

The Cocker Spaniel Hunting Style

Cocker Spaniels are the smallest of the Sporting Spaniels. They possess an instinctive ability to quest game. They are alert, merry, and willing to please, making them good hunting companions. Cockers hunt at a moderate pace, covering ground in an effective manner, making use of both foot and air scent.

Cockers glance to their handlers for direction and work as a team while out hunting game. Cockers will clearly indicate they are making game by their animated body movements and vigorous tail wagging, which may be preceded or followed by a brief hesitation, where they appear to use their nose, eyes, and ears to help them locate the exact area they have detected bird scent. A bold flush will follow.

Cockers are particularly excellent hunting dogs for Grouse and Woodcock often found in areas of thick hedgerow and dense berry bushes, where they will exhibit their true boldness to cover. Cockers are excellent markers, and willing retrievers. Although bred as upland bird dogs, Cockers are willing swimmers, and will retrieve game from water in a competent manner.

Summary: A Cocker Spaniel has an action all his own, and will hunt game methodically and at a moderate pace. His smaller size permits the Cocker to be hunt competently in hedges, brambles, and around downed trees. His merry action will clearly indicate when he is making game. A close working spaniel, the Cocker stays within gun range, and has the natural instinct to find, flush, mark and retrieve game birds to his hunting companion.

(revised October 2012)