

bone—not so light as to show weakness, nor so heavy as to appear coarse. The words *medium* and *moderate* describe this breed. His proportions are slightly longer than tall; *slightly* means very little, therefore he is almost square. Ample leg should exist underneath him. The Chesapeake must have flanks well tucked up. This trait is unique to this retriever and is often coupled with a fit and conditioned dog. The topline varies at the rear

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quarters from being as high as a trifle higher than the front quarters. A level topline and the *gentle S-curve* topline are equally acceptable. All other retrievers are level in topline.

Picturing the above as described, we can envision the structure and movement of the Chesapeake. From the side, we want to see the described outline with plenty of reach and drive and the ability to cover ground or make great strides in the water with strength and power. The down-and-back should show a dog who approaches you with efficient, ground-covering steps. A dog moving away from you should have drive that comes from a strong, well-angulated rear.

Avoid the following: short legs and too much length of body, with a sway back, straight shoulders, and poor rear angulation. Avoid a tubular body, one with not enough tuck-up. These lead to incorrect structure and movement for the Chesapeake. Also avoid the good, sound dog who lacks characteristics of the Chesapeake breed, such as one who lacks in reach and drive, ample tuck-up,

or evidence of good disposition.

In conclusion, recognize the Chesapeake and his type, and avoid refugees from the Working Group (dogs of Mastiff, Newfoundland, or Saint Bernard type) or the generic retriever. The most-respected breeders need to be passionate about what they breed and must produce specimens who meet the goal of excellence and best meet the standard's specifications.

Judges must recognize the nuances of this breed and judge accordingly. Too often, judges find it acceptable to put up a sound dog who is unfortunately not really of breed type but may be doing a lot of winning and is well advertised and well-schooled.

The judges who are really respected are those who can go beyond and not miss exceptional specimens who don't always have the advantage of looking like the majority and whose owners are not equipped with the monetary resources that include top handling and exposure in advertisements.

—Nat Horn, Columbia, Md.;
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Curly-Coated Retrievers

Why a Curly?

Since acquiring our first Curly-Coated Retriever in the late '70s, I have given lots of thought to why I am so fond of this breed. David Ferguson says, “They are the perfect combination of sporting dog and companion dog,” which is so true. One can take a Curly out in the field, and she will come home and settle down readily. I have known



of only one Curly who needed to be crated at times, due to her hyperactivity. The great majority of them are very calm in between their activities. I enjoy living with dogs who can settle well in the house.

This is a breed who can take advantage of many performance activities. My Curlies have participated in tracking, agility, upland and hunt tests, and all levels of obedience and rally, as well as conformation. I enjoy all these activities with them.

When considering this breed, it is true that a Curly is different from other retriever breeds. They can be somewhat more reserved, and some people might mistake this for indifference. Curlies usually do not go rushing up to strangers, but at the same time they like to meet other people and dogs if they are well socialized. Ferguson says that one of the reasons he switched in 1998 from another retriever breed to the Curly was that he was looking for a sporting dog who was a bit more reserved, and the Curly fit that need perfectly.

One thing I appreciate greatly is that Curlies seem to be very aware of their bodies. While playing, they don't bash into humans as I have experienced with some other breeds. They seem to respect other dogs and people.

On the whole, the Curly is a breed who matures slowly. His training may go at a slower pace. Once trained, however, they seem to remember well what they learned. If you wish to earn titles early, choose another breed. I am not saying that a Curly cannot do this, but you should be prepared to train at a slower pace.

The breed's coat care is minimal. I never brush the coat, but I do use a wide-toothed, rakelike comb to loosen dead hair during the annual or biannual coat loss. A healthy Curly may go for long periods without need for a bath—just a water-spritz and a pat-down are usually all that is needed to spruce up the curls.

Come to some of the larger show clusters in order to meet our

breed. You may find it quite interesting. Beforehand, you might check out online the number of Curlies entered at certain shows, as there will be none entered at many of the smaller shows.

Feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions about our breed.

—Ann Shinkle, Grand Island, Fla.;
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Flat-Coated Retrievers

Guest columnist Claire Koshar, GFCRSA member for more than 30 years and its parliamentarian and past secretary, is the author of *A Guide to Dog Sports: From Beginners to Winners*. Her English-bred Summerhill Flat-Coats have titles in conformation, field, and obedience. Claire has judged sweepstakes at national specialties in the U.S. and Canada.

Out Standing in the Field

On a beautiful California afternoon in the spring of 1988, the judge sat at her window and looked down at the grassy fields surrounding the hotel site



of the 11th Flat-Coated Retriever national specialty.

More than 20 years later, the judge, Michele Billings, reminisces: “I will never forget the sight. There must have been 100 Flat-Coats and their owners out there. There were jumps set up and dogs flying over them. There were Flat-Coats retrieving and Flat-Coats being petted and admired. Dogs were enjoying dogs. People were enjoying dogs and each other. It was a picture of people and their dogs just having fun.”

She continues, “Even today, in the show ring, I see Flat-Coat exhibitors demonstrating the same pleasure in their dogs and sportsmanship toward each other. There is always applause and warm congratulations to the winners. We see far too little of that.”

The dual nature of our breed lends it

to participation in a variety of activities. Our involvement with our dogs in other areas helps us to put show wins or losses in perspective. For most Flat-Coat exhibitors, the show world is not the whole world. It is essential that as a working retriever, the dog in the ring is physically and structurally capable of doing the work for which the breed was developed. It is not uncommon that the dog who is Best of Breed on the weekend spends the rest of his week training for a Senior Hunter leg.

Ch. Gamekeepers Blackhawk, MH, WCX, is a good example. Owned by Mitch and Maria White, he was Best of Breed at Westminster in 2001 and went on, trained by his owner, to become a Master Hunter.

Mitch echoes what Flat-Coat people have known for 100 years. “The qualities that make a dog a good retriever—responsiveness, kindness, and determination—are the same ones that make him a good companion. We have to breed carefully so that those qualities are not lost.”

With a look at old catalogs, we find that in the breed there has always been a high ratio of performance-titled dogs to specials entered. In recent years, however, we are seeing fewer champions with these titles. For many exhibitors, the time and expense of participating in several dog sports is a consideration. It is possible, however, that they just need a little encouragement from their fellow Flat-Coat fanciers. Our parent club provides educational articles in its newsletter and requires regional clubs to hold a field event for its members annually.

Longtime breeder and owner Beth Meany remembers that when she acquired her first Flat-Coat in 1986, her breeder scheduled field-training days to help give her puppy a good start. Meany went on to train that puppy and a succession of others. Of her latest, she says, “When she is out in the field, she is the happiest she has ever been.”

All of us can find opportunities to encourage those new to the breed. In doing so, we provide a service to the

breed itself.

And perhaps 20 years from now, someone will notice us out standing in the field, enjoying our dogs. —C.K.

Thank you, Claire. —Sally Terroux, Arvada, Colo.; sjterroux@aol.com ♦



Golden Retrievers



Sportsmanship

I received an interesting e-mail recently that started me thinking. The fact that it was sent at all is, I think, a sad testament to the state of the sport of dogs in particular and society in general.

In the e-mail, the writer asked, “When you were specializing dogs, were you able to maintain friendships with those who owned or showed dogs you were competing against? I had a problem in the past with this when showing [dog’s name], and this year again. I am competitive, but if I don’t win I don’t care who does, so long as it’s a good specimen of the breed.”

Dog shows and people at the shows have changed. When I began showing dogs in the very early 1970s, the breed was not as popular as it is now. At shows, exhibitors always stayed to watch the entire judging of the breed and often stayed to watch the Best of Breed winner compete in the Sporting Group. People actually talked to each other and enjoyed it. New exhibitors could easily chat with those who had been involved with the breed for many years, gaining invaluable knowledge about the breed in general as well as about specific dogs in their own dog’s pedigree. Dog shows were as much a social activity as a competitive one. To be sure, each exhibitor wanted to win, but not winning was done as gracefully as winning. People not only dressed like ladies and gentlemen, they acted like ladies and gentlemen.

Complaints about judging in those