

The Weimaraner - an Introduction

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The Weimaraner was originally developed as a hunting dog to be used in the pursuit of large game such as deer and wild boar. They were first bred in the Weimar Republic and were owned by approved people only to ensure purity of bloodlines and maintenance of hunting ability.

Today the Weimaraner is a Hunt, Point and Retrieve gundog and is used by rough shooters and for field trials. The breed is becoming increasingly popular as a show dog and household pet.

Could I own a Weimaraner?

Everybody who is interested in the breed should ask this question and bear in mind the following points:-

A Weimaraner is not necessarily a good choice for the first time dog owner.

The Weimaraner demands human company and can respond badly to spending long periods of time alone. If you work full time and have no-one experienced or energetic enough to cope in your absence - forget it.

They are intelligent and easily bored, can be extremely destructive and will simply provide their own entertainment if you do not provide it for them. Demolishing chairs, tables, and gardens are favourite pastimes for bored Weimaraners.

A puppy will grow to adult size very quickly but does not catch up mentally until later on. Therefore you have an adult size dog with boundless energy and the ability to wreak havoc if not properly raised from the outset.

Males can be dominant with other dogs and both sexes can be aloof with people if not correctly trained and handled. Once they know their place in the pecking order and are secure they can be loving and affectionate.

They are incredibly loyal and loving to their owners and, when correctly trained are responsive and obedient. They have a strong desire to please those they love and respect but they do not suffer fools gladly.

Training needs to be carried out with a firm but kind approach and needs to be consistent from the first day you take your new puppy home, not as an afterthought when the dog is approaching adulthood and is already causing problems. Weimaraners are a strange mix of stubbornness and sensitivity but when the right approach is used are a delight to work with.

They are natural retrievers and great fun can be had playing games that encourage this instinct. Hiding toys and sending your pup to find and fetch them is fun and training combined.

Exercise.

Weimaraners are a large and active breed. They need to be able to **run free in safe areas** and also require lead walking on the roads and around town to socialise with other dogs and people and to maintain lead training

Allow at least an hour a day just for physical exercise. Mental exercise is equally important and a role in life either as a gundog, or participating in other activities such as showing, obedience or agility is the ideal.

Puppies must not be over exercised. Running up and down stairs can cause joint damage and must not be allowed. Until the age of 6 months puppies need only garden play and short walks on the lead to socialise and train with 5 or 10 minutes free running, again to train the puppy to return when called.

Pulling and wrestling with any breed of dog are bad as they are 'power' games which encourages a dog to fight you for something. Dogs who are retrievers should be encouraged to have a soft mouth and release anything they have picked up without a battle. Never chase a puppy and grab at something it is carrying. A Weimaraner puppy should be taught to bring the item to you and should be rewarded for bringing you his most treasured possessions - even if it is a mouldy old chew!

Feeding.

All large dogs need a good balanced diet. Puppies need to be fed up to 4 times per day. Adults need 2 meals per day and must not be exercised close to feeding and particularly **never** afterwards because of the risk of bloat and gastric torsion - this is a condition that can affect any larger dog but is quite common in some breeds and usually fatal.

There is now a huge choice of food available. Be guided by the breeder or vet and choose the best quality food you can afford.

Health.

On the whole Weimaraners are healthy and robust but are accident prone due to their boisterous approach to life. Insurance is a good idea. Hip dysplasia is a disease many people have heard of and it affects many breeds of dog. HD can be screened for by x-raying breeding stock and ideally only low scoring dogs should be bred from. If this is of concern to you ensure any breeders you approach show you the Kennel Club Certificate with the Hip Score of the sire and dam. The ideal score is 0:0 - which is very rare. The average for Weimaraners is 13 total (e.g. 7:6).

There are other, possibly inherited, problems which are seen in many breeds. Ask advice from a vet or the Weimaraner Club of Great Britain, read books on the breed, and ask breeders who, if they are honest and reputable, will be happy to discuss this with you.

Dogs and Children.

Weimaraners are fine with children who respect them and their needs. If your children are well mannered and controllable it is likely that your puppy will be too. By the same token, if your children are noisy, boisterous and demanding.....!

No young child should be left to play alone with any dog, nor be in charge of that dog in a public place.

If you have young children do you have the extra time spare to cope with rearing a puppy? Do you have the energy and inclination to walk the dog in foul weather, then cope with muddy children and a wet dog?

Purchasing a Puppy.

Once you have researched the breed and decided you can offer a Weimaraner a good environment in which to spend his life the next step is to locate a breeder.

The Kennel Club and breed clubs will provide names and addresses. Discover Dogs at Crufts in March, or Earls Court in November are another good starting point. Championship Dog shows are held all year round in different locations and here it is possible to see lots of Weimaraners and to talk to exhibitors. The Internet is a good source of information but there is no control to prevent misrepresentation.

Reputable breeders will not advertise in trade magazines or local free papers.

Anyone who breeds a litter should not be doing it to make money, but unfortunately people do. It is important for you to check a breeder's credentials in the same way they should check yours before agreeing to sell you a puppy. Caring breeders want to be there to support you if you have problems.

What should you get for your £500+?

1. A healthy, happy eight week old puppy. Tail docked, dew claws removed.
2. Kennel Club Registration papers.
3. Six weeks free insurance. (Insurance costs around £150-£200 per annum).
4. A five generation pedigree.
5. A sample of food.
6. Puppy pack containing advice sheets and application forms for breed clubs.

Jeanette Meech, Marshfield, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire GL56 0JD

Tel: 01608 652091 e-mail: jeanette@meech.demon.co.uk