

## The Gordon Setter: Beauty and Brains

The Duke of Gordon is known as the "founding father" of the Gordon Setter breed, although the dogs were known throughout Scotland and England as early as the 16th century. In the United States the Gordon Setter was entered into the A.K.C. registry in 1892. This beautiful and flashy bird dog, a hunter of pheasants, quail and other game birds, still retains a strong "birdsense". In the modern world they are also adept at obedience and agility and of course are well known in the conformation ring. Like all the hunting dogs with strong instinct, the Gordon is a dog that will thrive on plenty of exercise and chances to explore. They are not safe unless in a fenced in area or on supervised walks, as they investigate their environment with their noses and following the trail of a squirrel is second nature to them! The Gordon Setter Club of America mentions three medical conditions which Gordon owners should be aware of. Like many of the deep chested breeds, the Gordon Setter is susceptible to Gastric torsion or bloat, which is life threatening. Also hip and elbow dysplasia can be a problem, as well as thyroid deficiency. The Gordon Setter weighs between 50-80 pounds and is between 23-26 inches in height. This is a dog with moderate bone and should be of moderate size, as being overly large in the field is not an advantage to a hunting dog. The coat is similar in nature to that of the flat coat retriever, being a coat which lies close to the body and being slightly wavy and feathered on the legs, ears, tail and underbelly. The Gordon has a tail that is constantly wagging and in motion this tail is carried out and proudly waving as he gaits. The color of the Gordon setter is a major consideration as it follows a specific "rule" which can deviate very little. The dog is black with rich tan or red chestnut markings over the eyes, around the muzzle, on the throat, chest and insides of the hind legs and on the forelegs. Any other color is not eligible to compete in the show ring and should not be used for breeding. The Gordon Setter is a fun loving and highly enthusiastic dog. They are puppies until at least the age of two, seeming to have boundless energy and enthusiasm. This is a dog which needs consistent training. However they are not considered "hard headed" and they do need to have a gentle but firm master. Once trained in obedience, the dog will respond well to his family and is a loyal and intensely affectionate companion. He is a dog which needs one owner or one family and does not often make overtures to strangers, being aloof but not aggressive by nature. They do not make good "kennel dogs", as they are needy of human companionship. Gordon Setters are protective of children and will tolerate much from their young charges.

## About the Author

They offer majestic beauty and fabulous recreational opportunities for all Americans to enjoy. They also are an important source of materials.

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