

## The Yorkshire Terrier Coat

The crowning glory of any mature Yorkie is his coat – a wealth of metallic blue against rich golden tan.

The adult dog's coat will gleam in the sun, reflecting the light, and consequently feeling cool to the touch. A black woolly coat will not shine as much, nor will it feel cool, as it will absorb light and heat. The quality of the silken coat often depends on breeding.

Coat colour and texture will always be a radical topic in the breed.

The breed standard calls for: silky and blue with a rich tan on the head and legs. Colour is of great importance. The adult Yorkie usually reaches full colour by 3 years of age.

During this process, its colour goes through many transitions: from the black-and-tan pup, through the blue-headed infant and the “badger-striped” adolescent, finishing up with the steelblue-and-tan adult.

This colouring process depends often on the genes of the dog. Some puppies change colour at an early age, often resulting in the dog being a silvery colour instead of steelblue.

At 6 months, the blue coat should still be quite dark, and the silken quality should be evident. The tan parts will still be quite pale, but with definite shadings. The colour of the hair on the ears often tells you how rich the tan will be at maturity.

“Dark steel blue” covers quite a range of colour, from light to really dark blue. The depth of blue to the eye should be “gun metal”, again with that metallic finish. The blue must be uniform throughout, with no patches or mingling tan hairs on the shoulders or hind legs.

Lighter blue and pale tan coloured Yorkies always seem to have an abundance of silken coat, and quite often waves too. A dark, woolly dog always remains dark and sooty-looking, and a solid, heavy tan seems to accompany the black coat, which will never break to a metallic blue. Many break to a slate colour, but they will feel cottony or woolly to the touch.

The coarse-coated dog is usually a solid tan, which is almost ginger (tan with no shading). These dogs have no hope in the show ring. This coat will never grow into a luxurious silk, and will just break off at the tips due to its brittleness, as the dog matures.

The Yorkies' neat head is framed with rich, golden tan moustaches and falls of great length, being darker on the muzzle, the side of the head and ears.

Using the word "rich" in relation to the tan colouring implies that it should be truly golden, not pale or washed out, and the word "golden", that it should be like a polished gold coin, again with that metallic finish, able to reflect light.

The tan should be darker at the roots than in the middle, and lighter at the tips. Only the correct silken texture can produce this requirement, and, in a quality coat, it is very evident on the legs.

"Glossy, fine silky texture" - the true texture, is cool to the touch, and this hair is very strong and can grow to great lengths and shine brilliantly, especially in the sunlight.

Some Yorkshire Terriers have a coat texture that is silky to the touch, but perhaps this is due to the conditioner used, but the colour never rings true.

The blue body coat can shine and even feel silky, but it is in the tan that the true texture is found, and this type of Yorkie will grow a coat of length, but the head will not properly clear, so he always bears the black marks up the front of his head and at the sides.

The quality of the silken coat varies, especially in different bloodlines. Some have the thick silk, others a thin sparse coat that does not thicken up until the dog is about 2 years old, and yet others have a wiry, hard coat that does eventually develop into a thick, silken steel blue.

However, dreaming of the perfect Yorkie coat, enjoy your Yorkie no matter what the coat is like!