

## **Before You Get a Weimaraner** **About the breed**

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM GINA GRISSOM---Gina Grissom has been involved with Weimaraners for over twenty years, and is a member of The Weimaraner Club of America and the Southland Weimaraner Club, Inc.

She is very involved in public education, teaching obedience classes and assisting Rescue, and competes in Obedience, Conformation and Ratings Tests.

Gina says, "My hope in writing these questions is to inform potential Weimaraner owners about the characteristics you may not yet be considering when you decide to purchase a Weimaraner. Too many people decide on a breed of dog based on looks and have no understanding of the pros and cons of their chosen breed. Consider these important questions BEFORE acquiring a Weimaraner, not afterwards."

Note: These questions are appropriate not only for Weimaraners, but also for any large, active breeds you may be considering.

I urge all potential Weimaraner owners to ask yourselves these questions:

Can your entire household handle the size and activity level of a Weimaraner?

The adult weight of a Weim can be overpowering. Weims are more active than a lot of breeds -- by this I mean that many, not all, Weims are busy, busy, busy. Does that type of dog fit your lifestyle?

Has someone in your household grudgingly agreed to allow you to have a dog/Weimaraner? Is someone only giving in to your pressure? Too many times a reluctant family member "lets someone have" their dream dog, but when that dream becomes a reality -- along with the housebreaking, barking, chewing and digging -- suddenly the dog has got to go. Tolerance is a big part of dog ownership, all family members have to really want to accept and cherish your new family member. If one family member dislikes the idea of a large house dog, you should instead compromise with a pet you can all agree on.

Will you obedience train your Weimaraner? Due to the size of a Weim, their busy attitude, and desire to work with people, you must have the time and commitment to obedience train your dog at an early age.

Can you live with the consequences of a Weimaraner's high prey drive? Weims can and do kill small fuzzy critters. If that happens can you live with it?

That is the one single question you must answer, and do it honestly. Weims can sometimes live successfully with cats and other small animals; however, if the worst happens will it cause you to want to get rid of the dog? If the answer is yes, then you should NOT get a Weimaraner -- period.

Will your Weimaraner live indoors? I think that all dogs should be indoors

when people are at home. Dogs desire to be members of a pack and as such they need to be with you (their pack leader) when you are at home. You are acquiring a companion animal: Livestock and lawn furniture are kept outdoors 24 hours a day, NOT companion animals. So ask yourself, how much time (out of a 24 hour day) do you plan on spending with your new companion? If the answer is only an hour or two at most, please consider an alternative to getting a dog.

A Weim's size, energy level, and desire to be with people means that if the dog becomes frustrated at being outside they can and will do significant damage (tear up lawn, chew hoses, chew electrical wiring, chew tires, chew off screens, chew through wood doors, chew molding, chew plants, chew up chain link, etc.). Oh yeah, if they are frustrated, Weims can also BARK real loud!

How will you deal with destructive phases? Weims hit a major energy and destruction phase from 6-18 months old -- and you need to have a plan to keep the dog from destroying the environment and the environment from hurting the dog. If all you intend to do is to keep the dog loose in the house or yard when you are not home (during this adolescent/puppy phase), you should plan on significant damage.

Are you ready to take on the responsibility of a Weimaraner for the next 10-15 years? Our rescue organizations are flooded with dogs that are given up for many, many reasons -- but the overwhelming reason is that their owners were not responsible enough or committed enough to stick it out. Owning a pet requires a sense of caring, tolerance, humor and love. If there is even the possibility that in the future you might move and not take your dog, get divorced and not want to keep your dog, or not have enough time for a dog - then DON'T GET A DOG.

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