

Congratulations on your new

# **Golden Retriever!**



Congratulations on your recent acquisition of a Golden Retriever. As a non-profit organization of more than 4,500 members dedicated to the well-being of this wonderful breed, the Golden Retriever Club of America (GRCA) wants to help you enjoy your new pet to the fullest by providing you with some basic information.

If you'd like to learn more about your Golden or the GRCA, we've included a coupon at the end of this brochure that you can use to obtain more information.

Golden Retrievers originated in the 1860s in Great Britain from foundation stock developed at the Scottish country estate of Lord Tweedmouth. To begin the breed, Lord Tweedmouth mated a yellow wavy-coated retriever—the only yellow in a litter of blacks—to a Tweed Water Spaniel (a breed now extinct). The resulting litter produced four bitches who, with a limited number of outcrosses, produced the foundation stock from which all of today's Golden Retrievers descend. Golden Retrievers were first brought to North America in the late 1890s and were first registered by the American Kennel Club (AKC) in 1925.

As you may know, Golden Retrievers were originally bred to assist in retrieving both upland game and waterfowl. Their basic hunting instincts remain today in varying degrees. The Golden is equally at home as a beloved companion, a gun dog, a guide dog for the blind, an assistant for the handicapped, an obedience competitor and/or a show dog. Golden Retrievers are noted for their gentle, loving dispositions and are an excellent breed for families with children. The Golden's desire to please humans is legendary—making him a top obedience competitor and a first-rate companion dog.

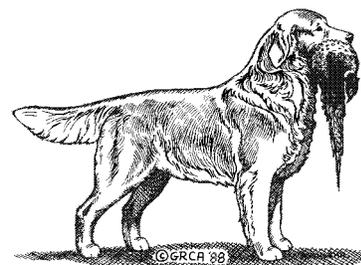
While Golden Retrievers can adapt to virtually any living situation, they need considerable daily exercise to maintain physical and mental fitness. Your Golden should never be allowed to run free. Time spent in the companionship of people indoors can and should be complemented with time spent on daily walks or playing in a secure fenced area. Without the companionship of people and adequate exercise, your Golden may display behavior atypical of the well-cared-for pet and family member.

Regular veterinary care, yearly vaccinations and proper feeding are vital to maintaining your dog's good health. With proper nutrition, routine veterinary care, and regular exercise and grooming, your Golden Retriever should live from ten to thirteen years.

Basic obedience training is an essential part of responsible dog ownership. It will make your dog a better companion and will help establish a stronger bond between the two of you. Your Golden wants nothing more from life than to please you. Therefore, it is your responsibility to train this faithful companion to do as you wish. Classes—ranging from "puppy kindergarten" to advanced obedience training and competition—are available in most areas, often as a service of a local kennel club.

A question that is frequently asked is, "Should I breed my dog?" This is a much more complicated question to answer than it is to ask. As with other breeds, Golden Retrievers may be subject to a number of serious genetic problems that can be passed on to any puppies they produce. These defects can include hip dysplasia (malformation of the hip joints, which can cripple), several eye problems, and, less frequently, epilepsy, skin allergies and heart defects. Poor temperament is also a serious genetic problem passed from parent to puppy. A Golden with atypical temperament for the breed should never be bred. Consult your veterinarian for additional information about these and other health problems.

Before you consider using your Golden as a stud dog or brood bitch, remember: No dog with genetic problems should be bred. He or she should be certified free of hereditary eye problems by a Board-Certified Veterinary Ophthalmologist; hip dysplasia by an x-ray submitted to the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals or to PennHIP; and hereditary heart problems by a Board-Certified Veterinary Cardiologist.





One of the best things you can do for your dog is spay or neuter. The basic disposition of your Golden will not be changed by removing his or her reproductive capability and will not, by itself, make your pet obese or lazy.

Having a litter is not in any way beneficial to a bitch and can occasionally lead to problems—even death. Spayed bitches are often healthier and live longer than unsplayed bitches. Neutered males cannot develop testicular cancer and have a lower risk of developing prostate cancer. And, by neutering a male, his psychological need to mate will be removed and he will become more tolerant of other male dogs and less likely to wander.

The American Kennel Club permits spayed and neutered animals to participate in all phases of obedience, agility, tracking, field work and junior handling, but not in most conformation classes.

Breeding dogs is a great responsibility. A significant financial investment is involved in breeding a litter properly, and a great deal of time must be spent daily to clean up after and socialize young pups so that they reach their full potential. Additionally, veterinary care must be considered, as well as proper facilities for delivering and housing newborn pups, along with the expanded facilities and greater time required after the pups are three to four weeks old. Equally important is the essential process of finding and educating responsible new families for the puppies, to ensure that those same puppies never reach a shelter!

Golden Retrievers are one of the most popular breeds in the country, with nearly 70,000 registered with the AKC each year. In fact, there are more Goldens alive today than were registered with the AKC from 1925 to 1980. Unfortunately, many of these dogs lack the qualities that make the Golden Retriever such a desirable breed. It is for this reason that only the best Goldens should be carefully bred.

As with all purebred dogs recognized by the American Kennel Club, there is an approved Breed Standard for Golden Retrievers. This standard of perfection is a written description of how the ideal Golden Retriever should look, how it should move and how it should behave. All responsible breeders strive to produce dogs that conform to this Breed Standard. Goldens with major deviations in appearance, structure or temperament should never be bred. A copy of the Standard can be found in several books devoted to the breed or may be obtained from the GRCA.

The Golden Retriever Foundation is a charitable organization created by GRCA to collect and distribute money to fund canine health research, to aid Golden Retriever rescue operations, and to promote education in the care, breeding, and training of Goldens. Visit the GRF website at [www.goldenretrieverfoundation.org](http://www.goldenretrieverfoundation.org) or write to PO Box 628, Elkhorn, NE 68022 for more information.

Additional information about Golden Retrievers is available from a variety of sources. In addition to the availability of several good hardbound books, the Golden Retriever Club of America offers a 75-page booklet entitled *An Introduction to the Golden Retriever*. It includes basic information on all aspects of ownership and provides contact references for more detailed and/or specific information. To order this booklet or to learn more about the GRCA or the Golden Retriever club nearest you, complete and mail the order form on this page.

You may want to visit the GRCA website on the Internet at <http://www.grca.org>.

Good luck, and enjoy your new pet!

For more information about the American Kennel Club, write them at 8051 Arco Corporate Drive, Suite 100, Raleigh, NC 27617-3390

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## ORDER FORM

Please send me:

- \_\_\_\_\_ copy(ies) of the 75-page booklet, *Introduction to the Golden Retriever*, at \$5.00 each, postage paid.
- Information about the Golden Retriever Club of America.
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