching for documents and photos. Photos, for lack of DNA provide a tremendous amount of information on types and colors, dating back a *long time*.

In the last 30 years, most competent people trying to save the breed from extinction have been pushed aside. It is very difficult to stay objective when you live a story such as this one!

Mrs Pêtre, Barbochos di Reiau de Prouvenco kennel, having worked closely as of 1992 with M Georgii, Poppenspaler's kennel with the objective of making the Barbet a gundog again and keeping the breed alive. Unfortunately, there was no will on behalf of the French kennel club to do it and therefore the



idea, the breed? was put aside. Now, M Georgii has passed on and the line has not gone ahead. Mrs Pêtre has stopped breeding.

Dates to remember for both breeds:

18<sup>th</sup> century: barbet = Poodle. Duck dog.

19<sup>th</sup> century:

1814-1818: Munito was a well-known poodle; the breed has hardly changed since

1863: Barbet was not yet fixed as a breed. The Poodle was.

1874: first poodle registered at the kennel club in the UK

1876: the Poodle Club of England was formed

1880+: a database for poodles shows ancestry to 1880's.

1880's Poodle pedigrees listed in the USA/ AKC

1886: the Barbet standard was written for a gundog/pointer J de Coninck

1890's: many Barbets d'arrêt shown and talked about in French and Belgian canine newspapers such as LE CHENIL, la CHASSE ILLUSTRÉE, le CHASSEUR FRANÇAIS, l'ÉLEVÉUR through the 1930's.

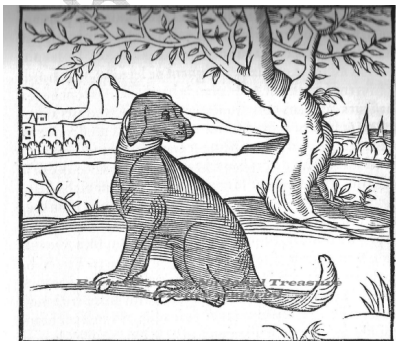
1896 the Poodle Club of America was formed

1897: Barbet standard Comte de Bylandt RACES de CHIENS

LE CHENIL references.

TBC

Those rustic hunting dog colors are one of its strengths today when the Barbet is less and less used as a hunter and what makes the Barbet breed so different from any other and colors may help in its survival. Below, a chien gris, from LA VENERIE, J du Fouilloux 1573. It mentions how there were good colors for hunting dogs with examples.



DE LA COMPLEXION ET NATURE  
des Chiens gris. Chap. IIII.

**N**OZ Chiens gris sont ceux desquelz se seruoient anciennement les Roys de France, & les Ducz d'Alençon. Ilz sont Chiens communs, parce qu'ilz sçauent faire plusieurs mestiers, a ceste cause ilz sont commodes pour Gentilz-hommes : car leur naturel & complexion est telle, qu'ilz courent toutes les bestes qu'on leur voudra faire chasser. Les meilleurs de toute la race, sont ceux qui sont gris sur l'eschine, estās qu'on illeuz

## 6. The Barbet breed or Vieux Barbet:

Waterdog, yes. Companion, yes. Gentle, beautiful, appealing to the eye, a coat that is not a groomer's dream come true. IF the Barbet can look like itself and not another breed, he could survive. Otherwise, he will be absorbed into another breed. The historical law of survival of the fittest, no more no less, like any other breed that has died.

Contradictory information, as of recently under the new presidency of the SCC wanting the Barbet to become a real working dog again...some lines of the Barbet still have a little of the blood from hunting lines may make it possible.

Who will want to take up the real challenge today of promoting a rustic, talented, intelligent dog who can be multi-task hunter, retriever, water dog, agilitist and most of all a gentle wonderful companion who does not want to let you out of his sight?

The Symposium taking place in August will tell us: Yeh or Ney.

My reference material is listed in the link below. They are updated regularly.

Poodle history project: <http://www.poodlehistory.org/>

<http://www.poodlehistory.org/RCRIB.HTM#RCRIB>

<http://www.poodlehistory.org/PZZLIT1.HTM>

<http://www.barkbytes.com/history/poodle.htm>

<http://www.poodlemaineia.com/history/index.php>

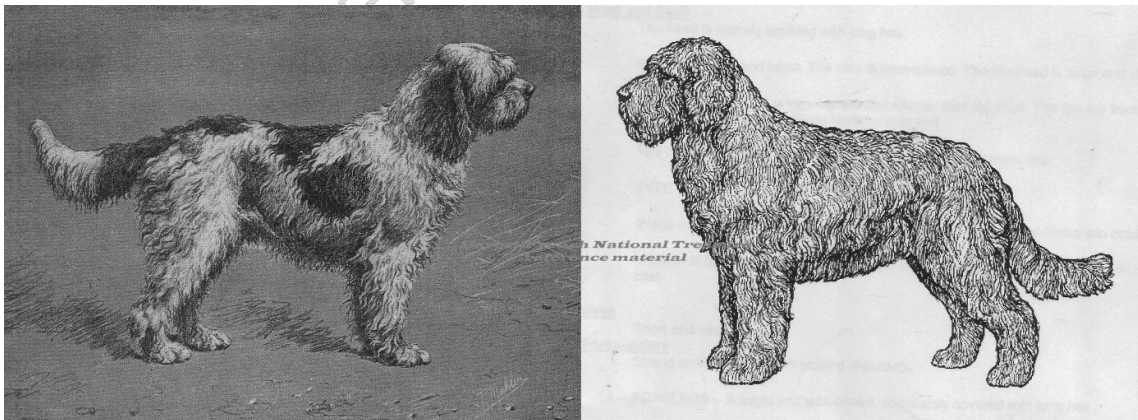
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flmDdEmoj0I>

<http://www.linguee.fr/francais-anglais/traduction/chien+arr%EAt+.html>

<http://chiensdeau.free.fr/BarbetenBresse/articles.php?pg=art246>

For more information about the Barbet breed:

[www.barbet-frenchnationaltreasure.com/](http://www.barbet-frenchnationaltreasure.com/)



The very characteristic grooming of the Barbet: rustic, never over-groomed. The Barbet has never been a show dog. Notice the head, typical of the Griffon family. Those traits are still visible today. The eyes are not completely covered. The coat is long, wooly and curly. The tail forms a crochet. It comes in lovely colors...

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