



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARY ELEANOR BROWNING

Will the Poodle Become America's No. 1 Dog?

Its popularity continues to rise for many reasons—all of them remarkable

By MRS. KENNETH LAWLOR

Secretary, Poodle Club of America

as told to JERRY KLEIN

ONE DAY SOON, dog-registration figures may show that the poodle has become America's No. 1 favorite. That won't surprise me a bit, because I've been in love with these adorable little ragamuffins for a long time.

Ten years ago there were only 3,000 poodles registered in the United States. Now there must be close to 80,000, and the way their number has been increasing—40 percent last year over 1958—they may displace the beagle in top position almost any day now.

The poodle has a reputation for being the nation's most sophisticated dog. But while they are fairly expensive and can be extremely dignified, they will also adapt to any mode of life, code of behavior, or timetable of activity.

I am not one who believes in pampering a poodle with a fur coat, jeweled collar, and a menu of *filet mignon*. What a poodle demands above all—what it must have to survive, really—is human affection.

Why, just recently, one of my friends left her poodle at home when she went on a three-month tour of Europe. As soon as the woman had left, her dog refused to eat; it just lay under her bed and watched the door, waiting for her return. Nothing at all could coax that animal out of its depression. It died of sheer loneliness.

There are many sound reasons why the poodle is becoming so popular. It's the only dog that has three separate sizes: toy, miniature, and standard.

It also can be one of four basic colors: white, black, brown, and gray.

The standard-size poodle is equally suited to city apartments or country houses. The smaller ones are better for owners who want their animals to travel with them. Incidentally, many hotels and

The 10 Most Popular Dogs

The American Kennel Club's official 1959 tally listed America's top 10 favorite dogs as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Beagle | 6. Cocker Spaniel |
| 2. Poodle | 7. Boxer |
| 3. Chihuahua | 8. Pekingese |
| 4. Dachshund | 9. Collie |
| 5. German Shepherd | 10. Boston Terrier |

motels that generally don't allow dogs will admit poodles. This is because poodles are clean and careful. They don't shed all over the place; their coats are close and tightly stranded. They don't have the doggy odor some breeds do. And they are sure-footed and nimble, so they don't break furnishings around a room.

In fact, poodles love elegance and can be extremely dignified. On the other hand—if you encourage them—they can be terrific clowns, since they love to attract attention.

A poodle that's a model of decorum in the living room will romp happily with the kids five minutes later. On weekend hunting trips, it will also work as a retriever (originally poodles were water dogs). In fact, with patience, poodles can be taught to do almost anything because they are eager to please and have so much inborn intelligence.

THIS INTELLIGENCE is proved by how easy poodles are to train and by the increasing number of prizes they are winning in the shows in both obedience and breed. Of course, their intelligence allows these animals to be easily spoiled. It's a pity when a dog's owner allows it to cultivate bad habits.

When a dog becomes so popular, there is always the danger that poor specimens will be reproduced and that the whole breed will deteriorate. But I do not think that this will happen to the poodle.

The Poodle Club of America has an active program to educate people who buy and sell dogs. We want people to know what distinguishes a good poodle from a bad one, and we want bad specimens given away without registration papers, not bred. We think our efforts are succeeding and that success will not spoil the poodle.

Protecting the breed is important both to people who expect to train and show their dogs and to those who merely want a pet. For good breeding means a good disposition—and nobody wants a nervous, unfriendly animal around.

COVER:

Famed animal photographer Walt Chandoha captures a study in contrasts, charmingly formed by two members of the same family: the poodle. See their story above.

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