

Chesapeake Bay Retrievers

Passion for the Breed

It never ceases to amaze me when fanciers reflect on the subject of their astounding passion for the Chesapeake Bay Retriever breed.

I attended a wedding this past weekend and ran into friends who had gotten their first Chesapeake about 25 years ago. The father and his son often hunted with the dog, and the mother and daughter always thoroughly enjoyed their pet and her many antics. These folks have always had only one Chesapeake at a time and recently have become owners of their third. Once having owned the breed, it was the only one they could ever want and find suitable for their needs.

In the mid-1940s, a couple befriended a Chesapeake while on their honeymoon. Shortly thereafter the wife received one of the breed as a very special gift from her beloved husband. That couple—my parents—became the founders of Eastern Waters Chesapeakes, which is now shared by me and my siblings. I could not begin to count how many families have adored this breed and carry on the tradition over multiple generations. Over many years of showing in conformation, I have spoken with judges who have had pleasant experiences with the breed. The late William Kendrick befriended a Chesapeake when he was a child. Dr. Harry Smith's father owned the breed and used them as hunting dogs. Both Mr. Kendrick and Dr. Smith have always had a special feeling toward Chesapeakes.

What is it about Chesapeakes that appeal to special people? They are a bid-dable breed and are individualistic, with personality; they are protective and adoring of children, comical with their famous snicker smile, playful with balls and other toys, and loyal and loving to the owner and the family. They are proven as a fantastic hunting dog, especially in cold waters, with all-day stam-

ina for the duck hunter. They perform well in field events, obedience, tracking, and agility. There are numerous cases of heroic rescue of children by the Chesapeake.

Chesapeakes are a hearty breed, with a typical life span of 13 to 14 years. The loss of the family pet is always heart wrenching, subsequent to which many families carry on with a new addition—a Chesapeake puppy. The care and rearing of the puppy is always a rewarding experience, with the milestones of the first swim, the first retrieve, and the dog-person relationship that develops so quickly.

I recall wrestling as a child with Chesapeakes on the floor, the family soccer ball—chasing games with the dogs, the swimming events, and talking at them to get them to snicker and smile. Always lovable, they sought attention and petting, would jump up and lick you, and would just always be glad to see you when you came home.

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



The Very Useful Down-Stay

I never gave much thought to the versatility of the *down-stay* command until recently. We all know how very important it is to have one's dog come when called, but the *down-stay* command is often only associated with the obedience ring.

As we often have visitors to my household, my Curlies are allowed to greet guests and then must go to an area where they lie down and stay there. This may last quite a while, but as new pups come into the household, they soon learn to stay very well, as the mature dogs set a good example.

Our recent trip in the motor home, during the hot part of summer, was fraught with maintenance problems. We had many hours of waiting in four different repair shops while the problems were taken care of. Due to the heat, the dogs could not stay in the motor home while

it was being worked on. Instead, they were allowed in waiting rooms with us. Fortunately they knew the *down-stay* well, and they spent many hours lying down.

Today we had visitors, and they brought their 16-year-old, blind, and deaf little Poodle with them. I had the dogs meet him very carefully; the two oldest were very careful not to bother him. The youngest Curly, very inquisitive, was also careful not to bother him and seemed to sense his handicap. However, since he was not used to our home and a bit apprehensive, all three Curlies had to *down-stay* while he roamed around, using that one powerful sense that he still has; his nose. Again, this command proved to be very useful.

While I am on the subject of obedience, which is a favorite activity of mine, the recent new classes added in obedience trials are proving to be very interesting. Granted, all clubs do not offer the optional tiding levels, but if you are at all interested in obedience, attend a trial and see what is taking place these days. I took advantage of the Graduate Novice class when it first was offered and found it provides a really nice transition into the Open class.

The next time you are having a bit of trouble with having your dog stay in the down position, remember that this exercise may well prove to be a huge help in the future. —Ann Shinkle, Grand Island, Fla.; amshinkle@aol.com ♦



Flat-Coated Retrievers



Barking

As with most breeds of dogs, the Flat-Coated Retriever primarily barks either when frustrated or when feeling threatened. Neither of these situations is fun for the dog, and any excessive barking should be viewed by the owner as a serious problem.

Frustration is the more common problem with the very social Flat-Coat. It can happen because the Flat-Coat wants to play and can't reach what is on