

Airedale Terrier Upland Hunting Style

The Airedale Terrier has distinguished itself as a "three-in-one" gun dog, equally able to handle upland game birds, waterfowl and fur.

Airedales are methodical hunters who work showing desire, courage, and perseverance; moving at a deliberate pace within gun range of the handler. They should show a command of the terrain and a willingness to penetrate cover. They hunt purposefully, utilizing both ground and air scent, and should be trained to quarter the beat, thus eliminating the likelihood of passing game. An Airedales indicate that it is making game by breaking out of its search pattern; using foot or body scent to locate the game.

The Airedale is an energetic dog and is expected to quickly put the bird up in air or catch it if it refuses to fly. The flushing styles of Airedales can vary. While some are hard flushers, many employ a hesitation flush where they will pause briefly before pouncing on a bird. They cover an area quite thoroughly and hit the likely hiding spots for birds in a field. When a handler desires, Airedales can be directed to other productive areas with a whistle or hand signal.

On the retrieve, the Airedale is expected to mark and retrieve the bird with enthusiasm, showing perseverance and willingness to penetrate cover should the situation require it. The Airedale should deliver the intact bird to hand, showing a willingness to relinquish it to the handler.

Airedales can be excellent swimmers, but generally most do not plunge into the water with a high level of enthusiasm, but will evaluate each water approach, determining the most effective access to the bird.

In conclusion, the Airedale Terrier is a very capable upland hunting dog. He is a methodical hunter who will search the field thoroughly to find birds. At the end of the day form must follow function. Thus the "style" demonstrated by a flushing dog of any breed must culminate in finding/flushing and retrieving the birds. A dog that fails to do this no matter how "stylishly" he presents himself cannot pass the test.

April 2009