

## **Is it possible to breed healthier bulldogs?**

With enthusiasm we follow the information about the torture breeding characteristics of the brachycephalic breeds in the media.

Certainly there will be more discussion about banning the breed, because all the big clubs don't wake up and cling to their old statutes. At the same time the demand for quickly bought cheap dogs doesn't stop.

We have taken the necessary steps years ago as breed lovers of the French Bulldogs. It is possible to make a change!



We are a non-profit association Gesunde Bulldoggen e.V. We are committed since 2010 with the awareness site [www.gesunde-bulldogge.de](http://www.gesunde-bulldogge.de) and try to educate the public about the misbreeding of brachycephalic breeds.

We have restarted our own breeding in 2014 after a long break with a much smaller number of breeders. The introduction of the hip examination and their results via GRSK in 2011 led to a huge loss of breeders.



Already in 2010 we gave a lecturing in Berlin about torture breeding including the request for a turnaround in dog breeding in amending the animal protection law.

How have we approached these topics with success?

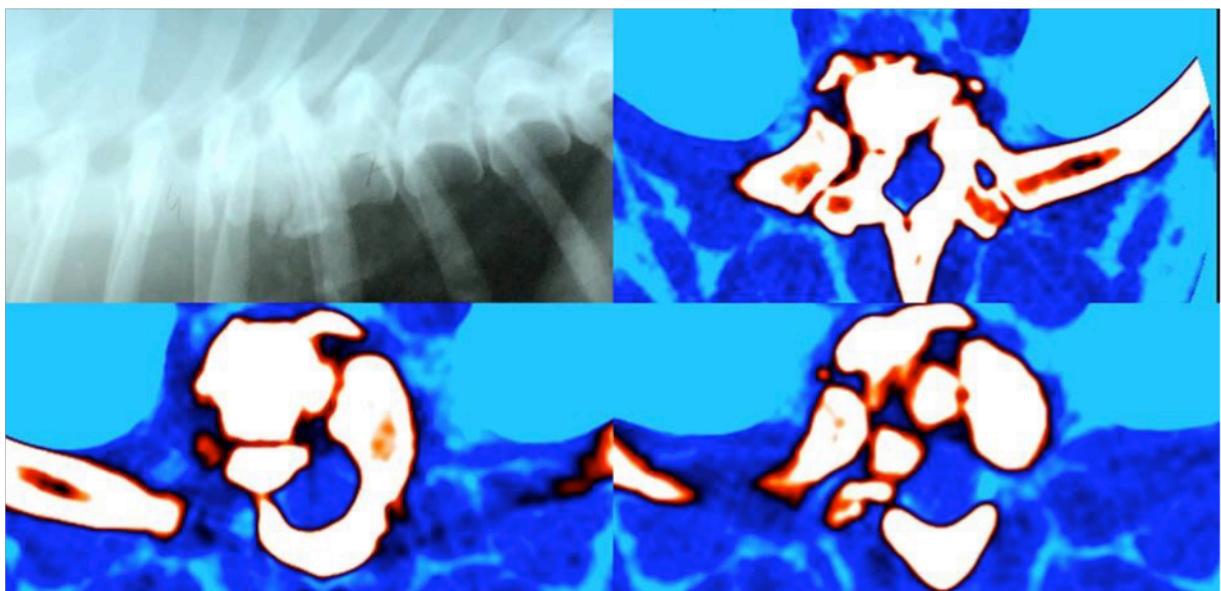
The first step was the separation from the umbrella organization, we work autonomous and can therefore react at any time to the latest breeding and scientific findings.

Then the exclusion of an obligation to exhibit! The evaluation of a dog by an external party is more than hindering for the breeding selection.

Evaluation of dogs by third parties according to doubtful fashions has never been beneficial in the sense of animal protection and for the conservation of a breed. A world winner who had surgery is not beneficial to health.

We introduced the obligation to a CT scan in 2014, evaluation of the structures of the respiratory tract and spinal column / spinal canal by a specialized veterinarian, examination by an evaluated expert of the GRSK.

This is the image of a male dog, suitable for breeding by x-ray, but the CT showed severe deformations of the vertebral bodies, which could not be seen by 2D-diagnostics. Weeks later these were corrected by hemilaminectomy of Th4 - Th8, he is now 10 years of age. For sure we have not used these genes any longer. According to the x-ray he was fit for breeding! And exhibition champion of course!



**Selection by function!** The first and most important feature is the natural birth, a wonderful instrument to recognize fitness and condition. What an intelligence of evolution to simply want to bring the degeneration to an end. We respect that. Our Caesarean section rate is below 15% and we will improve this even more. Average litter size is 6 puppies, puppy mortality until the 8th week of life is about 8 %. For a “torture breeding line” already quite useful and surely still worth developing.

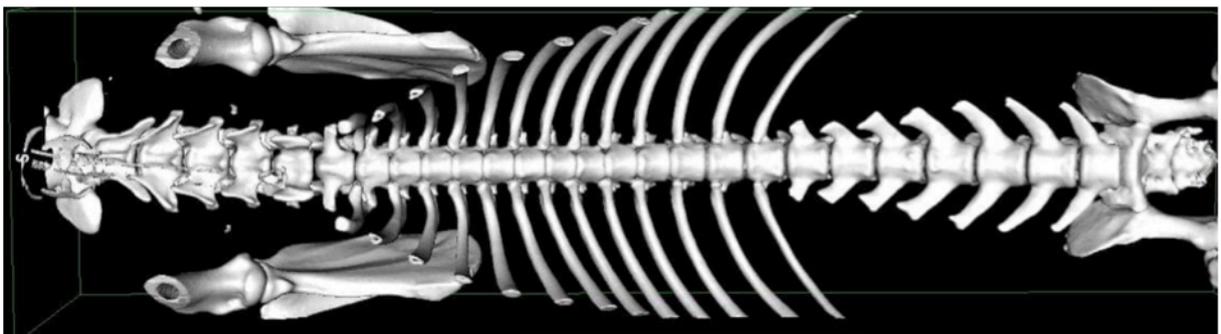
The picture shows Lilly giving birth to six puppies without human help in 2.5 hours. Also - by the way- genetically free from the risk of slipped discs, tested by Embark.



**Opening of the stud books.** We accept dogs without pedigree and ancestry proof. These animals must of course also pass our annoying breeding examinations: Heart ultrasound, patella examination, eye examination, CT of the respiratory tract and the spine, HD, ED and dental status as well as various DNA tests for traits and hereditary diseases, including Embark DNA tests.

**Breeding of colors like merle and blue is not permitted.** We take care to keep the genomic inbreeding value as low as possible. Embark offers a great tool: you can create sample matings of tested dogs and calculate the expected COI of the puppies. Also a nice argument to steal the thunder of the opponents of registry dogs!

This is the spine of a bitch without pedigree. It would be foolish not to use such findings because the lack of a pedigree!



Furthermore, we approve cross-breeding projects after consultation with specialists and geneticists.

In 2020 one of our breeders will try to mate French Bulldog x Basenji.

Another breeder outside the club is currently trying the mating French Bulldog x Retropug with excellent results!

We are breeding aligned to the breed standard, our goals are hopefully happy puppy buyers as well as small companion dogs who can meet their own needs as canids again.

The dogs must mate freely and must self-whelp.

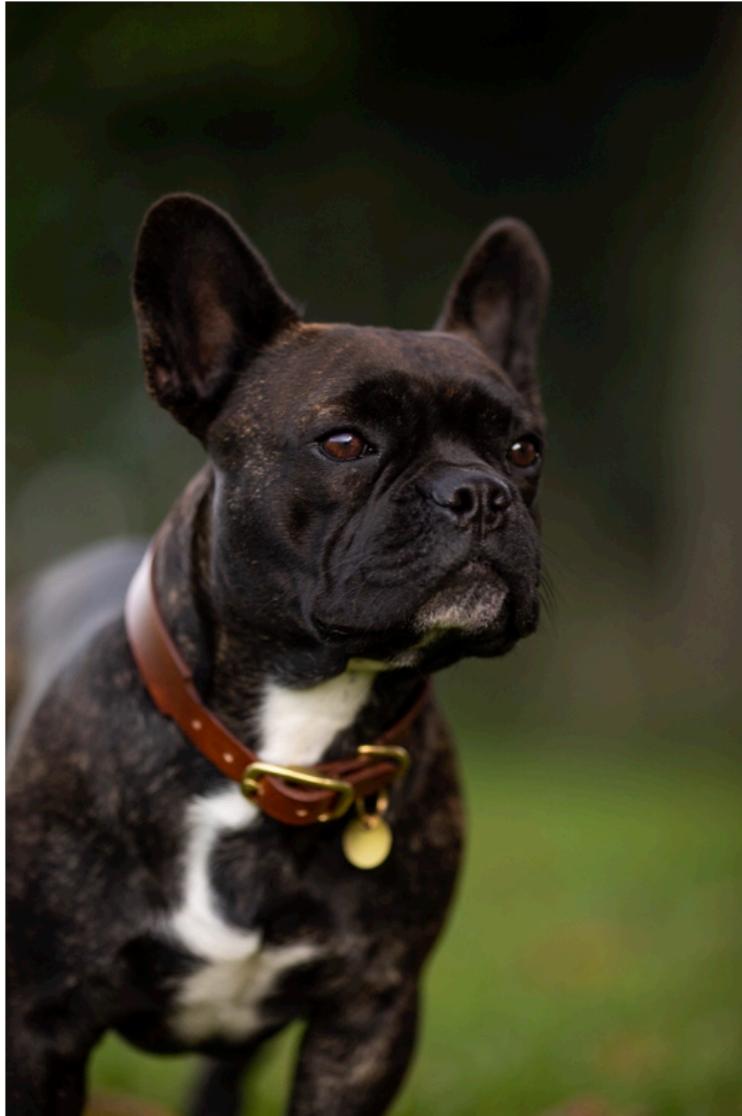
The body's shape must allow to clean themselves.

The structure of a runner must be given.

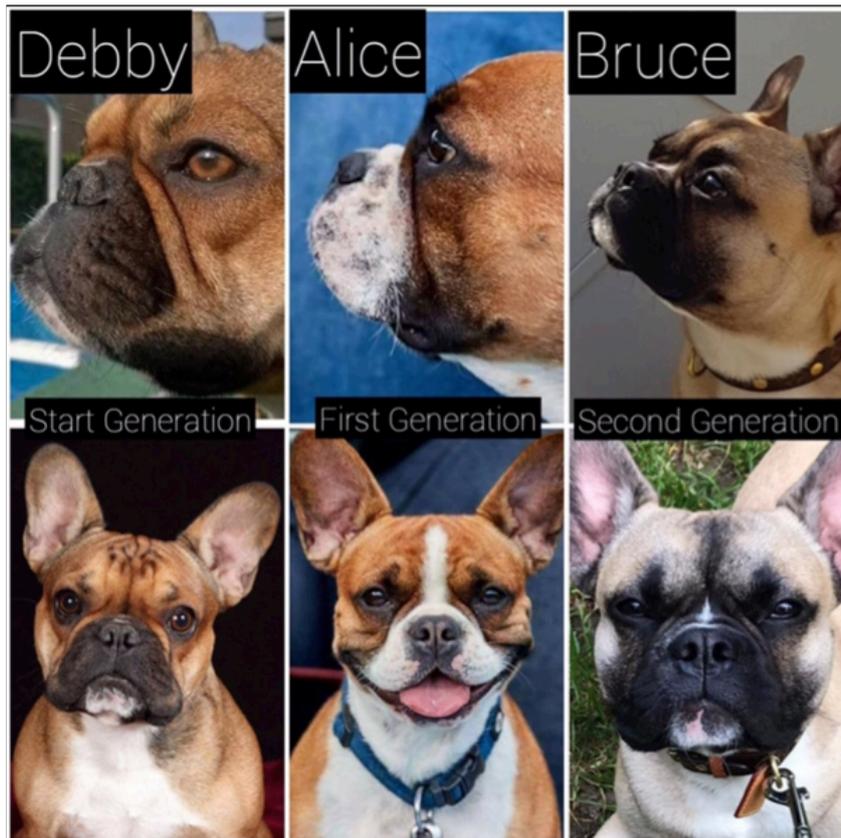
The selection for more nose, flatter skull, longer backs with small wagtail works very fast.

Nature is clever and is very happy to take it back.

We have the first offspring with scissor bites!

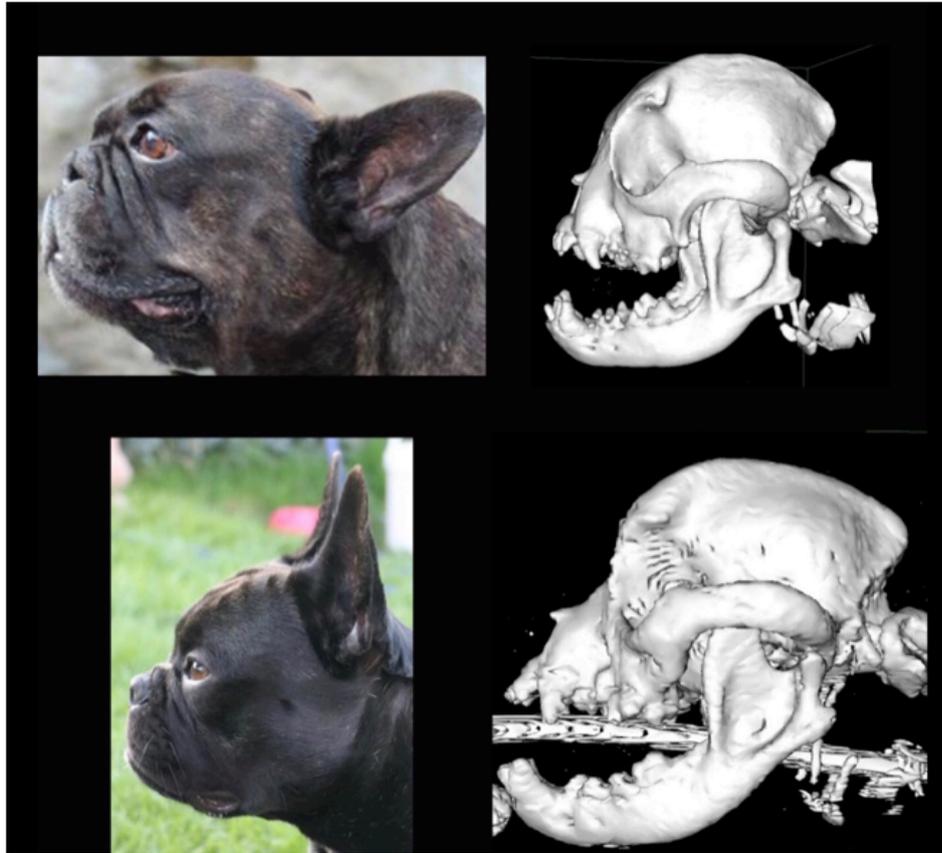


In the diagram you can clearly see the fast changes through selection! The health and intactness of an animal must be the first priority. Even if the breed standard must be watered down a bit.



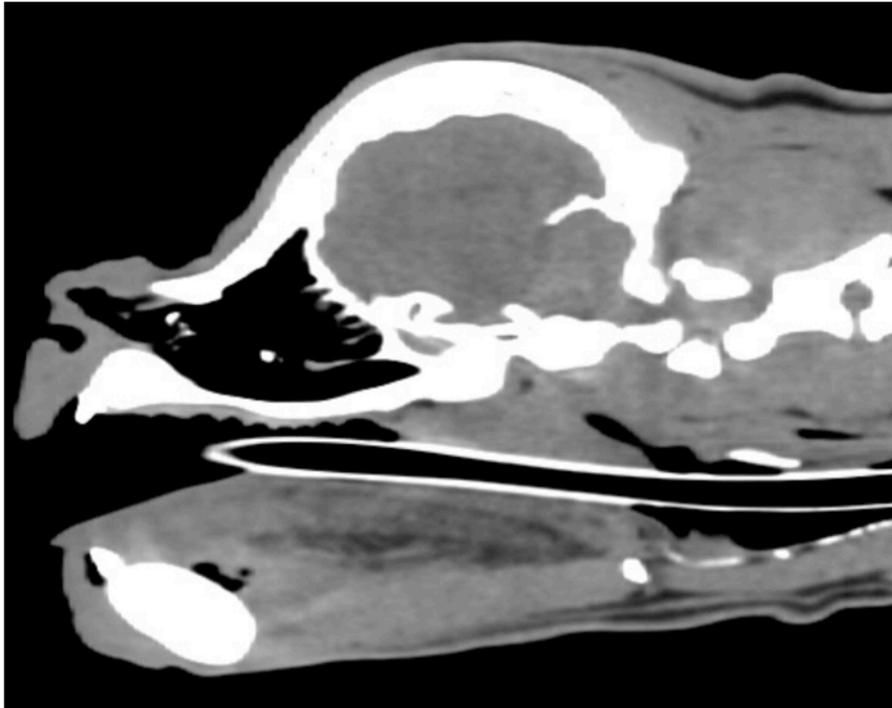
The next picture shows the 12 year old deceased male Spocky, who got his first nose job on his first birthday and later on he was fine-tuned in 2008 by Prof. Oechtering & team, the famous surgeon from Leipzig, Germany.

Spockys story was out fate - we recognized the chance and enthusiasm for 3D diagnostics. Spocky was the inspiration for the work and the beginning of the educational process with the sad realization that such dogs should simply never be bred again, no matter how smart and cute the little guy was!



Below a male offspring from parents examined with moderate findings and without any functional impairment of the respiratory tract.

A head CT of a male offspring – back-breeding is possible as you can see here. The nose is clearly bony again! Yes, we still have to work on the thickness of the soft palate, and we monitor this closely. He also has well opened nostrils for a French bulldog.



The problem of wedge vertebrae will not be solved without cross-breeding in the long run. Ours have been bred back so moderately that our dogs do not show any clinical abnormalities. Some are free of wedge vertebrae, others still have small changes in the thoracic spine area.

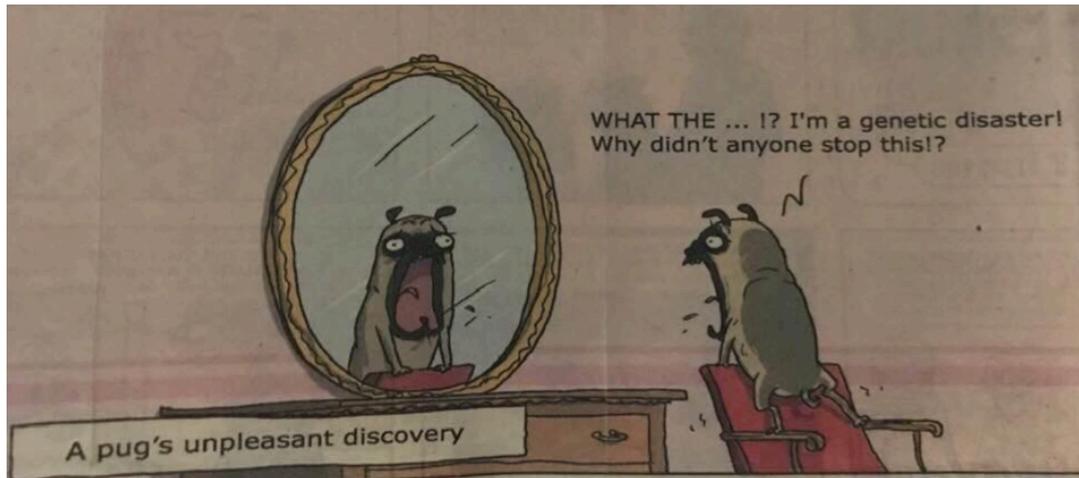
We are a small association, we have about 60 members and about 7 active breeders in the German speaking countries. We diligently collect data and material of our dogs. We unmask and decide about the good breeding dogs by using important breeding examinations.

Is the apparently good sire a spoiler? Findings can only be recognized by examining closed populations?

We banned dogs and whole litters from breeding if, despite careful diagnosis, serious genetic defects have slipped into the daylight. Learning by Burning!

Should a good research project require data in form of X-rays, CT's, saliva samples etc., we would be pleased if we were recommend. Please do not hesitate to contact us. Our little French Bulldog companion fits perfectly into our world and has a right to get a body in which he can feel comfortable again. This is our mission and – it is possible. And not so difficult at all.

The necessary discussion about torture breeding and its consequences must also show possible solutions. Meanwhile there are good results with correspondent networks and really cheerful short noses, which grow old without complaints as companion dogs.



A not insignificant part of the clientele around the brachycephals seem to have a distorted relationship to the nature of a dog and apparently prefers a fosterling! This can be proven by innumerable contributions in the social networks and media, when these bred creatures are presented in the most unnatural way and in costumes. It is absolutely necessary to sensitize people to the basic needs of the runner and predator dog.

The torture breeding debate is important and right, only the French Bulldog -Bashing must not be generalized. In case legal measures are taken, we would like to see that there are still possibilities for the reasonably smart breeders to continue breeding healthier brachys.

Gesunde Bulldoggen e. V.

Dezember 2019