



Pointers In Need Information Sheet #5

“Introducing the Pointer” (One is never enough!)

March 2022



“Jasper” – Droveborough the Twitcher. (show line)

History – a noble breed:

THE POINTER is without doubt the aristocrat of the gundog breeds. The origin of the breed is not entirely known for sure, but it is thought that the Pointer we know today originates mainly from the Spanish pointing dogs imported around 1700. While he possibly begins to appear in early paintings dating from around 16th century, the breed was at its most popular when the large UK sporting estates existed in the 1800s. Rated highly for his scenting abilities, his athleticism, his stamina, he can quarter the moor, covering a great deal of ground quickly and efficiently and pick up the scent of a game bird at which time he will stop and go on point. (“Point” - The classic stance of rigid head and frame with tail held straight out, and a front foot raised and bent at wrist and elbow - hence the name Pointer). He then flushes the bird for the gun. With the introduction of the more versatile HPR (hunt, point, retrieve) breeds such as Springers and Labradors, Pointers for the hunting fraternity eventually became less in demand.

Character – the lovable aristocrat:

POINTERS are regarded as a large breed with males averaging around 25”-27” at the shoulder and females a little shorter. Males weigh in on average at around 30kg-32kg. His head has a classic ‘dish faced’ appearance which is a characteristic of the breed. The Pointer is an elegant dog with clean lines. He has a trademark bee sting tail, so called because of its shape which tapers to a point, but it is never docked; and generally held out straight and is frequently wagging unless on point. He comes in four colours: black and white, orange and white (with black nose), liver and white, and lemon and white (with a brown nose). Occasionally, solid-coloured Pointers are seen. Blankets, that is to say solids, are usually black or liver with usually white/speckled legs, can be found but are not

overly common. Finally, tricolours are possible, but are rarely seen. The Pointer (also referred to as the English Pointer to distinguish it from its German cousin), is powerful, graceful, and aristocratic. He carries his head proudly.

The Pointer has an alert, some say aloof, expression and a well-muscled, athletic body. The nose is set higher than the rest of the muzzle. His upper lip is full but not slack. The eyes are hazel or chestnut depending on the colour of the coat. The medium-sized ears are pendant and somewhat pointed. Show ring dogs would expect to have a scissors bite, however level bites, under/overshot jaws (quite common in foreign rescues) would not affect the normal eating functions of the dog. The neck is long. The feet are oval. The Pointer is a healthy breed and has no required health tests, although some breeders do carry out hip scoring which forms part of breeding responsibility. The average age to which Pointers live is around 12-13 years, but 15/16-year-olds are quite possible.

Pointers are loving, loyal, gentle, sweet, and affectionate, and love to be around you.



"Murphy" – Gamedawn Tullibardine



"Bob" – Bob de la Benigousse

He should have a kind and gentle disposition which goes with his working background. Pointers may be slightly aloof with strangers. He needs to be treated in a kind manner but with firmness as and when needed in training. He makes a marvellous family pet for the active family and is most suitable for a countryside home, although he will live happily in suburbia, provided he gets out for exercise regularly. He is not, however, a dog for a built-up area where the only place for exercise is an unfenced park next to a busy road where he would have to stay on lead. You need to be able to relax and let him enjoy his freedom somewhere safe. It is important to give a Pointer sufficient exercise on a regular daily basis to keep him fit and happy.

Training – *the challenge, the intelligence and the independence:*

As a minimum, you should expect to provide two hours free running per day. He will quite happily take more, and it is sometime hard to wear him out! As mentioned above, a safe place away from busy roads where he can be let off the lead is essential, particularly when he is young and may possibly chase a bird into the path of danger.

While originally bred as a working dog, the Pointer is fairly versatile and they can, for example, be trained to do agility and canicross; which they love.

Any problems owners have with Pointers arise from one of two things: the first is a dog that isn't exercised sufficiently who becomes bored and may chew or be generally unruly. The second is one who is prone to bouts of selective deafness, particularly when a scent is picked up. A good recall is a challenge for even the most experience

Pointer owner. It is therefore essential to start training, particularly with recall, from an early age. Letting the dog off from when he is a puppy and getting him to recall for a reward, then let him off again for another run. He will then learn from a young age that coming back to his owner is a good thing and doesn't necessarily mean being put back on the lead. He will generally respond very well to a whistle.

It is also vital to socialise a Pointer from when he is a puppy. Having a soft disposition, he needs to be exposed to things that he might otherwise find scary when he is older. This socialisation will include exposure to different noises as well as to things he might see. It is also important that he meets lots of people – young, old, tall, small, etc. while he is young. He will accept cats if he is brought up with them from an early age but is less likely to be accommodating the older, he gets without such earlier interaction.

He is not generally a dog to walk at heel when out with you, much preferring to be hunting and exploring in the hedgerows/trees at the furthest part of a field from you. You'll find you will spend a lot of time walking alone without the dog by your side if he's off lead!

He is not generally known as a guard dog, although some of the larger males could be seen as slightly intimidating due to their size, and a big dog bark.

Care & Feeding – *the easy bit:*

He is an easy breed to care for. His coat is short, and it just needs a brush occasionally to get rid of the loose hairs.



"Bob" (Rescue working line)



"Nubi" and "Bob"

If he starts to moult, then a rubber grooming mitt will lift the loose hairs. If he gets dirty, he can easily be brushed clean once dry.

As far as feeding is concerned, Pointers do well on any working dog diet during their active years. You may find that feeding twice a day will help to keep weight on active youngsters. Pointers also do better if meat is added to the diet, even if feeding one of the high-quality diets. If they lose condition while growing it can take a while to get the weight back on to them. Pointers are also happy on a raw feed diet. Of course, once you have an older dog who is not as active, or a spayed bitch, then you will need to cut back on the amount fed. Some Pointers can be picky eaters but that is the exception to the rule since an active dog will usually be a hungry one! Remember also that advice will always be available from a good breeder for the lifetime of your Pointer.

If you can put in the time and effort with the early training and give him some free-running exercise each day, then you will have a Pointer that you can really enjoy as a companion throughout his life.

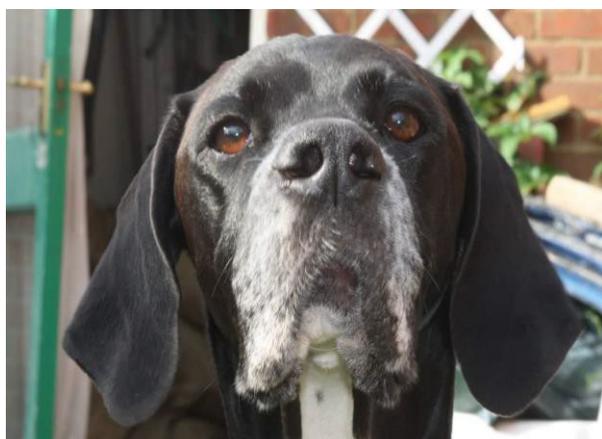
It should be noted though, that dogs from "working lines" and particularly those rescued from Europe, will be that much higher work instinct, and thus probably NOT ideal for a first time Pointer owner.

At home – the adorable companion:

He will steal the sofa and prefers to be there rather than in his own bed; can clear a house with his farts; loves cuddles, and will want to be on your lap and in your face. Sleeping on their backs with all four legs pointing skywards and other contorted sleeping positions are not unusual, if just a bit comical. He will frequently lean against you and will have his front legs on your shoulders. Some love water others detest it (including rain); they can be destructive, decapitating and disembowelling a toy within minutes of being given it, and finally have a face you just can't be angry with!

Although not an overly common breed in the UK nowadays like a Labrador or Staffie, there are many Pointers in the UK, but in some areas, you will be lucky to see another whilst out. Be prepared for passers-by to ask, “is that a puppy Great Dane?” Be prepared too for other Pointer owners making a bee-line to you and your dog wanting to say hello!

They are quite happy as a single household dog, but do are at their best having other dogs around.



“Nubi” – Bestina Anubis (show line)



“Murphy” (working line)

All in all, a well-tempered, loving, loyal, stunning family dog provided you understand his needs. Most Pointer owners will tell you once you have one, you'll want two, three. (**One is never enough!**)

The best way to get to understand the Pointer is to talk to a current owner – or contact the Team, all of whom are experienced Pointer owners themselves and who love to talk endlessly about the breed. Contact details below.

www.pointersinneed.org.uk
info@pointersinneed.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 1196922