

HISTORY OF THE GERMAN WIREHAired POINTER

by Bernee Brawn

Versatile!

Just what is a German Wirehaired Pointer made of?

The German Wirehaired Pointer (Deutsch-Drahthaar) was developed in Germany in the late 1800's by a group of sportsman looking to produce a breed that could do it all. At that time, there were many groups trying to develop a "supreme" hunting dog and many of our foundation breeds *almost* fit that bill. However, they were still looking for *more!*

The Goal

The goal of this particular group of breeders was to produce a dog that could find and point game, as well as retrieve any game that was wounded or killed. The dog must work the thickets on command, track and trail, as well as retrieve on land and in water. With appropriate training, the dogs must work equally well with game birds, rabbits, fox, deer and boar. They wanted a dog calm in disposition, but brave in the face of diversity. They had to be good family companions, but would guard the home and bounty of the family. They had to retrieve gently, but be willing to dispatch vermin if asked to. They had to have the drive necessary to independently search the marshes for a wounded goose, but work closely to the gun in the heavy forests.

This group decided to use whatever breeds they thought would contribute to the final product and their motto was:

"TAKE THE GOOD WHERE YOU CAN FIND IT AND BREED AS YOU LIKE, BUT LET THE RESULTS BE YOUR GUIDELINES; BE HONEST AND TELL THOSE WHO ARE STRIVING FOR THE SAME OBJECTIVE, WHAT YOU HAVE DONE."

At that time there were many "rough coated" breeds, and each filled a particular niche in the

hunting dog world. Apparently this group knew their final product should be rough coated, since most of the breeds they used carried a wire coat. But they also used a smooth coated breed for its working abilities. The breeders kept records of the dogs used to produce each litter, and even today you will find references to the "motherlines" or what breed the parents lineage came from.

A Little of This, a Little of That

This practice of "cross breeding" continued well into the 20th Century and still affects the GWP today. Breeders must remember the heritage of the GWP and not be surprised when traits of some of these foundation breeds pop up in their litters.

The various breeds that were used were chosen for certain traits; coat, tracking ability, temperament, water love, braveness, pointing etc. The Griffon was chosen for its calmness and love of water, its ready adaptability to all species of game, all climates, and all varieties of terrain, nose and ease of training; the Stichelhaar for bravery, calm temperament and tracking abilities; the Pudelpointer for the abilities of the Pointer as well as the high degree of intelligence and sporting abilities of the Poodle. The first cross of the Pudel (Poodle) and an English Pointer to establish the new breed took place in Germany in 1881. The idea behind this breeding was to combine the outstanding natural working abilities of the two great specialists in one dog: The intelligence, water love, retrieving instinct, easy trainability and willingness to please, wrapped into the protective coat of the Pudel with the unending desire to hunt, birdiness, pointing instinct, field nose and endurance of the English Pointer; the German

Shorthaired Pointer (Deutsch Kurzhaar) to intensify the pointing instincts and adaptability. All of these breeds brought desirable coat characteristics.



The Goal is Reached

The fight for recognition of the Deutsch Drahthaar in Germany was hard and long, and not until 1928, (after the breed had held the leading position in registrations for

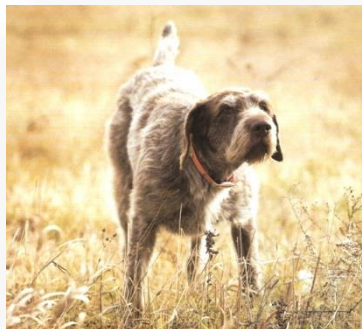
sporting dogs) did the Deutsch Drahthaar gain membership in the German Kartell for dogs. It was finally commonly recognized that the breeders had reached their goal to develop a rough-coated sporting dog that answered the sportsman's all-around demands.

The first Wirehairs were brought to this country in the early 1920's.

However, it was not until after World War II that the breed achieved any degree of popularity here. A breed club was formed by a group of 10 Chicagoans in 1950 and the breed was officially recognized by the

American Kennel Club in 1959 as the German Wirehaired Pointer.

Some of the early kennels, such as the Haar Baron kennel of Louise Faestel, set a precedent for breeding truly dual quality dogs. Many of today's dual champions and Best In Show dogs go directly



back to the Haar Baron line. DC Haar Baron's Gremlin is the top producer (dam) of Field Champions, many of them being Duals, and can be found in the pedigrees of

at least six Best In Show German Wirehaired Pointers. The late Helen Case Shelley, active in both German Wirehaired and German Shorthaired Pointers, was also a patron of Dual dogs. Promoting Wirehairs in both conformation and performance events. Helen campaigned multiple BIS dogs, including Ch. Mueller Mills Valentino, and two of her Dual Champions were also National Field Champions. Current breeders are very fortunate to have had such dedicated predecessors.

Today, the main job of the German Wirehaired Pointer is still that of an "all around hunting dog". The GWP is a wonderful companion for those who have the time (and sense of humor) to train and

entertain them. The breeds strong willed nature, high energy level and willingness and ability to think for itself makes it quite a challenge for the weak of heart or for those who cannot bring themselves to discipline a cute fuzzy faced puppy.



For more information on GWP's visit the German Wirehaired Pointer Club of America website.

www.GWPCA.com

