

A Couple That Creates “The Creature Comforts of Home”

By Nancy Dewar

Adorable French Bulldogs, commonly referred to as “Frenchies,” rank in the top five most popular dog breeds in the US according to the American Kennel Club. However, they are top dogs in Terry and Dick Southwick’s world, with Pugs following right behind! Frenchies are completely irresistible. How can one not love their sturdy little bodies, smushed in mugs...not to mention their bums, which are pretty darn cute.

Terry and Dick live in North Hampton with their two French Bulldogs, 11-year-old Lola who they got as a puppy and Maddie, their 5-year-old rescue pup who’s been part of the family for four years. When talking about their dogs, Terry referred to them as “our current batch!” Talking about Lola’s age, Dick stated, “11 is the new 5!” Terry and Dick have been married for nearly 40 years, and their dogs are truly their children. Prior to Maddie and Lola, they had six very special Pugs over the years. They got Morgan, their first, about a year before they got married. “We called her our out of wedlock dog, and she spent time between both of our homes!”

Their last pug Clara lived 17 ½ years with a debilitating hind leg disease the last five. She maneuvered around with assistance from her Eddie’s Wheels, and Dick and Terry carried her outside to do her business for years. Other Pug family members included George, Bella, Mac and Mocha. While reflecting on never having had children, they both agreed that maybe having dogs was the reason. Dick laughed and said, “Having dogs is like having two-year-olds forever. They never really grow up!”

Not being that familiar with either of these breeds, I asked about their differences. Dick explained, “Frenchies are like Pugs on steroids. Pugs are more mellow. French Bulldogs are a combination of Bulldogs, Pugs and Terriers.” The Terrier influence probably contributes to the “steroids” part; i.e. must be active. The other difference is their ears. Pugs have floppy ears. Frenchies do too as a puppy, but they eventually stand straight up. Terry laughed and said, “Frenchies eventually grow into their ears. Though they look huge when they are puppies!”



The Southwick’s not only create wonderful homes for their pups, but also for many others with their business, Southwick Construction Inc. Dick grew up in the construction world having worked for his Dad’s company. The business also brought the couple together, as they met when Dick was working on a project at Terry’s parents. 90% of their work is building custom homes. The duo, working closely with their clients every step of the way, approach each project as if they were building the home for themselves. Terry, who loves the design aspect, explained, “It’s all about form and function, not just the design. Often architects are more concerned about the aesthetics. To us it’s all about everyday living. We cook, so we know how a kitchen should flow.” I laughed when they were talking about huge laundry rooms that are popular now. “No one really hangs out in a laundry room, why make them so big?”

Both are passionate about their business and love guiding clients through the process, focusing on each client’s lifestyle.

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"Everything is personal, and nothing can be just ordinary," said Dick. All the craftsmanship and finish work is done onsite, and their work is truly beautiful...from custom cabinets to walls, moldings to stairways. Terry and Dick have built 5 homes for themselves. I asked about some of Maddie and Lola's favorite features of their current home, as it's always fun to learn from a dog's perspective! "They both love the walk-in shower, and Maddie loves the fireplace. When she hears the "click" when we turn it on, she makes a beeline for it!"

Terry and Dick do a lot to make the lives of other dogs better, as well. They are involved with several Pug and French Bulldog rescue groups. Both tend to be "expensive breeds" when it comes to potential health issues such as breathing problems and skin allergies. Hence, many are given up for adoption as their medical needs can be costly. "What bothers me is that the breeds are popular because 'they're oh-so-cute,' and then people can't afford them," Terry said. A lot of their support goes to the French Bulldog Rescue Network, the Pug Rescue of New England and SNORT; Short Nose Only Rescue Team! One of their funniest anecdotes was about Dick buying a coffee mug for \$200 in support of a rescue group. It said "My Pug & I Talk Sh#t About You," and the writing wore off after the first time in the dishwasher!



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What a gift to spend some time with Terry and Dick. “We are best friends.” That was so obvious. Also, as obvious, is their unwavering love and support for man’s best friend. Lola and Maddie go everywhere with them, as they love car rides. The couple’s get-away trips are usually just long weekends, as they hate being away from the kids. Dick told me, “Whenever I see a Frenchie, I just have to stop.” Years ago, they had a boat named “The Pug Pen.” A fellow boater came up to them and asked, “Are you George’s parents?!” We all can relate to that one...people often know our dog’s names; though not ours! Terry has also created a line of granola (for people!) named after Lola, *Lola’s Granola*, which is sold locally at KB’s Bagel Shop in Hampton and at Joe’s Meat Shoppe in North Hampton.

Every aspect of their life really does revolve around their pups and their commitment to creating the most wonderful homes possible...for their kids, other people and other dogs in need. Creature comforts are the things that you need to feel comfortable in a place; e.g. nice surroundings, good food, companionship, etc. Terry and Dick Southwick truly do create the creature comforts of home in many ways.