

## Popular Dogs: German Pointer

**Differences aside, GSP and GWP breeds are both lovable companions.**

*Nikki Moustaki*

Between the words “Shorthair” and “Wirehair” are differences that some breed enthusiasts will say involves more than the type of coat. However, the German Shorthaired Pointer and the German Wirehaired Pointer have a lot more in common than you think. They are both versatile hunters, able to cover a variety of terrain, including dense brush and water; they are both affectionate housedogs, and both need a fenced yard and plenty of exercise. So, what’s so different?

Edwena Adcock, owner of Lochvogel German Wirehaired Pointers in Brisbane, Australia, has had both breeds, and sees a lot of similarities between the two. “Both breeds are outgoing, highly intelligent and quick to learn,” Adcock says. “They make great obedience dogs. They love people. They both need plenty of room to run around and good long walks where running free is involved.”

Upbeat, loving, ready for anything—all easily describe both breeds. They might not be so dissimilar after all. One thing is for certain—the followers of each breed are passionate. Jean Bernier of Omro, Wisconsin, who has four GSPs and has been active in the breed for 14 years, says she absolutely loves the GSP for its attitude. “They are willing to take on the world, and nothing is going to stop them. They can be a little arrogant at times, but they are loving dogs,” Bernier says.

“As hard and stubborn as they may appear, they are exceptionally soft,” Bernier adds. “One thing is sure, though. They will only work for someone they respect. You definitely need that bond.” The breed requires the love and attention of a human family, and as a sporting dog, bred to serve humans, it will wither without a close relationship with at least one human in its “pack.”

### The Wiry and Short of It

Essentially, the two breeds, though they share very similar names, have differing origins, which is why they vary somewhat in temperament. The GSP was the result of crosses with pointers, foxhounds and scenthounds. The GWP is descended from the GSP, and has been additionally crossed with griffons and other rough-coated sporting dogs.

The GWP is described by aficionados as a fearless dog with terrier-like qualities, though it has no terrier ancestry. According to the German Wirehaired Pointer Club of America (GWPCA), the GWP is “highly possessive... a smart, proud, ‘stand-up’ dog. If challenged by another dog, or seriously mistreated by humans, or when its home and family are in danger, a typical GWP is quite capable of fighting or biting.” These are all qualities found in a typical terrier. It can be aloof, as well, though it is quite affectionate with its human family.

The GSP is a more easy-going dog, considered bright and sweet by those who love them. “My GSPs range in personality from insistent and pushy to easy and tractable. Like humans, every dog is an individual,” says Nancy C. Campbell of Homesteader GSPs in Redding, Connecticut, and the German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America (GSPCA) rescue chairperson.

Campbell has bred many show Champions and owned the No. 1 GSP (all systems, which means according to any rating system used) for 2001, Ch. Summertime’s Southern Reign, CDX, JH, AX, OAJ, “Marley,” the same dog that won Best of Breed (BOB) and a group placement at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in 2003 in New York City.

“The breed description is a generalization,” says Campbell, who is also a volunteer with GSP Rescue of Connecticut and the National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA) director of canine issues. “Every individual Shorthair fits more or less within that general description, but will have unique characteristics. They are smart, comical, eager to please, but will sometimes also please themselves. They are affectionate, dependent on their owner’s presence, and love to play and show off. They are not for the sedentary, slow or impatient person,” she continues. “Dog-experienced people do better with them.”

Anyone who has either of these breeds knows that the energy of a gun dog is like a stick of dynamite, and leaving an un-exercised dog alone is the lit match. “The GWP and GSP are not the type of dogs that will sit around in the backyard day in and day out,” Adcock says. “If left to their own devices, your backyard and anything in it will become fair game.

They will dig; eat plants, shoes and furniture; chew door frames; and bark and annoy your neighbors.”

Both breeds are highly intelligent—they have to be in order to point, flush and retrieve game—but the GWP is often more reticent until it gets to know someone new, while the GSP may come bounding up to a new person to make instant friends. The GSP is also extremely loyal and trusting, as is the GWP.