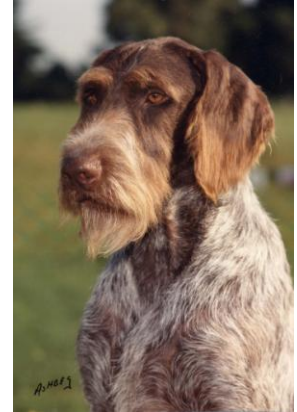


Back to Basics:

A Comparison:



**the
German
Wirehaired
Pointer**



And



**the
Wirehaired
Pointing
Griffon**



Contributing writers: AKC judges – Dorothy Macdonald, Plus Davern, and Joy Brewster

It's the 1800's, communications are pretty much limited to messengers on horseback. A hunting dog visionary in the Netherlands might not have known what German hunting dog visionaries were breeding in the country right next door, or did they? Both of these groups of hunting dog breeders were looking to develop a close working all terrain versatile hunting dog. These hunters also wanted to develop a tough wirehaired dog coat that could withstand the elements and be easy to maintain. A wirehaired hunting dog that would do it all and do it with their owner on foot next to them. A dog so versatile that he could cover all types of terrain, to find the game, point it out to the hunter and then retrieve it after the shot. This wirehaired versatile hunting dog also had the additional assignment of being his owner's companion at home by the fire after a long day's hunt. So, in the late 1800's in both the Netherlands and Germany, you find the foundation of the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon and the German Wirehaired Pointer. While there are many similarities in these two breeds, there are also definite distinctions that made them different in the 1800's and continue to make them different today.



To know a breed one must understand why their form developed and how that form served the function for which they were intended. The history of the development of the form for the function of each the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon and German Wirehaired Pointer are quite similar.

As taken from the American Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Association website (www.awpga.com):

“The development of the current day Wirehaired Pointing Griffon began in earnest in the Netherlands in 1873 by a young Dutch sportsman and avid hunter by the name of Eduard Karel Korthals (1851-1896). Korthals endeavored to create what he considered the ultimate walking hunter’s gun dog. The Griffon was developed as a hardy, all-terrain close-working hunting dog, working in the polders; the marshy low-lying ground of the Netherlands. Very little, if anything, has changed in the purebred Griffon since Dr. E.B. Ilyus, the first secretary of the G.C.A. wrote in 1917; “The chief characteristics in which the griffon excels, and is superior over setters and pointers, are his ready adaptability to all species of game, all climates, and all varieties of terrain, his exquisite nose, wonderful vitality and endurance, and the pronounced instinct which makes him the easiest of all dogs to train on game. As a retriever he has, in my opinion, no superior, and being very intelligent and affectionate, he makes an ideal man’s companion.”

And as taken from the German Wirehaired Pointer Club of America website (www.gwpca.com):

“German Wirehaired Pointers trace their origins back to the late 1800s. They originated in Germany, where breeders wanted to develop a rugged, versatile hunting dog that would work closely with either one person or a small party of people hunting on foot in varied terrain; from the mountainous regions of the Alps, to dense forests, to more open areas with farms and small towns. The breed the Germans desired had to have a coat that would protect the dogs when working in heavy cover or in cold water, yet be easy to maintain. The goal was to develop a wire-coated, medium-sized dog that could search for, locate and point upland game; work both feather and fur with equal skill; retrieve water fowl; be a close-working, easily trained gun dog; be able to track and locate wounded game; be fearless when hunting sharp game such as fox; be a devoted companion and pet; and, be a watchdog for its owners’ family and property.”

When you fast forward to today’s Griffon and Wirehair, you find that not much has changed.



These two sporting breeds are still active in the hunting field as the companion of their walking hunter owner. It is not uncommon in either breed to find a dog going from the hunting field to the show ring within a given weekend or even a given day. And consideration for the wear and tear of the hunting field on furnishings and coats is something that must always be considered by judge and observer alike. But just how similar are they? And how do the two different standards compare and differ?

One AKC judge sees the difference: Joy Brewster, AKC Sporting Dog breed judge, takes a unique perspective in her judges education seminars, teaching about the German Wirehaired Pointer and the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon through comparison.

Without a gift of being able to memorize written words in the Standards, I utilize breed comparisons to best develop a picture of the “ideal” dog of that breed in my mind. As a judge, I am supposed to judge each dog against each individual Standard as it is written. This can present a problem when trying to determine if the words written in a Standard should be taken literally or implied. Herein lays a possible conflict in the interpretation of the Standards. From my observations we generally have several breed “experts” in most any breed that interpret the intent of their Standard differently and breed or judge accordingly. Is this where we have developed a different “type” within a breed? Who is right and who is wrong? If the Standards are to be taken literally as written with no variance for interpretation, wouldn’t the same dog be winning at every show?

Many of our Standards were written or interpreted long ago and the wording has generally stayed the same. It is the application and understanding of these words within the breed that has changed. In many cases the same word or words are now in conflict relative to other breed Standards. Perhaps not a problem if you are deeply involved and have knowledge of only your own breed as then you know how to interpret it. With this in mind I feel it is necessary to study and learn the intent of the word description in each Standard. I am offering my comparison regarding the differences between the German Wirehaired Pointer (GWP) and the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon (WPG) utilizing what I believe is the intent rather than a literal translation of each Standard in order to provide you with a mental picture of the ideal dog in these breeds.

Overall:

GWP : Like a Thoroughbred horse with a smooth graceful line, no bulk.

WPG: Like a Draft horse with strength and bulk yet very agile.



Height:

GWP: Male 24 -26”

Female – smaller but not *under* 22”

WPG: Male 22 -24”

Female – 20” – 22”



Proportion: GWP: Little Longer than high 10 as to 9. Balanced

WPG: Slightly longer 10 as to 9. *Not Square.*



Head: GWP: Current Standard: Skull “broad”. In reality, the head is two parallel equal in length *rectangles* with more length than width. The foreface when viewed from the side is *rectangular shaped with sufficient underjaw* and a *medium stop*. The back skull is *flat on top* and when viewed from the top tapers slightly from the ears to the eyes.

WPG: Current Standard: Skull is of “Medium Width”. The skull and muzzle are generally accepted as two parallel equal *squares* joined by a *slight stop* when viewed from the side. The muzzle is also a *square being equal in length and depth*. Viewed from the top, the skull is also a square being equal in length and width. The top of the back of the skull has a *slight roundness*.



Eyes: GWP: Eyes are brown, *medium in size with an oval contour*. Yellow eyes not desirable. The nose is always dark brown.

WPG: Eyes are all shades of yellow and brown, *large and round*. A nose other than brown is a disqualification.



Neck. And Body: GWP: Neck *medium length*; backline shows a perceptible slope; tight skin; chest deep with well-sprung ribs. *Apparent tuckup*; back short straight and strong. Loins taut and slender. Hips broad with rounded croup.

WPG Neck *rather long*. Back strong and firm with a gentle slope from higher withers to base of tail. Chest is well developed with the ribs more round than oval. There is *little tuckup*. The back is broad with loins strong and well developed. Croup and rump stoutly made with good length.

Forequarters: GWP: The shoulders are *smooth without bulk*. The scapula and upper arm are equal in length. The medium bone on the legs are more oval in shape than round with the front legs set under the withers.

WPG: The scapula is longer than the upper arm with the front legs set well back under the deepest part of the chest. The bone is *more round and heavier* than the GWP



Hindquarters: GWP: Well balanced to the forequarters with equal lengths of upper and second thigh bones. The thighs are strong and muscular with short, straight hocks.

WPG: The upper thigh bone is relatively longer than the second thigh bone to maintain the balance and ratio as in the forequarters. The stifle and hock joints are well angulated. The hocks are relatively short and straight.



Coat: GWP: The natural functional double coat is the breed's most distinctive feature. A dog must have a correct natural double coat from one to two inches in length and lays flat to be of correct type. The beard, whiskers and eyebrows are made up of straight, medium length hair. The coat on the skull and ears is short and close fitting, however the ears may have wisps of longer hair. A short smooth coat; excessively long, soft, or a lack of outer coat; as well as excessive or absence of undercoat, are to be severely penalized.

WPG: A distinguishing feature is the wiry, double, medium length coat. The outer coat is straight and wiry to the touch. The coat should never be curly or wooly. The undercoat consist of a fine, thick down. The head is furnished with a prominent mustache and eyebrows. These required features are extensions of the undercoat which gives the Griffon an untidy appearance. The hair covering the ears is fairly short and soft, mixed with longer harsh hair. The overall texture of the head and ears is less wiry than the body. The coat on the tail is the same as on the body. Plumes on the tail are prohibited



Color: GWP: The color is a combination of liver (brown) and white or solid liver. Accepted patterns include roan, ticking or patches. The head is liver, sometimes with a white blaze. The ears are solid liver. Some liver is extremely dark and can be confused as black. If the nose is black the color is black. A liver nose is required according to the current Standard

WPG: Coat color may vary from the preferred steel gray with brown markings to chestnut brown or roan, white and brown. White and orange is also acceptable but less desirable as are uniformly brown and all white coats. A black coat disqualifies.

Gait: GWP: Seen from the side, the movement is free and smooth with good reach in the forequarters and good driving power in the hindquarters. The dog carries a firm back and a long, ground-covering stride. When moving in a straight line the legs swing forward in a free and easy manner. As speed increases, the legs will converge toward a center line of travel.

WPG: A medium speed dog with good coordination and efficient smooth movement. At a trot, both front and rear legs tend to converge toward the center with good extension both front and rear. Viewed from the side, the backline is firm showing a powerful ground covering ability.

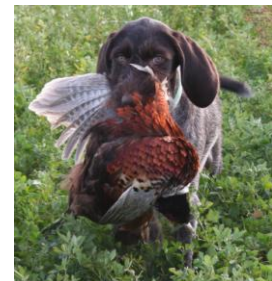
Temperament: GWP: Of sound, reliable temperament, at times aloof but not unfriendly toward strangers. He is a loyal and affectionate companion that is eager to please and enthusiastic to learn.

WPG: A quick and intelligent mind and easily trained. The outgoing personality shows a tremendous willingness to please and is trustworthy. An excellent family dog as well as a meticulous hunting companion.

A Overview by AKC judges Dorothy Macdonald and Pluis Davern.

While sharing a common ancestor in their development the GWP and the WPG have evolved differently over the years in their hunting style. Both breeds were initially designed to work solely for a hunter on foot; and as their countries of origin dictated they were expected to hunt both fur and feathers and retrieve the game to hand.

Both breeds are Continental Pointing breeds. As with all continental pointing breeds they are known as HPR's – Hunt-Point- Retrieve. In other words all purpose hunting dogs. They were bred to hunt and point birds, but equally to hunt hares or other small game. Both breeds are particularly good at retrieving as they have a strong wire coat with a thick under coat that is very good protection in both heavy brush or cold water. In fact their wire coat was actually a disadvantage to them when they came over to the United States. It presented a very different look from other pointing breeds that hunters were used to seeing and they did not present the very stylized look on point that the Pointer or English Setter did.



The German Wire or Drahthaar (as he is known in Germany) was developed by crossing several existing breeds and was kept as an all purpose hunting dog. He arrived in America early in the 19th century but was not really appreciated until the 1950's. By then handlers were used to his coat and had begun to realize the added protection that it was for an all purpose dog. His popularity continued from then on and he is now a strong contender in field trials and is also considered a first class hunting companion. He ranges at middle to wide range on a par with German Shorthairs and



Brittanys, but less than the Pointer or English Setter. He has good style on his birds and works with an excellent nose. He points with style and intensity and runs with good range and a wide forward run. He is a very energetic dog that can be strong willed and independent. The GWP is ideally adaptable both for foot and horseback hunting. The majority of the breed is hunted and his success rate in field trials is very good. Today he has an ardent following and is actively involved in field trials and has a great record of a high percentage of placements based on the number competing.

The Wirehaired Pointing Griffon was developed at the turn of the 19th century by E.E.Korthals and he wanted an all purpose hunting dog that could handle heavy cover as well as cold water. The breed is still known in Europe as the Korthal's Griffon. He has maintained his original purpose, functioning as a close working dog, within gun range and at a pace suited to a man on foot. His pointing is more of the old style found in Europe, with either a level or slightly dropped tail, but certainly not lacking in intensity. He is a sound hunter with an exceptional nose that also makes him an excellent tracker of wounded game. He is shorter on leg than the German



Wire and actually has less leg under him for his height than any of the pointing breeds. The only smaller pointing breed is the Brittany but they have a lot more length of leg for their size.

Similar to the German Wire, the Griffon has a coarse coat with a heavy under coat for protection in brush or cold water. While the German Wirehaired Pointer coat must have a correct natural double coat from one to two inches in length and lays flat to be of correct type, the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon's double coat consists of a obligatory thick down undercoat along with the longer harsh textured outercoat. The combination of proper texture with length of both coats brings about a natural untidy appearance.

Although in the United States since the turn of the 20th century, the Griffon was little known until after the 2nd World War when he became popular as a foot handling bird dog. He is a slow working, thorough hunter with an excellent nose and of course his wire coat to protect him from all sorts of cover, wet and dry. The Griffon is less independent than other pointing breeds and he works strictly for his owner. He is good on woodcock, grouse and birds that inhabit marshy lands and bogs such as rails. He does not have the range or style for competition in field trials, but is really good at locating birds within his range. He is also known as an excellent water dog, retrieving both duck and geese. The Griffon competes well in Pointing breed Hunt Tests, and has recently been approved to compete in



Retriever Hunt Tests. He is referred to as the Versatile Gun Dog for his ability to hunt, point and retrieve on land and in the water.

In conclusion:

Both the **German Wirehaired Pointer** and the **Wirehaired Pointing Griffon** can be seen in virtually every AKC venue. Not only are they active in the hunt field and show ring, they excel in Obedience, Agility, Rally, and Tracking. But they are never far from their roots and the intent of those 1800-period hunting dog visionaries. Both breeds are first and foremost hunting dogs that were bred specifically to have their form follow the intent of their function. Their beauty and style in a field can be breathtaking and to have that beauty in form conveyed in the show ring is an honor to the breeders of both breeds.

Special appreciation goes out to Kristi Rogne for her vision in presenting these breeds to the readership. Also, a special thanks to our AKC judges who took the time out of their busy schedules to assist in the article: Dorothy Macdonald, Pluis Davern, Joy Brewster, Pat Laurans and to the judges education coordinators Judy Cheshire, GWPCA, and Kerry Pruznak, AWPGA.