



In my opinion, the Labrador retriever is the best all-around hunting dog you can buy, even if I do say so myself—and I do. Quite often. However, when it comes to quail or grouse hunting, a good pointing dog is hard to beat. I mean here is a dog that runs around in the woods or fields, and when it scents the bird it suddenly stops and freezes and points to where its nose is saying the birds are. A canine can't make it much simpler than that! Why I've seen some of you quail hunters stop your car by a good-looking piece of quail territory, let your dog out of the car, and encourage it to run around in said field. If your dog points, then you take the trouble to get out of the car and go to where it is pointing. You can almost hear the dog say, "They are right here, Boss. Now take a couple of steps, flush 'em, and see if you can hit one or two with those brown bullets."

Frankly, I think it is not much of a challenge to quail hunt with a pointing dog. After all, when a pointing dog goes on point, the dog knows the quail are there, the hunter knows the quail are there, and the quail certainly know they are there.

Hunting quail with a *flushing dog*, on the

other hand (or paw), adds a few extra pumps to your heart rate. When we scent quail, we move in fast for the big rush of flush. The closer we get to the birds, the hotter the scent and the faster we move in. We like nothing better than to put those birds in the air so you can do your job. So you bird hunters better keep up with your flushing dogs when quail hunting, because if you don't, it is going to be "all go and no show" for you efforts.

But back to what I was saying... If I was looking for a pointing partner, I think I would look very closely at a German shorthaired pointer (GSP) for a number of reasons. They have a reputation for hunting closer to you than the English pointer. The GSP is known as one of the continental breeds of bird dog, and in Europe continental breeds may be asked to hunt game with fur and not just feathers. Where in America you hunters have tended to appreciate hard charging, wide-going pointers, Europeans often require a different style of hunting. In Europe, this versatile dog had to be able to retrieve hares, run, and sound when chasing deer. The GSP was required to act as a guard dog as well. Its webbed feet help the German

shorthaired pointer be an excellent swimmer, although its docked tail hinders its navigational abilities. Retrieving is not a big problem for the GSP, and this dog can be used in a duck blind during early season and in climates warmer than ours.

Americans began to import the German shorthaired pointer in the 1920s when looking for a pointing breed that excelled in most environments and found that the GSP performed well not only as a hunting dog and in field trials but also in agility and obedience competitions. Because of their affection for people, German shorthairs are also used as therapy dogs.

An interesting aspect of the shorthaired pointer is the variation of its coat color. According to the German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America, a GSP can be solid liver (Americans sometimes refer to this as chocolate), liver and white, or black and white, but not a combination of liver, black, and white.

Some German shorthaired pointers have a particular quirk. According to some breeders, the GSP is not a dog to be ignored—meaning that it is a dog that thrives on attention and requires a great deal of exercise. If left alone for a period of time, it could be destructive.

So if you are an active family and want a dog with the affection of Don Juan and the brains of Wernher von Braun, you owe it to yourself to check out a German shorthaired. What other dog do you know that will always be happy to hunt for you and, after an exciting day afield, help your child with his science project?

Keep a leg up,  
Luke

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"Let Daddy know if you get a bite."  
— R. STUBLER —