

Meet the Breed: Elegance Meets Intelligence

Discover the Standard variety of the Poodle, a sporty and sophisticated companion.

Stephanie Horan

Few dogs are as elegant and sophisticated as the Standard Poodle, yet this stylish canine is also popular throughout the world as a highly intelligent, fun-loving companion. “[The Poodle is] a bright and energetic breed with a marvelous mind and a tremendous affinity for people,” says Del Dahl, publicity chairman for the Poodle Club of America and author of the book *The Complete Poodle* (Howell, 1994).

Leslie Newing has owned Poodles for more than 30 years and edits PCA’s newsletter, *The Poodle Papers*. “Poodles are great all-around dogs that train easily,” Newing says. “They are affectionate, caring dogs that have a great sense of humor. They are wonderful companions.”

Poodles are a single breed with three varieties. The Standard Poodle is thought to be the oldest of the three, but the Miniature and the Toy varieties were developed shortly after. The breed standard for all three varieties is identical with the exception of size.

A cloudy past

The Poodle probably originated as a water dog centuries ago, retrieving ducks and other waterfowl, and many owners today keep that instinct alive and well. Several European countries have claimed responsibility for the Poodle’s development, but the most popular theory is that the breed came from Germany. A large, black water retriever has been described in 16th-century German writings as a Pudel, which roughly translates to “splash in water.” The Poodle might be the original water spaniel, and may also be related to the Portuguese Water Dog. The breed is recognizable as early as the 15th century in drawings by the German artist Albrecht Durer (1471 to 1528) and in paintings by Spanish artist Francisco Goya (1746 to 1828).

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