

# LIVING WITH A Wirehaired Pointing Griffon

By Susan Edginton

**T**he Wirehaired Pointing Griffon (WPG or Griff) is a versatile sporting/hunting dog used to hunt upland game birds and waterfowl.

The Griffon is an intelligent, athletic, slower paced, closer working hunter. Griffons tend to "check in" with their humans when hunting. With webbed paws and a double coat, they are excellent swimmers. If you ask owners who hunt with them, they are the ultimate all-weather, all-terrain hunters. In Europe, they are used to hunt small game, and to track wounded prey. Many Griffons are dual field and show ring champions. They also compete in Agility, Obedience, Tracking and Hunt Tests. Griff's do it all. Griff's can be happy as pets in a non-hunting home, but it needs to be in a very active one, so they are able to exercise as if on a hunt. They very well may hunt birds, rabbits and squirrels in your backyard. (You may have even seen them point birds in the show rings.) They are happiest when working hard. Griff's are not good city dwellers, nor a kennel dog 24/7. In general, a Griff is a good family dog, playful, gentle, faithful and protective of its family.

## Living With a Griff

Griff's are easily trained. They want to please their owners, and a light hand is recommended. Many a Griff owner knows a Griff does not think of itself as a dog, but a person and as such wants to be with its people as much as possible. There are many words that can be applied to this breed: smart, clownish, curious, passionate, exuberant, of sound temperament... just ask their owners and you'll find many more that apply. Griff puppies work their way into your heart the first time you hold them. They love to play and often challenge you with their antics.

With their bushy beards, and an ability to sop up all the water from their bowl, you may find that your floors are cleaner and your face wetter with a Griff in the house. They have a goofy personality and often greet you with something in their mouth (a shoe, a toy) wanting to play. If left alone, they will find something to occupy them with a purpose: food on the countertop, leather shoes left out, anything in the yard, a tissue that surely must need shredding, inventing games.

## Life Span & Coat Care

Given proper care, nutrition, and exercise they can live for 12 years and some as long as 15. Griff's don't shed a lot and usually have an unkempt look. They need brushing about once week, trimming around their paws and ears as needed, and an occasional stripping of their coat especially as they lose puppy coat. A Griff is not fully mature until about 3 years old, when their coats are full and their bodies are fully developed.

## Should You Get a Male or Female?

This depends upon your personal preference. Their sizes vary with the sex, males are larger 22"-24" at the shoulder and 55-65 pounds; females are 20"-22" and 45-55 pounds. There are some differences in personality, but nothing significant.

## Where can I Find a WPG?

The WPGs are still relatively rare. If you are fortunate to live near a respected and reputable breeder, or find one in another location, you may find yourself on a waiting list, and it is worth the wait. Do your homework and find the correct breeder for you.

Griffons are a delight to live with and Griff owners agree that their lives have NEVER been the same since they introduced the WPG into their household and THEY became beloved by a Griff. Be prepared to answer the question "What kind of dog is that?" on a daily basis.

