Puli

I've invited Limore Cleveland to collaborate with me on this topic, since she participated in U.S. dog dancing competitions for many years with her Puli, Kerge.

DOG DANCING

If you're looking for a fun and unique sport that strengthens the relationship between you and your Puli, and you also enjoy music and teaching your dog tricks, why not try dog dancing? The sport of dog dancing is known under a multitude of names, including musical canine freeway, musical freestyle, freestyle dance, and canine freestyle.

In its broadest description, dog dancing combines obedience training with creativity in the form of tricks and dance. The Puli's agility and obedience skills are combined, creating a unique display of athleticism and music.

To participate in dog dancing, the handler is responsible for being the primary driver. The handler's role is to encourage, motivate, and lead the dog through the performance. The handler can be positioned in front, behind, or to the side of the dog, and can change positions throughout the routine to keep the performance dynamic and engaging.

The music selected for dog dancing is often classical, jazz, or even pop music. The handler must be able to anticipate the dog's movements and make quick decisions to ensure a smooth performance. The handler's presence on stage adds an element of personality and entertainment to the routine.

Dog dancing can be a fun and rewarding activity for both you and your Puli. It is a sport that requires physical fitness, training, and a strong bond between dog and handler. With consistent practice and dedication, you can create an impressive dog dancing routine that will entertain and amaze audiences.

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both the dog and the handler. Although a sense of musicality can be helpful, dog dancing participants have stated that they definitely do not feel that being a good dancer is a requirement, since you are presenting an illusion of dance. Your costume matches your music choice, and depending on venue, you may be able to use props.

Unlike other dog sports, where the course or expected performance is essentially the same for each team, the focus of freestyle is the individuality of routines. Each team determines the music, moves, and interactions that will highlight the team’s individual strengths and skills. No other dog sport offers that much flexibility to adapt each performance to the capabilities and needs of each team member (dog as well as human).
HERDING GROUP

Spanish Water Dogs
BEYOND “HYPOALLERGENIC”

Most if not all breeders of Spanish Water Dogs have received that inquiry, “We understand that your dogs are ‘hypoa-
llergenic,’ and we are interested in a puppy.” For the breeders, it then becomes a matter of which reputable they employ first.

Our first task regarding the request for a “hypoa-llergenic” puppy is to explain that while this is a single-coated breed that sheds far less than many other breeds, truthfully there is no such thing as a “hypoa-llergenic” dog. Specificity of allergies and severity of allergies vary considerably between individual dogs and people. If a dander is the problem, less dander is scattered by a dog who does not shed, but it still certainly exists. If a major trigger is saliva, training the dog to not “give kisses,” lick faces, and so on, is an essential and fairly easy solution.

Most breeders consider these situations with great caution to avoid the heartbreak of receiving a subsequent call from the family to report that they must re-home the dog due to allergies.

Allergies aside, there are also puppy buyers who are attracted to a non-shedding breed simply for the convenience of having minimal dog hair on their clothing and in the house, car and so on. While a reasonable consideration, “who” is this breed with whom the buyer(s) can expect to share their life/lives for typically 12 to 15 years?

The AKC standard describes the breed as follows:

“...faithful, obedient, lively, hard working, and watchful. He is highly intelligent with an outstanding learning ability. His loyalty and protective instincts make him a self-appointed guardian to his owner, his family, and his property. He should be neither timid nor shy, but is naturally suspicious of strangers. Properly introduced, and given time, the Spanish Water Dog will accept strangers. He is very affectionate with his own people.”

Longtime breed owners and fanciers have come to value deeply the qualities above. For the new owner, however, they must understand the unique nature of this breed’s temperament. In conversation with an experienced breeder and owner prior to acquiring my first SWD, he said to me, “These dogs almost seem slightly feral at times.” While perhaps an extreme descriptor, it is not completely inaccurate.

Often described as “velcro” dogs, SWDs are extremely devoted to their chosen person and immediate family. Vigilant and wary of strangers, they only want to bark at visitors to the home and even at passers-by on a walk on a dark evening. Combined with herding tendencies results in some individuals that may attempt to circle and even nip persons perceived by the dog to be unruly or out of order. In encountering new people, these dogs do their best when given the opportunity to assess the person, and then they will usually approach quite willingly. When judges try to elicit an animated expression from dogs in the confirmation ring, most SWDs care so little for unfamiliar people that frequently the dog’s gaze will not even wander from his handler.

The athleticism and intelligence of this breed can also translate into “trouble” if it finds itself in a setting offering little mental stimulation and/or minimal exercise. When I came home to a fresh excavation in the backyard, or destruction by chewing, I realize that a good run or cerebral training session is in order for my dogs.

Not all shedding, cute, and unique have increasingly become dog choice criteria without thoughtful consideration of “who” that dog is to actually train and live with. As with any breed, to know them is to love them, but choosing a dog primarily on the basis of its coat quality has the huge potential for an unsatisfactory outcome.

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Puli Club of America