

The Hunting Style of the Golden Retriever

The Golden Retriever originated in the Scottish Highlands in the Late 1800's and was used predominately for hunting upland game and waterfowl. The breed was developed by Lord Tweedmouth and interestingly the tweed spaniel (now extinct) played a large part in the breeds' background. The versatility of a Golden Retriever as a hunting dog is demonstrated by its enthusiasm, drive and exceptional bird sense combined with it being a biddable and efficient hunting companion.

The Golden, when on game either by air or ground scent , will show a good nose along with persistence and the excitement you would expect of any breed determined to flush its game to flight. A well trained Golden will likely work a field within gun range either in heavy or light cover. Its hunting pattern, dependent on the owners/trainers preference along with the prevailing winds, will be methodical and the dog should not avoid dense cover.

The bird finding abilities will vary somewhat depending on training received and the dog's in-born traits. Many Golden's will naturally flush in a bold manner while some, if a bird is sitting in tight dense cover, may show a location or slight hesitation. Either is acceptable as long as the dog flushes the bird on its own without urging from its handler. The Spaniel Hunting Test program is to demonstrate the traits and value of a flushing dog.

The Golden Retriever is always anxious to perform the retrieving portion of the job. They will demonstrate excellent marking and when released, they should pick up the bird with haste and deliver the bird with style and pride. The mouth of a Golden should be firm, yet gentle on game. Tracking and retrieving of wounded game is an important part of the test and should be relished with sense and purpose.

The Golden Retriever loves a water retrieve and will likely show an impressive entry. Willingness to enter water is a must and could vary from deliberate to bold.

Golden Retriever Club of American Kennel Club

May 2013