

SPORTING GROUP

The thin lips leave no place for feathers to lodge. The characteristic yellow or amber eyes are clear and intense. Some oldtimers thought the color gives the Chesapeake superior vision as an eagle. His broad chest holds a heart and lungs that keep up his stamina. At the prow of a boat, he can break ice and push a heavy goose through the roughest seas. His well-webbed hare feet become paddles when he swims. His strong toes and nails can claw up a steep, muddy riverbank.

Bigger is not better. *Moderate* is a key word. He is of medium build so as not to crowd a hunter in the blind nor swamp the rowboat. His strong rear end propels his mighty leap into the water and can drive him through the thick mud of shallow water. His tail is like a rudder, steering him after a cripple.

The all-important double coat is the mark of a Chessie. A thick, downy undercoat protects his skin from the cold and wet. The harsh, slightly wavy oily outercoat repels the water. When a Chessie comes out of the water and shakes, he is just slightly damp. He has no long hair on his sides, face, or legs to trap the water. In the winter, water doesn't freeze on his coat, and he doesn't swamp the hunter's blind. His coat repels the water, much like a duck's feathers.

A Chesapeake is a camouflaged dog. He comes in all shades of brown from the light dead grass that hide him in the winter wheat



Chesapeake Bay Retriever

fields, to the brown of the muddy banks of the lake, to the red of the sedge grass that grows along the lakes. His color suits him for all working conditions. He is the color of his background that makes his undetectable in an open blind.

The Chessie in the show ring does not have the high-stepping gait of a flashy dog, but he moves smoothly, exuding power and grace. He exhibits a keen, friendly temperament, with tail waving, ears up, and a happy grin on his

face. He moves easily from field to show ring.

—Audrey Austin,
audreyaustin@cox.net
 American Chesapeake Club

Curly-Coated Retrievers A ROUGH START

This month, I thought that I would share with you the ups and downs of a first year with a young CCR who had a few challenges.

First, very soon after her arrival, she started with gastrointestinal problems. During the day it was easier to handle, but after a night in her crate, it would take me as long as two hours to clean and wash both the crate and the pup. I tried just about every diet possible, and veterinary help with special canned food and kibbles, but nothing seemed to help much at all. Finally I was sharing my tale of woe with a Curly owner friend, and she suggested a brand of kibble that only had three main ingredients. They were sweet potato, chicken, and rice. This did work for her, and she soon improved after that, and today this young bitch appears to have a stomach of iron and is able to eat all good food and some outside morsels that are *not* good to eat—without tummy upsets!

Along with her queasy insides, another problem had been ongoing, but since we were staying at home since she arrived, the problem of motion sickness did not appear until we started to travel again to dog events. The usual Dramamine did not help, so our vet prescribed Cerenia, which did help, but her routine for ingesting that had to be a trial-and-error type of routine. Taking the medicine just an hour in advance of traveling was not long enough for her. At least two to three hours seemed to work far better.

The motor home was one mode of trans-

SPORTING GROUP



Curly-Coated Retriever, British cigarette card, early 20th century

portation, but here in town, she needed to learn to also travel in the car for vet visits, and I soon realized that for her, just going to the vet was not the delightful experience it was for my other Curly. Therefore, at a certain point, I was fortunate to locate a small training class that offered a variety of AKC activities that included obedience, rally, agility, and a bit of the new scent work now offered. Now these short trips have led to fun activities once a week, and gradually she is tolerating the short trip to the class with no medicine at all. Now her trips in the car will be mostly fun—rarely

to the vet (hopefully), and I can lengthen the time of trips gradually, at first using Dramamine, and then, hopefully, soon not having to use any medication at all. For the start of any long trip in the motor home, I now give her the Cerenia pill three hours beforehand and then try to use Dramamine after that when the trip, usually many hours, is to a new area.

Sometimes these traveling upsets have to be conquered a few steps at a time. One gentleman recently told me that his Lab easily became ill in the car at first. He succeeded in

ending that after a week of sitting in the car with her without any driving at all, with the radio turned on, sitting and reading and giving her something to chew that she liked. Then he sat with the engine turned on and gradually worked into driving around the block and so forth.

Now there is the challenge of jumping up on and touching a person when very excited, but that will be another story, and with maturity and patience, even that will be over with before too long.

One big plus with all of this occurring during the past many months, is that I have accomplished many stay-at-home short training sessions with Fame. Hopefully this will transfer to more serious ring time before too long!

—Ann Shinkle,
annshinkle@aol.com
 Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America

Golden Retrievers THAT GOLDEN HEART

The Golden Retriever is well known for his loving nature—indeed he has a heart of gold. But some golden hearts today may be at risk for a heart condition known as dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM).

In 2005, a team of cardiologists reported on

a family of Golden Retrievers diagnosed with cardiomyopathy that were also deficient in taurine, an amino acid that helps support the heart muscle. That finding led to recommendations that dogs diagnosed with the disease be tested for low taurine levels. Veterinary cardiologists began to focus on diet as a possible cause of DCM related to taurine deficiency.

“Diet plays a huge role in this condition,” said Dr. Josh Stern, a Morris Animal Foundation-funded researcher. “Home-cooked diets have been implicated in this problem, as well as small batch, boutique dog foods.”

Some studies have linked high fiber and very low-protein diets to the condition. Additionally, some grain-free foods containing legume ingredients that are high in protein contain little to no taurine, compared to meat based protein diets.

Veterinary cardiologists recently have reported an increase in cases of dogs diagnosed with DCM associated with taurine deficiency, with an unusually high number of Golden Retrievers affected.

That increase in Golden numbers has prompted Dr. Stern to question whether genetic factors might be involved in increasing the risk of developing this condition within the golden retriever breed.

“I suspect that Golden Retrievers might have something in their genetic make-up that