

Living with the CHESAPEAKE BAY RETRIEVER

By Joanne Silver



Congratulations! You are thinking about getting a new puppy. With this come joy, happiness, anxiety, stress and work. Getting your puppy off to the right start is the most important and rewarding thing you can do. You will hopefully have this puppy for 10 plus years of joy, doing things right from the beginning will pay off in the long run.

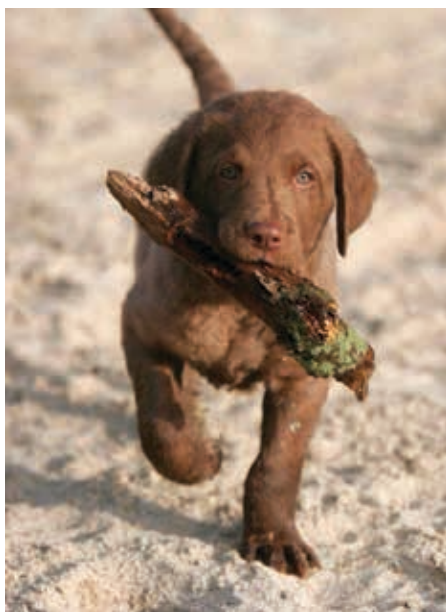
The Chesapeake Bay Retriever was named for the famous bay where the breed originated. The Chesapeake is one of the few American Breeds and the only

American Retriever. As the story goes, in 1807 a ship the *Canton* rescued the crew and two Newfoundland puppies from a sinking ship in the Chesapeake Bay area.

The Chesapeake is not a breed for everyone they are powerful and strong willed. I highly recommend meeting the breed before you buy one. Ok you have done all your research, found the right breed for your family and found the right breeder. You have discussed with the breeder the exact puppy you want whether for companion, show, breeding, hunting or field trials. This is important information to advise the breeder so that they put you on the right litter and puppy.

The Chesapeake is a versatile breed and can be used in many areas. The Chesapeake's are a fun breed and can be very entraining. They are famous for their work in the field but today they are excelling in the show ring, obedience, rally, agility, tracking, dock diving, and lure coursing, barn hunting, hunt tests and field trials. The Chesapeake can also make wonderful pet therapy dogs because of their outgoing personalities. Some have been used in Search and Rescue and law enforcement.

It is of the utmost importance to have your Chesapeake puppy well socialized and start early training. Many dog



training schools can be found through your local vet's office. Another great source is the American Kennel Club to find a local dog club near you. Many of these clubs hold a variety of group training classes. To start your puppy off right find a Puppy Kindergarten that trains with positive reinforcements and obstacles for confidence building. Chessies are extremely smart and very misunderstood by trainers who are not familiar with the breed. Why group classes? Chesapeake puppies need to be well socialized. Training in groups gives your pup the experience to meet other humans, dogs, and to learn to listen with distractions. Many trainers have heard that Chessies are difficult and stubborn; this cannot be further from the truth if you don't know how to handle the breed. Chessies are extremely smart and have an outstanding memory. Chessies are problem solvers which mean they are always thinking. They can be extremely easy to train basic obedience commands with positive reinforcement method such as food, balls, bumpers, wings, and praise. A Chessies will always ask "what's in it for me"? Your new puppy will want to please you so make it fun for him.

If you only try pop, jerk, and negative methods you could run into a Chessies pup thinking this is no fun and nothing in it for me.

The Chesapeake has a strong human bond to the family. You and your puppy will be a team for life. Every team needs

a leader. You must establish yourself as that leader to earn your Chessies respect. Given the opportunity, your Chessies pup will easily take over this position and may at times test your leadership. Therefore, early training will help establish your leadership. You will also have to be consistent in your training and use of commands. Please be sure that everyone in the household is on the same page using the same command. It can be very confusing to a young puppy to have several commands being used for one requested behavior. Example: Sit is "sit" and not "sit down". You have given the puppy two commands, does he sit or down?

The Chesapeake is a devoted family member and is good with children and can be protective of them. The first thing you want to do is get your Chesapeake off to the right start. They will make wonderful family companion dogs. They will dedicate themselves to the family. Since they are a watch dog you want to be sure you get them well socialized

The Chesapeake is an extremely strong swimmer and will seek out water when given the opportunity. Many a Chesapeake will swim for hours and enjoy swimming and retrieving with the family.

They are a moderate exercise breed. Usually in the house they will go and lay down. However, make a move towards the door or car and they are there. The Chesapeake will be more active outside when playing. Once a day a nice walk or 15 minutes of retrieving will make them happy. ■

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Sassy & Joanne Silver