

What Makes Him Unique

If you breed Weimaraners for any length of time you quickly realize that novice owners come in all shapes, sizes and motivations when it comes to raising their brand new Weimaraner puppy. One of my favorite types of new owner is the overly conscientious one who dotes on their Weimaraner puppy, has a million questions, and needs reassurance that they are doing everything absolutely right when it comes to rearing their puppy. These folks come up with some of the most amusing and startling questions about our breed.

For example, I had one of these wonderful “worry warts” call me in a panic. She blurted out, “I don’t know how I missed it, but there’s something wrong with my puppy. He has growths in both of his ears!” Her words came out with machine gun rapidity, punctuated by gulps for air. The tone was a combination of panic and guilt. I tried to calm her and get more information about what was happening with her puppy. She described a couple little flaps of skin around the edges of the puppy’s ears, some on the outer edge and one on the inside of the ear. I asked if she would take her phone and send me a picture. Moments later I had multiple pictures and another anxious phone call. The pictures confirmed my suspicion that her Weimaraner has Harrasburg horns. Trying to calm her, I explained that these little skin tags occur in many dogs and that they were harmless. In Weimaraners we call them Harrasburg horns after the name of very early imports from Germany that hailed from the Harrasburg Kennels.

This was not the only question that I’ve fielded about Weimaraner markings and coat characteristics. Our standard says that the Weimaraner’s coat is, “Short, smooth and sleek, solid color, in shades of mouse-gray to silver-gray, usually blending to lighter shades on the head and ears.” While that is a good general description there are nuances that the standard does not address. Sometimes the coat color along the spine is a darker shade of gray that gradually blends into lighter gray on the sides. This pattern is called an eel stripe since it mimics the coloration of darker on top/lighter on the bottom seen in many types of eels.

Along with coat color variation is the not uncommon cowlick. It’s just a section of hair that grows in a direction different from the rest and resists being combed flat. It can occur in any part of the body but common sites are along the top of the muzzle and on the back of the neck. I’ve heard them discussed in judging seminars and the bottom line is that they are such a minor variation that they are pretty much ignored. In the show ring, I’ve successfully shown dogs with cowlicks and been questioned about it only once. The question surprised me but I recalled someone once referring to them as “God’s thumbprint.” I used that line and got a laugh out of a usually solemn judge. My personal experience with cowlicks is equally amusing. I owned devilish little bitch who had matching cowlicks on her shoulder blades. We called her “Angel Wings” which matched her temperament not at all.

Who would ever think that there were so many exceptions and footnotes possible in describing a smooth coated, gray dog? The more you know about Weimaraners, the more you appreciate their uniqueness.

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