

DON'T BUY A WEIMARANER

Most mornings, I ease into the world of the awakened by downing a hot cup of tea, and deleting the emails that have accumulated overnight. The delete key makes short work of ads for things I don't want, announcements of events I won't attend, and a plethora of "fluffy news" stories about celebrities I've never heard of.

However, I must admit there is one genre of email that frequently snags my attention. It's the list format, with stories like: "Ten Ways to Ace a Job Interview;" "The Fifteen Best Restaurants in America," and: "Top Ten Vacation Destinations." You can imagine how quickly I clicked when I saw, "Fifteen Worst Dog Breeds for the New Pet Owner." Scanning the list, there was our beloved Grey Ghost as number six.

I was shocked that we even made the list - but number six! I had to see what they had to say about the Weimaraner.

Let's see, they say he's energetic with no "off" switch, he doesn't like being left alone, and he's a hazard to cats.

The vision of my first Weimaraner flashes before me ... how he destroyed his crate, went through a screen door and made the neighborhood cats very, very nervous.

Maybe these list writers are on to something?

No, there's no way that the Weimaraner should make the worst list. While my first Weimaraner experience did give me some rocky moments, the overall experience was a showcase of our breed's positive characteristics.

The writers of the "Worst Dog List" say Weimaraners don't have an "off" switch. That's a good thing if you're doing field work, pursuing an Agility title or enjoy an active, outdoor life style.

New owners have to be impressed with the fact that Weimaraners can be dynamos; but if their energy is channeled, it is an asset.

The second claim is that they don't like to be left alone. That's true, and dealing with separation anxiety is something that breeders need to educate new owners about. While it may take some work to accustom a Weimaraner to the fact that they can't be with you 24/7, it's a training issue and one that can be accomplished. The characteristic of wanting to be with you is an ultimate expression of the bond between man and Weimaraner. "Getting a Weimaraner is like getting a second shadow." Yup, I can't argue with that and it is a characteristic that. I personally treasure about the breed.

And finally, there's the "hazard to cats" accusation. There's a real mixed bag. Generally, I'd agree that Weimaraners and cats don't idyllically walk off into the sunset together, unless that picture is of the Weimaraner in hot pursuit of the fleeing cat. However, I do know of Weimaraners who live peacefully with "their" house cat. As I said, it's a real mixed bag on the cat issue.

While we all have said the famous phrase, "The Weimaraner is not a breed for everyone," there's no breed that fits the universal needs of all dog owners. Educating first time owners about the Weimaraner is a mix of warning about the negatives and praising the positive things that make our breed unique.

Should the Weimaraner make the list of worst breeds for a first time puppy owner? Keep one thing in mind, if someone hadn't taken a chance on you when you bought your first Weimaraner, you wouldn't be in the breed today.

Carole Lee Richards

PO Box 516, Collingswood, NJ 08108

ymar_column@yahoo.com