

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Small Munsterlander Pointer, also known as the Small Munsterlander, Kleine Münsterländer, Heidewachtel or Spion, is a medium sized (about 40-60 pounds, 20-22 inches at the shoulder) highly intelligent and trainable long-haired versatile hunting dog. This breed possesses one of the finest noses for both air and ground scents among all gundog breeds. In Germany the performance capability of this breed is maintained by requiring testing of young adult dogs in order to permit breeding.

Because Small Munsterlander Pointers are a versatile hunting dog breed, they instinctively hunt, track and retrieve both fur and fowl on land and in the water; training is required to focus only on bird hunting. Their tracking ability, drive to retrieve, agility and focus make them excellent at game recovery. They are excellent water dogs with great endurance and love salt and fresh water, as well as surf and rapids. Their beautiful flagged tails are also important swimming tools for these dogs as are their webbed feet. Small Munsterlander Pointers are agile and athletic with powerful hocks; can sprint at up to 25mph and jump over considerable obstacles. In cool weather and with ample water, a properly conditioned healthy Small Munsterlander won't tire out on an all day hunt through wooded and thorny grouse terrain, steep and rocky chukar territory, brushy pheasant country, open partridge plains or mucky duck marshes.

Small Munsterlander pointers display flowing outlines with a horizontally carried tail and an aristocratic predominantly head with possible tints of auburn particularly on the long fur of the ears. When pointing they exhibit a typical horizontal "arrow point". Their glossy coat is straight or slightly wavy, dense and not too long, and without an undercoat. The fur around the neck and ears is particularly soft and luxuriant. They are most happy in moderate to cold climates and have been hunted in -60°F (wind chill) without additional protection. Small Munsterlander Pointers have negligible doggy odor and shed relatively little.

The coat of the Small Munsterlander Pointer exhibits many patterns involving brown and white. The background color is white with various brown plates, brown patches, brown ticks and possibly a brown mantle. Various regions of brown/white roan ticking are common, particularly on the lower legs, but possibly extending to most of the non-plated areas behind the head region. These areas may be sparsely ticked or very heavily ticked and the ticks may vary from almost pure brown roan ("dunkelschimmel") through medium roan ("braunschimmel") to light roan ("helleschimmel"). Puppies are grouped into two classes shortly after birth, Roan ("braunschimmel") and Plated ("Braun-Weiss"). Puppies exhibiting extensive pigmentation on the pads of their feet are designated as Roan; otherwise they are designated as Plated. After the coat has developed, Roan dogs are often referred to by the color of the ticking, thus, Dark Roan ("Dunkelshimmel"), Roan ("Braunschimmel") or Light Roan ("Helleschimmel"). The head color is predominantly solid brown with possible auburn tints and patches of white near the nose or a white blaze. Tan colored markings at the muzzle, the eyes and around the anus ("Jungklaus markings") may also occur.

TEMPERAMENT

Their temperament is enthusiastic and friendly, showing great focus when hunting yet relaxed in the house where they are often to be found sleeping near their owner. Small Munsterlander Pointers exhibit the independent thinking required for effective game search and recovery; this independence, however, is offset by a tremendous pack instinct, making them among the best pets to be found among hunting dog breeds provided they have an outlet for their hunting instinct. This breed is not appropriate for an environment where they do not have such an outlet, and acquiring one of these dogs because of their beauty and friendly personality without such an outlet can lead to frustration for both the owner and the dog.

Small Munsterlander Pointers are very compatible with children because of their close-up personal nature, their love to be petted, their trainability, and their respect for humans as leaders of the pack. Their love of people, their pack instinct and their love of companionship make them housedogs rather than kennel dogs. The “Munsterlander kiss” is another aspect of the close-up, personal nature of these dogs. They love to groom and lick their human companions; the “kissing” can be related to their desire to smell the food eaten by the human, to lick creams or oils on the skin, or just to show appreciation for being petted.

Small Munsterlander Pointers get along well with other animals and blend well with family cats and even large birds such as parrots. They enjoy the company of another dog and often like to sleep or rest together; however it’s always wise to introduce dogs to each other carefully, particularly in the case when both are dominant dogs of the same sex.

The combination of enthusiasm, independent thinking and excellent memory require more finesse in training Small Munsterlander Pointers than needed for some other gundog breeds. Finesse is particularly important during adolescence (4-10 months) when the pack instinct is still developing. This period requires patience and gentle firmness from the owner, and, depending on the individual dog, care must be exercised not to “traumatize” the young dog by excessive pressure while at the same time instilling the necessary obedience required for the rest of the dog’s life. Males, as a general rule, require somewhat more firmness than females during this period. This is the period when the dog should be exposed to as much game as possible in order to focus their hunting instinct. Correctional training with electronic collars (best done by someone with experience comparable to a professional trainer of “soft gundogs”) is effective after late adolescence, but seldom required for a properly trained dog over two years of age other than an occasional “reminder”. Reward training and bonding become continually more important as the dog matures with bonding the ultimate best method for obtaining maximum performance from this breed.

HISTORY

Prior to the 19th century, hunting was the privilege of landed upper class who had the financial resources to breed, train and manage large kennels of specialty dogs. The middle class arose in the 1800's and gained access to hunting through land ownership. These hunters wanted companion dogs with diverse hunting skills. Within Germany, however, aristocratic hunters strove to preserve the traditional hunting ethic with its profound respect for game animals. This ethic necessitated versatile hunting dogs skilled in recovering lost and wounded game, and not just in locating or retrieving downed birds or animals. Thus, the concept of the versatile hunting dog, *Jagdgebrauchhund*, became popular at the beginning of the 20th century, and several versatile hunting breeds were founded at that time.

In the Münsterland area of Germany (roughly east of Holland to Hannover and north through the moors) a search began about 1870 for a versatile long haired *Wachtelhund* (quail dog) breed. Hunting dogs in this part of Germany were already noted for their staunch point, their enormous search drive and their outstanding nose, capable of both air scenting and tracking. Several hunting aristocrats as well the famous poet, Hermann Löns, and his brother, Edmund, were among the leaders of this group.

In February of 1912, Edmund Löns wrote the following (excerpted translation) about the Small Munsterlander Pointer (which he called the ‘Spion’):

“The Spion is a small dog with beautiful lines and wiry physique, oblique shouldered, well angled and laid out in the hocks, that combines endurance, drive, speed and agility in a small package.

This is a dog which hunts by searching. In a moderate fast gallop a short distance before the hunter it thoroughly searches each area of cover, finding all game quickly without ever going ever out of hand. The sight of its flaglike tail provides a charming view. Now it quarters this way and then that way and then becomes still in a wonderful pose in front of the game.

Spion track running birds with skill, pressuring them toward the hunter and using other tricks that contribute greatly to the success of the hunt. The dog has the tasks of assessing the terrain; obtaining a reasonable shot for the Hunter as often as possible; and certainly retrieving any shot game.

Those who hunt in Münsterland, with its chopped up and confusing terrain consisting of thorny thickets, bushes and moors, understand how important is the ability to locate and retrieve what appears to be hopelessly lost game. The Spion is outstanding for this ability.

Shot game will be retrieved quickly and brought with a firm grip to the hand of the hunter.

The Spion has a strong will, and bad habits must be removed by good treatment and diligent training. The dog learns quickly if one acts right away. The Spion is an unusually good house dog, in that it is very largely quiet in the house, and is almost always by its master, whom it never, or only unwillingly, lets get out of sight of its pretty brown eyes. If you want to see it become animated, you need only take out and blow your hunt whistle, and it trembles with excitement, jumps and races about, it is so eager to get outside.”

On March 17, 1912, a group of 68 formed the *Verein für Kleine Münsterländer Vorstehhunde (Heidewachtel)*-the Small Munsterlander Pointer (Heath quail) Club--in the town of Osnabrück, north of the city of Münster.

The Small Munsterlander Pointer was accepted by the versatile hunting dog club (*Jagdgebrauchhund Verein*, or JGHV) that had been founded in 1899. To this day this club administers the tests that form the foundation for any versatile hunting breed. However, an acceptable breed standard did not appear until 1921 when Dr. Friedrich Jungklaus published a scientific work on Small Munsterlander Pointers and their breed characteristics. His description of the breed is still fundamentally valid today. The smaller stature of the Small Munsterlander Pointer is distinctive among long haired German versatile hunting dogs.

Small Munsterlander Pointers at that time were mostly plated, with many color variations (except black). *Braunschimmel* (broken color with white on roan or brown background) dogs first appeared in the mid 1920's, probably through one or more crossings with German Shorthairs. Liver and white are now the predominant colors for Small Munsterlanders, although glints of auburn are often apparent in their coats, particularly around the ears.

Germany is recognized as the parent country for the Kleine Münsterländer by the FCI.

There are more than 10,000 FCI registered Kleine Münsterländer in Germany alone, and the Kleine Münsterländer is the third most popular versatile hunting dog in Europe. The integrity of this breed in Germany is maintained by a testing program administered by the JGHV. This program tests hunting performance, conformation and temperament.

HEALTH

Documented and reliable objective health surveys have not been conducted for this breed, although health conditions, other than hip dysplasia, are not thought to be common in America. Epilepsy is known to occur in some countries in Europe. The results of health examinations by a qualified veterinarian and documented Penn-Hip test scores for hip dysplasia should always be obtained for at least both the sire and dam when considering a new puppy.