

**The American Bouvier Rescue League presents**  
**The Bouvier, Black Russian Terrier, Giant Schnauzer and Briard:**  
**What's the Difference?**

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The information below attempts to neatly categorize the differences among these four breeds. Unfortunately, identifying these breeds is anything but neat. While lovely breed standards exist for all, rarely is a conformation champion brought into rescue or found at a shelter. Often, the “specimen” in question is the result of a poorly thought out breeding and, as a result, does not adhere to the standard. It's wise to keep in mind that the characteristics presented, below, represent the ideal for each breed, and that significant discrepancies can exist in all.

	<b>BOUVIER</b>	<b>BLACK RUSSIAN</b>	<b>GIANT SCHNAUZER</b>	<b>BRIARD</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>COLORING</b>					
<b>1. Black</b>	YES. Can have individual white hairs.	YES. Can have individual gray hairs.	YES	YES	
<b>2. Grey</b>	YES	Very rare; allegedly being bred out.	Can be “Pepper & Salt” (grey back, whitish legs) or have grey or “agouti” (banded) hairs—banding of black and shades of grey or white.	YES	Varying shades. Bouvier may have many combinations of color in its coat, but each individual hair will be a solid color.
<b>3. Fawn</b>	YES	NO	RARE, but yes. “Black & Silver” and “Black & Tan” sometimes. Young P/S, B/S, B/T can take on a brindle appearance. Any color other than Black or P/S “not acceptable.”	YES	Range is from whitish to yellow to reddish.
<b>WHITE ON CHEST</b>	YES	“Disqualifying fault,” but might be present. Very small (size of 50-cent piece).	YES	YES	BRT might also have small white spots on paws and chin. Bouvier might have white on chin.
<b>DOUBLE DEWCLAWS ON HIND LEGS (1)</b>	NO	NO	NO	YES	If present, most likely a Briard. Bouv hind leg dewclaws are typically removed at birth; if present, they would <i>not</i> be <b>double</b> dewclaws.

	BOUVIER	BLACK RUSSIAN	GIANT SCHNAUZER	BRIARD	Notes
<b>TAIL</b>					
<b>1. Not docked (natural)</b>	YES	YES	YES	<b>“ALWAYS”</b>	Briard tail is unique: J or hook shape at rest.; long. Double dewclaws and tail should rule in/out Briard fairly definitely.
<b>2. Docked</b>	Docked, leaving 2 or 3 vertebrae. Set high. Preferably carried upright in motion.	Docked with 3 to 5 vertebrae left. Tail is set high; thick.	Set moderately high and carried high in excitement. Docked to the second or not more than the third joint (approximately one and one-half to about three inches long at maturity).	<b>“NEVER”</b>	
<b>EARS</b>					
<b>1. Not cropped</b>	Set almost in a level plane with top skull and one fold at back of ear so that ear lies flat against the cheek. Bottom tip almost reaches edge of bottom of jaw joint. Younger dogs' ears can look longer because ear size is developed before the head matures. Ear leather heavier and thicker than Giant's.	The top of the ear should be level with the rear corner of the eye. Ears should not be higher than the top of the head.	Ears are V-shaped button ears of medium length and thickness, set high and carried rather high and close to the head.	Leather comes to the inner corner of the eye when pulled forward	
<b>2. Cropped</b>	If cropped, triangular contour and in proportion to the size of the head. The inner corner of the ear should be in line with the outer corner of the eye. Ears sit closer to eye (fore-aft) than Giant's.	<b>“NEVER”</b>	Set high on the skull and carried perpendicularly at the inner edges; <b>typically much longer than Bouvier</b> . Ears further back on skull, and sit higher due to narrow skull.	<b>Slightly rounded tip.</b> When ears are standing, there will always be a scar on the outer edge.	<b>Crop &amp; Drop (Briard):</b> Ears were cropped but did not stand. The leather is shorter and there is a scar but the ears are down. Usually the break is higher than a natural eared dog. Sometimes only one drops.

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<b>HEAD</b>	Backskull wider than Giant; different ear set. Stop (slight rise in the skull bone directly between the eyes) "more apparent than real."	Moderately broad and blocky skull. Marked but not pronounced stop.	Longer, more narrow head; eyes closer together. Slight stop.	Long head. Nose more square.	
<b>FEET</b>	More rounded front and back, esp. versus Giant.	Feet should be big, close, and round.	Well arched, compact and almost "cat-like" in appearance. More apparent in the rear feet.	Slightly oval in shape.	
<b>COAT</b>	Double-coated; harsh coat, but more tousled, or softer appearance. Can take on curlier look. Undercoat might appear thicker. Ear coat is more tousled and hair stands higher from the skin.	Tousled, double coat. Outer coat is coarse. Undercoat is thick and soft. It is a pronounced tousled coat rather than wiry or curly.	Double-coated; distinctly wiry to the touch. Against the grain, the coat will stand slightly up off the back. Beard more straight than Bouvier. Ear coat flat.	Coarse, hard, dry outer coat. Lies flat. Long, slightly waving locks. Fine, tight undercoat.	Clipping can change the texture, making it softer.
<b>SHAPE</b>	Appears more short coupled, giving a more powerful overall appearance than the Giant. The width of chest of a Bouvier is usually wider than that of a Giant.	Slightly longer than tall. Very heavy boned.	Should appear totally square (length of back = height from withers to ground). Typically the length from the skull to the withers is longer in a Giant, <b>giving them a more elongated neck than a Bouvier.</b> Giant typically has a "finer" look than a Bouvier.	Length of body slightly longer than height at withers; even more so in females.	
<b>SIZE/ AVG. WEIGHT</b>	M: 24.5-27.5" F: 23.5-26.5" 60-90#	M: 27-30" F: 26-29" 80-100#	M: 25.5-27.5" F: 23.5-25.5" 55-80#	M: 23-27" F: 22 - 25.5" 50-100#	Bouv female height often less than 23.5, males sometimes larger.
<b>TEMPERAMENT/ OTHER CHARACTERISTICS</b>		Deep voice. Often will not eat at first. Shy at first; when relaxed, can act silly (i.e.,	Seems to share the clingy nature of the BRT, as well as mouthiness. I have met more than one Giant		All four breeds can exhibit black marks on the tongue; this is not a defining characteristic.

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		walk through your legs from behind, rub their heads on you). Mouthy. Want to carry things around.	who tried to climb into a person's lap while s/he was seated. Giants strike me as somewhat clownish and goofy.		BRT was created from Airedale, Giant, Newfoundland & Rottweiler.
<b>2006 AKC REGISTRATIONS</b>	808	143	855	284	

**(1) About Double Dewclaws:** They are mounted low on each rear leg, and are legitimate fifth and sixth toes (dogs typically have four toes). Each double dewclaw should have bone substance and nail, giving the appearance of a wider rear foot. The odds of a Briard not having double dews is very small. One 20-year breeder never had a pup born without them. There are still some vets who want to remove them but that is actual amputation of full boned toes so it will leave a good sized scar.

#### **PRACTICAL ADVICE**

- **Do not** rely on ID by photos alone.
- **Do** seek out and develop relationships with “experts” in each of the breeds who live in your area.
- **Do** get savvy dog people (breeders, groomers, fanciers, etc) to meet the rescue and put their hands on the dog.
- **Do** familiarize yourself with breeders of each breed in your area. How many classified ads do you see for each breed in your weekly paper?
- **Do** attend dog shows to meet and greet the breeds.
- **Do** be aware of “breeds” such as Labradoodles and a more recent introduction, the Giant Schnoodle (Giant X Standard Poodle).

#### **Sources:**

AKC Breed Standards; Ontario Giant Schnauzer Rescue, Elizabeth Turner, “Giant Schnauzer or Bouvier des Flandres?” ([www.ontariogiantrescue.com/art9.html](http://www.ontariogiantrescue.com/art9.html)); Deborah Morrow, Briard Rescue and Haven; Diana Evans, Black Russian Terrier Club of America Rescue; Deb Stover, G.I.A.N.T. Schnauzer Rescue Network