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SPOTLIGHT

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The Field Spaniel is an intelligent problem-solver, highly trainable with a docile, independent and inquisitive nature.

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2021 Christmas Show**

**Preparing for Sydney Royal**

**Protecting your dog  
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“The sweet and sensitive Field Spaniel is famously docile, but vigorous and game for anything when at play or in the field. These close cousins to Cocker Spaniels and Springer Spaniels may be small in number, but their charm is enormous.” ~AKC



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## SPOTLIGHT

# Field Spaniel

## History

The Field Spaniel is a medium-sized dog breed of spaniel type. They were originally developed to be all-black show dogs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and were unpopular for work as a hunting dog. However, during the mid-20th century they were redeveloped as a longer-legged dog that was more suitable to be used for field work. <sup>1</sup>

Well into the 1800s, the several British spaniels used by hunters for flushing gamebirds were not classified by breed, as they are today. Rather, they were organised by size and job description. This changed late in the century, with the advent of dog shows in England. Suddenly, setting definite types and breeds became important, and a particular type of spaniel, born of Cocker, English Springer, and Sussex crosses, was designated as the Field Spaniel. These early Fields were an immediate hit in the show ring but also capable hunters. <sup>2</sup>

The breed's success in the ring encouraged breeders to produce a showy Field Spaniel, exaggerating its long, low shape to extremes - a "grotesque caricature of a spaniel," as one commentator put it. Such short-sighted breeding practices negated the Field's worth as a gundog and introduced health problems to the breed. The Field's decline in popularity was as rapid as its rise, and the breed soon teetered on the brink of extinction. <sup>2</sup>

Still, the Field's endearing qualities made it too good to dismiss. Dedicated fanciers of the 20th century worked to rehabilitate the Field. By the late 1960s, enthusiasts got back to basics and, with the re-introduction of Cocker and Springer blood, rebuilt the dog along its original lines. In the decades since, the Field Spaniel's rise and fall and rise again has served as a cautionary tale for dog breeders. <sup>2</sup>

## Appearance

Well balanced, noble, upstanding sporting Spaniel built for activity and endurance. <sup>3</sup>

The Field Spaniel coat comes in solid colours of black and liver, or in roan. Tan points, white markings on the throat and the chest can be ticked or the same colour as the rest of the body. They have a moderately long single coat with no undercoat. Feathering of the fur appears on the chest, belly, ears and on the back of the legs. The coat is not as heavy as that of a Cocker Spaniel but requires grooming in order to prevent mats from appearing in the fur. <sup>1</sup>



Coat: Long, flat, glossy and silky in texture. Never curly, short or wiry. Dense and weatherproof. <sup>3</sup>

Sizes: Height: approx. 46 cms at the shoulders. Weight: 18-25 kg. <sup>3</sup>

## Temperament

The Field Spaniel is an active and inquisitive breed and makes a good companion. However, if left alone and unoccupied for long periods of time, they may become bored and destructive. They are patient with children and like to stay close to their family.

They are suitable for dog agility and hunting and when socialised, they are good with other dogs. <sup>2</sup>





*'The sweet and sensitive Field Spaniel is famously docile, but vigorous and game for anything when at play or in the field.'*

*~ American Kennel Club*





## SPOTLIGHT

### Temperament

The sweet and sensitive Field Spaniel is famously docile, but vigorous and game for anything when at play or in the field. These close cousins to Cocker Spaniels and Springer Spaniels may be small in number, but their charm is enormous. Field Spaniels bear a family resemblance to Cocker, Springer, and Sussex spaniels. The distinctive glossy coat is either black, some shade of liver, or combinations of the two. The long, feathery ears frame a facial expression conveying a grave, gentle intelligence. Field Spaniels are sweet, sensitive souls with just enough independence to make life interesting. They are trustworthy with kids, tolerant of their fellow mammals, and responsive to training. <sup>2</sup>

### Suitability

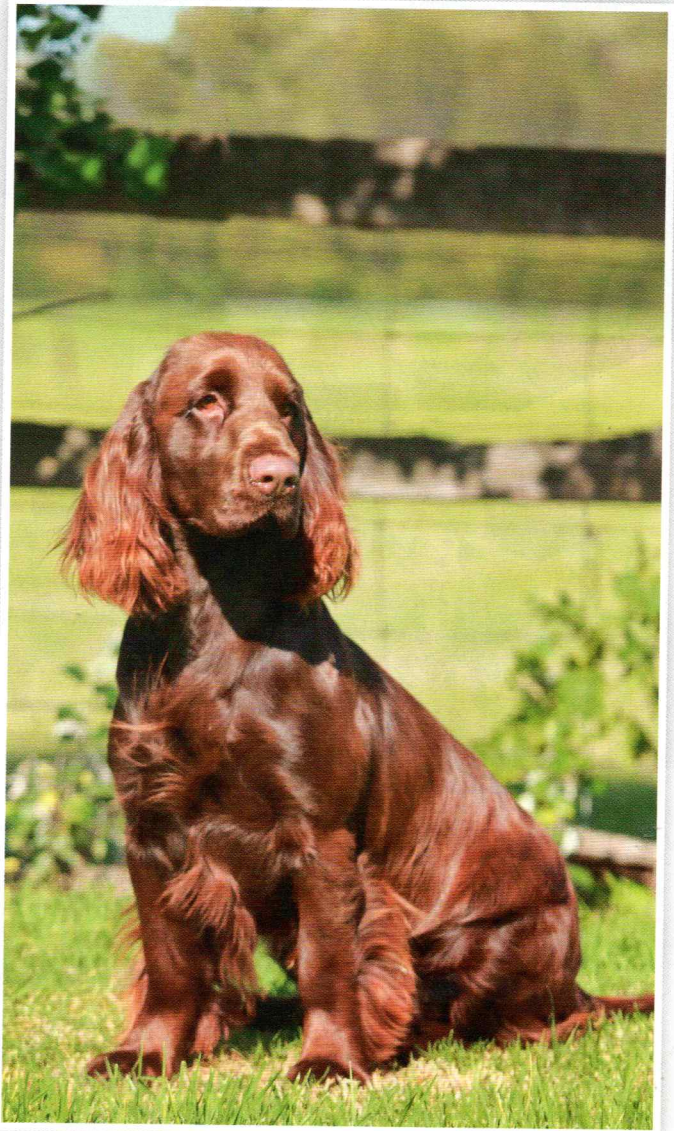
The Field Spaniel is an intelligent problem-solver who is trainable and can excel at any game when properly motivated. These "thinking dogs" thrive best on clear communication and reward, with minimal correction. They require early socialisation and a family sensitive to their needs. Fields love their people and range from serious to clownish in attitude. Once they understand expectations, they are solid in training, and the breed excels in multiple canine sports and activities. Fields are an amazing, soft breed that are not for everyone, but owners feel their sometimes-oafish habits such as snoring, sloppy drinking, and perpetually shedding coats are well worth their companionship.

The lovely single coat is one of the breed's most attractive features but requires regular care and maintenance. Weekly brushing and combing will keep the coat shiny and help to reduce shedding. Fields may need minimal trimming about the head and feet. The breed is not to be body clipped as some other spaniels. Their ears should be checked regularly for any signs of infection, and the teeth should be brushed often, using a toothpaste designed for dogs.

An active sporting breed, the Field possesses an energetic spirit that does best with regular exercise and mental stimulation. They are suitable for many canine sports and activities and enjoy brisk activity, as well as downtime at home with their families. Fields are found in a wide variety of lifestyles, from city to country, but do best when given challenges for both the mind and body. <sup>2</sup>







## Health

A generally healthy breed, Field Spaniels have seen some issues that also affect other breeds. Responsible breeders screen for genetic disease and select for health-cleared stock. Breeders are urged to adhere to recommended testing and consider orthopedics, thyroid, eyes, cardiac, and late-onset seizures when planning matings. Temperament, structure, and health are all very important in making up this breed that is a "combination of beauty and utility" in an enthusiastic canine companion.<sup>2</sup>



## References

1. Wikipedia.org
2. American Kennel Club
3. ANKC
  - "Introduction to the Field Spaniel" [www.fieldspanielsociety.co.uk](http://www.fieldspanielsociety.co.uk). 21 Dec. 2017.
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