

SPORTING GROUP



*Chesapeake Bay Retriever
“Look at me. I am striking.
I can do anything. I am a
Chesapeake.”*

work. They sparkle and dance with delight. They shine with pride. They question when they don't understand your requests. They are serious when protective, and glaring when angry. “Eyes are mirrors of the soul,” especially with a Chesapeake.

Complementing the eyes are those expressive ears. They are pulled forward and high with excitement. They fold back and down when unhappy or questioning. They are very alert when asked to work, especially when

marking a bird. The waving tail also adds to the conversation.

The Chesapeake can all but speak. Actually, they do “speak” if you are paying attention. Ears up and forward, tail waving, eyes intent on you, dancing with excitement, translates to *Throw the bumper [ball, or bird]. Or Let's go [for a walk, out to shoot something, or to do something, anything].* Their tapping feet and bouncing bodies leave little doubt that they want.

Many Chesapeakes have a smile or a grin,

with lips pulled back and face wrinkled. They are so happy to see you, they all but laugh.

Any intruder would know the deep-throated bark and the angry glare that says, *Don't come into this house uninvited.*

If they are not happy with you, they can certainly let you know. “The squint-eyed Chessie look,” ears flat, eyes narrowed, tail limp, says, *I don't think so.* When my husband told my girl she had to go outside, she would give him “the look,” turn to look at me, then “says” to him, *You're not my mother, you can't tell me what to do.* It made him crazy as she walked away, ignoring him. They may give the look when you ask them to repeat a command numerous times. The fifth day in a row I took my girl tracking, she looked down at the start flag, up at me, and said, *Again? We are doing this again? I love to track, but enough is enough.* I took the hint and began tracking three days a week.

In the show ring, the judges look for the confident, head up, stride of a dog at work, they give off the signal, *Look at me. I am striking. I can do anything. I am a Chesapeake.*

In the field, they are keen, and focused. There is little they would rather do that retrieve those birds, especially in the water. The flying leap into the lake can carry him yards to the mark. No doubt what he is saying here:

I love the water.

Just look, and you can hear what your Chesapeake is telling you.

—Audrey Austin,
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Curly-Coated Retrievers OLDER AND BETTER!

Many years ago there was a short discussion among a group of individuals practicing field bird retrieving with their retrievers. Among them was one owner with a 5-year-old Curly-Coated Retriever who just recently had decided to start her Curly in field retriever training and mentioned it to the group. The response from one of the individuals there was to question why anyone would bother to start field training with a 5-year-old dog. My response to this was that it could be an interesting challenge, as there are Curlies who tend to mature later, and that it could be a good learning situation. This particular Curly had other performance titles and had performed well in them all. She went on to perform very well in her field activities and earned titles in all levels. Also, working with one's dog is a plus for handlers and their dogs—win or lose! Any activity that we do with our dogs, especially outdoors with a nice group of people, is positive and very worthwhile.

DAVID WOOD BAKER

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Now I am faced with a similar situation. I have a mature Curly, almost 3 years of age, who has never been in any formal competition at all until very recently. During the past two and a half years she has had serious bouts of carsickness when traveling more than 10 to 15 minutes in a car. I talked to other owners who had been through this challenge and now have a good routine as to what type of pill I give her. Any trip over 15 minutes from home requires some level of medication—over 15 to 20 minutes up to about one hour requires one type of pill, available over the counter, while over one hour requires medication from the veterinarian.

Fortunately, I found one training facility that is only 10 minutes from home, and that has been her place for training for the past two and a half years. The instructor does short sessions of obedience, rally, and agility, which for Curlies is fun. Taking turns and not too much repetition, as I stated above, seems to work well, and just recently she earned her first title in Rally Novice, and hopefully there will be more to come.

There are a few things to remember when training a Curly, and this applies to all of the activities. They seem to really appreciate a well-regulated routine, with no harsh words or actions. Also, in training they do not like too many repetitions. During practice, when doing



Curly-Coated Retriever

a bit of retriever-training fun, I rarely will do more than three repetitions at a time and keep the distance short for most retrieves. Whether to reward with treats, as one may do in obedience training, I feel is up to the individual. Most people feel that being able to retrieve a bird or bumper is a treat in itself.

Finally, speaking of age and training, it all depends upon the dog and his handler. Some dogs age faster than others; some have challenges that curtail training and progress. The main fact is that we should enjoy each day

with our dogs and keep them active, both physically and mentally.

—Ann Shinkle,
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 Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America

Golden Retrievers GOLDEN HEARTBEATS

In July 2018, I wrote about a heart condition recently discovered in Golden Retrievers: dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM). DCM is a

serious disease of the heart muscle that leads to increased heart size and weakened contractions. These changes can result in severe consequences such as congestive heart failure or sudden death.

Cases of DCM in Golden Retrievers have increased exponentially during the past several years, with veterinarians and veterinary cardiologists reporting DCM occurring even in mixed-breeds and breeds not typically genetically prone to the disease.

While a specific cause has not yet been identified, in July 2018 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said it was “alerting pet owners and veterinary professionals about reports of DCM in dogs eating certain pet foods containing high levels of peas, lentils, other legumes, or potatoes as the main ingredients that are more common in diets labeled grain-free.”

That dietary link has been confirmed by veterinary cardiologists who found that affected Golden Retrievers were deficient in taurine, an amino acid that supports healthy heart muscle. The big question facing Golden owners then became what is the best and safest formula to feed their dog. Given the suspicion that there is a connection between DCM and a grain-free kibble or an exotic “boutique” diet, owners are faced with researching a huge variety of brands, reading food labels, and question-

MARY BLOOM/AGAC