

Redlion Chesapeakes & Labradors

Dogs for hunting, competition and family

Jane Pappler
7 Easton Way, Southampton, NJ 08088
609 859-3570 - nofleas@aol.com

Article from Nov. issue of Field and Stream

Don't be mis-lead by those who say, "You train a Golden with sweet talk, a Lab with a rope, and a Chessie with a 2x4." Nothing can be further from the truth. Chessies require intelligent training, not extra force.

This all-American breed originated as the market hunter's dog back in the days when waterfowl were shipped from the Chesapeake Bay to distant markets. The market hunters lived a rough life and needed tough dogs that could share their load. Through selective breeding, they created a super intelligent dog with a came colored, thick, and oily coat; a dog that would work in any weather, retrieve countless downed birds without much direction, guard the hunter's bag and his possessions, and defend against all assailants. The Chesapeake Bay retriever has all those traits in spades.

Unfortunately, the Chessies specialties are increasingly seen as obsolete today. Consider this: Chessies are capable of working in any weather, but most hunters today stay home when the weather is really bad. A thick, oily coat gathers dirt and smells bad unless washed regularly. We don't shoot countless birds anymore, and most any dog has the fortitude to pick up today's bag limits allow. The Chessie's determination to guard the hunter's bag and possessions can also be interpreted as likelihood that the dog may bite the mailman. And as for its intelligence, the Chessie is so smart it doesn't need a trainer to figure out the most effective way to get a job done, and it often resists being forced to do things the trainer's way.

For all these reasons, Chessies have lost popularity among trainers who found the other breeds easier to mold to modern standards, and the breed's popularity among hunters has eroded as well (4,400 registered last year).

Nevertheless, if you are a hard-core hunter who cares more about getting the bird than maintaining field trial etiquette; if you want a dog that can carry a 12-pound goose effortlessly and will follow a cripple to the ends of the earth; if you want a dog that will never, ever refuse a retrieve, and will do anything for you if you will simply take it hunting, then the Chessie is the breed for you .(166,000 Labs registered last year and 62,500 Goldens)