

Weimaraners

Boy or Girl?

Responsible breeders have a “job description” that includes far more than the production of puppies. To be a good breeder, a person should be willing to take on the role of educator, whose job is to influence, guide, and teach those who are about to acquire a puppy.

From my own experience at placing puppies, the first “rough cut” in screening a potential home is based on whether or not the breed is appropriate for the buyer’s lifestyle and their expectations for their dog.

If prospective buyers pass my test of “Is a Weimaraner for you?” the next question they often ask is “Should we get a male or female puppy?” Here is where a knowledgeable breeder should give advice that is tempered by experience and accompanied by facts about breed and gender characteristics.

First, there are the obvious things to point out, like the size differential between the sexes. While no one interested in a Weimaraner is expecting a small dog, the size and strength of our breed is a factor that cannot be overlooked. Since the males are bigger and can weigh 10 to 15 pounds more than their feminine counterparts, this fact needs to be brought to the attention of the buyer.

Next, we get into gender differences in behavior and personality. Before I’m taken to task for spouting stereotypes about the sexes, I’ll admit that this is exactly what I am doing. There are tremendous variations in individual personalities, but some generalizations seem to hold up when you compare the sexes.

I’ve heard people say, “If you want a good dog, get a male, but if you want a great dog get a female, and hope that luck is on your side.” If a buyer wants an affectionate, happy-go-lucky dog who seeks and easily gives affection, a boy puppy is just their ticket.

On the flip side, the boys are more easily distracted and always seem to have one eye on the horizon. Boys may have the attention span of a gnat, but

they're rollickingly good-natured about it and will work diligently to please, despite playfulness being their middle name.

And what about the lady dogs?

While they too are affectionate, they tend to be more independent, as though they have their own agenda.

When your agenda overlaps theirs, everything is in sync, however the girls always retain the right to do things the way they think they should be done.

When motivating a female, it's wise to couch your tactics around an assumed "What's in it for me?" attitude. The girls are shrewd survivors who negotiate partnerships; the boys are open-as-a-book playmates.

As I write this, my male has his head in my lap and thumps his tail every time I look down at him. Meanwhile my female is glued to the window, watching for the neighborhood cat to make her daily rounds. It's as though they're illustrating my observations on the differences in male and female behavior.

A friend of mine who is an accomplished trainer may have summed it up best in her description of one of her males and her females. "Such a sweet boy. You give him a command, and he does it without question. Then there are the girls ... they want to know, 'Why?' " —Carole Lee Richards; ymar_column@yahoo.com; Weimaraner Club of America website: weimaranerclubofamerica.org