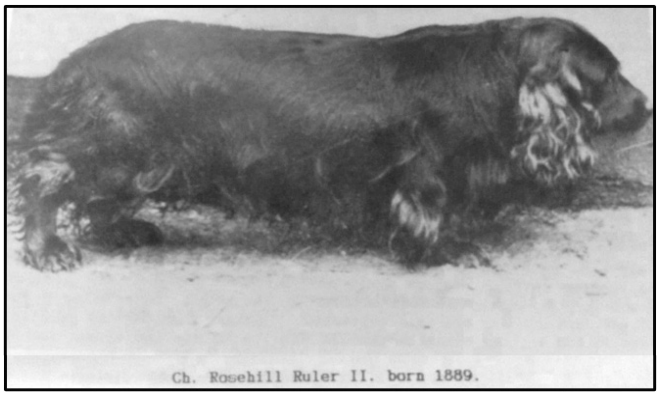
Congratulations

On behalf of the Sussex Spaniel Club of America, and welcome to the wonderful world of Sussex Spaniels!

The Sussex Spaniel Club of America, Inc. is the Parent Club of the Sussex Spaniel owners, breeders, exhibitors, and fanciers whose primary purpose is to preserve and advance the breed's existence into the future. Welcome to the breed and please reach out should you need our help and support. Contact information on reverse side.

History

Although the early history of the Sussex Spaniel is shrouded in mystery, two things are known for certain. The breed originated in Sussex County, England,


Ch. Rosehill Ruler II. born 1889.

sometime during the 18th Century, and the breed has teetered on the brink of extinction ever since. The golden liver color, the short legs and long body – the breed's most recognizable traits – were well established by the last quarter of the 1800's. Even after a deliberate attempt to alter the fundamental characteristics of the breed occurred following World War I in the United Kingdom, breed type managed to survive. This was the case even after repeated outcrosses to the English Springer and other spaniels took place. Today's Sussex Spaniels in America look nearly identical in type to those captured in photographs from the Edwardian and late Victorian eras.

The Sussex Spaniel was among the first ten breeds recognized by the American Kennel Club in 1884. Although a couple of Sussex reached America prior to the 1920's, importation of breeding stock from the United Kingdom did not occur until the early part of that decade. Breeders imported a few more during the Great Depression. One even arrived after the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe after having been rescued when a German U-boat torpedoed the ship carrying her. Although several American breeders were active during this time, the AKC registered the last descendant from these imports in 1951. After that date, the breed functionally was extinct in the United States until a dozen English-bred Sussex arrived during a five-year period beginning in 1969. From these twelve, most all present-day American-bred Sussex descend. While the population has grown over the past 50 years, the Sussex Spaniel remains critically endangered world-wide.

General Characteristics

Long, low, level, liver and lively tail action, the five "L's," best describe this breed. The Sussex Spaniel presents a long, low, rectangular and rather massive appearance coupled with free movements and nice tail action. The breed has a somber and serious expression. The rich golden liver color is unique to the breed. The height of the Sussex Spaniel as measured at the withers ranges from 13 to 15 inches. Their weight should range between 35 and 45 pounds. The tail may be docked or undocked. The body coat is abundant, flat or slightly waved, with no tendency to curl. The most important features of the Sussex Spaniel are the color and general appearance.

This breed instinctually connects to their owner, handler, as well as to strangers. A loyal companion they are, with a loving side that makes us simply enjoy their company. They can be energetic, lazy, or any variation in between. Some are prone to resource guarding whether it is to their favorite person or toy. As well, a dominant streak may come through occasionally, especially with bitches. Also, consideration must be given to co-housing males because they may become intolerant of one another.

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Insofar as temperament, the Sussex Spaniel can be friendly and cheerful, but also can be stubborn and strong-willed, or even a bit standoffish. They may be noisy at times, whether barking or howling. And if you're fortunate to have more than one, a howling symphony of sorts may take place. Persnickety also comes to mind with this wonderful breed.

Bottom line is once you think you got them figured out, guess again! Don't try counting the times you say or think, "Where did that come from?" They can get under your skin time and time again, but remember they're really just getting closer to your heart! A complete illustrated standard may be ordered from the club. See Information and Help.

General Care and Training

Early socialization is a priority. Take them to the park, or to a business that allows dogs, and take them while they're young in the formative stage. Exposure, training, and socialization are key to early development of well-rounded behavior.

Insofar as training goes, consistency is key with respect to a Sussex Spaniel. They are very intelligent, and are always watching, thinking, and discovering something new. They will test you to your end's wit, but the prize awaits. Their loving devotion prevails.

Sussex Spaniels are quick to learn and respond well to positive training. Again, consistency in training yields the best results. They can be successful in obedience and agility, as well as in conformation and field activities.

One of the earliest challenges you may discover is a Sussex Spaniel is difficult to housebreak. Diligence and patience are a must. Crate training is recommended as well. It is best not to overcorrect a Sussex Spaniel. They're rather sensitive dogs and don't take heavy handedness very well. Tender loving care along with consistent training render the best results.

Sussex Spaniels are natural hunters and as a result should never run loose unless under constant supervision. Furthermore, they are diggers and have a knack at digging holes in the yard and uprooting your flowers or vegetables in the garden. Herein again, consistent training helps in dealing with such.

Health Care

It is important to have a veterinarian identified for health care; such as, regular check-ups, immunizations, parasite treatment, and microchipping. A healthy diet and plenty of exercise are necessary for this breed.

Grooming

Bathing your Sussex Spaniel should be done at least monthly, or sooner if needed. For general care their coat needs regular combing or brushing. Mats are especially problematic, especially in the ears or feathering if outside any considerable amount of time. Always keep in mind when grooming a Sussex Spaniel that there's no "one size fits all" template.

The grooming priorities will be based on head, ears, coat, frill, feathering, and feet for the most part. Don't forget the nails. Overall, a Sussex Spaniel should have a natural coated look and not be overgroomed.

Breeding

Due to the extremely limited gene pool, breeding Sussex Spaniels require extensive knowledge of the breed as well as pedigree background. Whelping Sussex puppies isn't for the faint of heart. Newborn Sussex require constant care, attention, and oversight. Consult an experienced breeder before breeding. There are many and varied nuances that only a seasoned breeder may know when considering breeding. Rule of thumb is don't breed unless you're financially and ethically prepared to take on such an endeavor.

Supporting Health Research

Many Sussex Spaniel club members support health research through supporting the AKC Canine Health Foundation. This is a nonprofit charitable organization whose mission is to help dogs live longer, healthier lives. **For more information see www.akcchf.org or call toll free 888-682-9696.**

Information and Help

The Sussex Spaniel Club of America, Inc. website is:
www.sussexspaniels.org

For additional help and information contact our club at
assistance@sussexspaniels.org

