

LIVING WITH LAKELAND TERRIERS

By Sara Peterka

Lakeland Terriers or Lakies as they are affectionately known, were originally bred by farmers and houndsmen to fill a niche. They needed a dog that was good around the farm and could be taught selectivity in prey. They needed a dog that was tough and gritty, one that could take on foe who might exceed their own size and weight, one that worked with the rest of the pack on a hunt. They needed an athletic and agile dog who was healthy and robust, a companion who had the stamina to hunt all day in extreme terrain and weather. Those characteristics have remained to today.

They fit into the class of long legged terriers with their cousins, the Welsh Terrier and Wire Fox Terrier. Comparatively the Lakeland Terrier should be smaller than the Welsh Terrier who is heavier boned and taller than the Lakeland. And although the Lakeland Terrier is shorter than the Wire Fox Terrier, the Lakeland should be heavier built than the Wire Fox Terrier. Personality wise, the Lakeland Terrier also fits in between the 2 as well. More fun loving and social than the Welsh Terrier, but not as active as the Wire Fox Terrier.

They are a pretty rare breed in the United States and taking one on a walk will initiate friendly curiosity as people try to guess if you've got a miniature Airedale or possibly Irish Terrier, or maybe a puppy. They are attractive companions, and they enjoy the attention and are happy to help you explain just who they are and what they do.

Early socialization is imperative, introducing your pup to people of all ages and appropriate dogs of all sizes helps ensure you will have a well-rounded companion. Lakeland Terriers should be friendly and outgoing with a "cock of the walk" attitude. They are go getters and do-ers, when

trained correctly, but if treated unfairly or overindulged they have the attitude and tools to be formidable. If undersocialized they can be fearful. Care must be taken to find a breeder who understands this as well.

Lakeland Terriers are problem solvers. They know what they want and they figure out a way to get it. This can be a blessing or a curse for trainers. Training needs to be firm, fair and consistent first and then give them validation for accomplishing tasks desired. They aren't terribly food motivated, so picking up a clicker and/or bag of treats where the relationship has not

been founded first will only present further frustration in the relationship. They take their work very seriously and need to feel valued for it. They excel at Earthdog, they love to track and to use their nose to find things. You can use this to create healthy games of hide and seek, but also, don't be surprised if your Lakie "finds" a varmint in your siding or somewhere else possibly inconvenient or destructive. They are incredibly adept and agile on agility equipment, but don't be surprised if your Lakie designs their own course. They love to learn new things, but don't thrive on





repetitive training. They are simply too smart to be expected to perform the same task over and over again and again.

They are sound structurally, and one of the more healthy breeds there are. They have benefited from the early expectations of

out proper training, can warn of (bark at) every leaf that falls or breeze that flutters. Certainly they are capable of being more discerning, though.

Lakies have a beautiful harsh double coat when maintained properly by hand plucking, but since finding someone who can pluck (or strip as it is sometimes called) a coat is difficult, clipping the coat will also suffice, however, the color and texture of the coat will fade. This is due to the fact that the color and texture of the hair is at the distal end, so once it is cut off, the coat becomes soft with loose curls. The coat does not drop out without provocation and so they are considered a non-shedding breed and suitable for some who can't tolerate lots of dander. They can be considered for those who might be allergic to other breeds.

Lakies do well with kids who are respectful. When properly socialized, they will tolerate light hugging, and investigation of beards and teeth and toes by young children. However, they will not tolerate abuse, and will stick up for themselves if light investigation turns into pinching and pulling. They enjoy the like-minded curiosity of a toddler and seem to enjoy the "partner in crime".

Lakelands are relatively small with relatively small bladders. This means more attention must be paid during house train-

airlines allow. They love a car ride or any other mode of travel available and relish in the idea of going somewhere and doing something.

Lakies naturally claim a territory that is larger than most city lots, meaning when living in town, one must expect to have a fenced yard (not capable of being dug under, climbed over or chewed through) or one must plan on walking the dog on lead to eliminate. You can not turn your Lakie loose and expect him not to go exploring, their inquisitive and outgoing nature does not equal "stays in yard". If your Lakie does go exploring, you can bet he will chase and touch and steal and learn every square inch of his neighborhood. This can mean trouble for you if you have not done your job socializing. Anything your Lakie sees as foe is fair game.

Lakelands take the "lake" in their name pretty seriously. They love hoses with sprinklers, and kiddie pools, and water dishes, and toilets, and puddles, and any place where water might be held to include lakes, streams, and ponds. Due to their build they aren't terribly strong swimmers, but they love to splash and play and put their whole head and body under water like little submarines. It is not untypical for them to go into the water and lay down and put their head under the water and flop it around as if to rinse their unique

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soundness and health, but it is important we not lose sight of the fact this must be maintained and not taken for granted.

Lakeland Terriers are also affectionately known as Laplanders. They curl up and fit perfectly on a lap, not too big and certainly not too little. They are incredibly intuitive. They make great nursemaids for you when you are under the weather and are gaining popularity as service dogs, especially emotional support dogs. They just know how their people are feeling and how to make them feel better. They know how to make their people feel safe and are ever watchful over those they care about. This means they can make good watch dogs, but with-

ing than for dogs with bigger bladders. They are not marathoners and especially not as young dogs when it comes to being able to hold their bladders all day long while you work. Thoughtful plans must be set in place before you bring a dog to your home about how and where you will have the dog eliminate. They learn quickly and are capable of being sneaky, so if you don't make a good plan ahead of time, trying to figure out how to solve the problem you created by teaching your dog to hide his elimination will be a problem you wished you didn't have.

They make great travel companions and most fit in travel bags for carry on where

fall and beard. No wonder some pet owners trim the beards short.

If you think a Lakeland Terrier sounds like the breed for you, it is suggested that you research to find a breeder who has experience and is able to mentor you, especially if it is your first Lakeland Terrier. Finding someone who asks you no questions and expects nothing of you, probably expects nothing of their dogs. Since the breed is challenging to raise correctly, this is not a good sign for having a puppy that has the proper early foundation. ■