

Along came a Sprocker



An introduction to the most modern of Spaniels

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Along Came a Sprocker

www.sprockerspaniel.co.uk

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Introduction

The Sprocker Spaniel is bred from the English Springer Spaniel and Cocker Spaniel and sometimes the American Cocker Spaniel. A Sprocker pup can have a Springer Mum and a Cocker Dad or the other way round. A Springer bred with a Sprocker or a Cocker bred with a Sprocker or even a Sprocker bred with a Sprocker will always produce Sprocker pups.

It's these possibilities that produce such a wide range of colours, shapes and sizes amongst Sprockers and while a Sprocker pup may favour either their Springer or Cocker heritage a Sprocker usually has the traits of both parent Spaniel types.

The result is a handsome Spaniel who can be an excellent dual purpose working dog and a happy, loyal family pet. The popularity of the Sprocker continues to grow and we estimate that there are between 5000 & 10,000 Sprockers in the UK.

When I first came across Sprockers and was deciding between Sprockers and other Spaniels there was little information available. A small Facebook group existed and as I learnt more about Sprockers I decided to share this information first of all through a website and now the book.

My aim was to provide a resource for new and potential owners to find out more about Sprockers and their needs and personalities.

I hope you enjoy the book!

Matt Gardner
2014

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None of this would have happened if it had not been for Barbara Beaney not keeping an eye on Snoop Dog and letting him have his wicked way with Crazy Daisy... A wonderful accident!

A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to the book and for all the inspiration from the thousands of Sprockers and their ever so slightly bonkers owners sharing their joys and frustrations on social media.

A special mention for Lynda Elliott who started the madness by founding Recognise the Sprocker Spaniel. Lynda is slowly working her way through the Hebrides... Rhum the Original, Jura the Invincible and now Uist the Puppy.

Not forgetting the great band of Southern Sprockers who meet up regularly, friendships forged through a love of Sprockers.

“You don’t have to be mad to own a Sprocker but it certainly helps”

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CHAPTER 1

A History of Spaniels



"The Spaniel is gentle loving and courteous to man more than any other dog, of free untiring ranging, beating a full course over and over, which he does with a wanton playing taile and a busie labouring noise, neither desisting nor showing less delight in his labours at night than he did in the morning"

This was quoted by 17th Century Sportsman Richard Surflot about the original Spaniel before they evolved in to different types such as Cockers and Springers and his views ring true for modern Sprocker Spaniels, particularly his comments about being gentle, loving and courteous. Ideal traits for a family pet. People who work their Sprockers will tell you his comments also ring true

Spaniel type dogs have been found in art and literature for almost 500 years. Initially, spaniels in England were divided among land spaniels and water spaniels. The differentiation among the spaniels that led to the breeds that we see today did not begin until the mid-19th century. During this time, the land spaniels became a bit more specialised and divisions among the types were made based upon weight to be defined as either Cockers or Springers. At this time it was not uncommon for Cockers and Springers to come from the same litter.



The smaller cockers were used to hunt woodcock whilst their larger littermates, the Springers, were used to spring or flush game bird into sky the for Falcons or Hawks to bring them back to the handler. From this point on the Cockers and Springers were selectively bred to create the two distinct breeds we know today.

Sprockers take us back to a time when one Spaniel type produced the variations of size and weight and make ideal dual purpose Spaniels. Springer and Cocker Spaniels were selectively bred from Land Spaniels so it is safe to assume that they have been crossed either accidentally or by gamekeepers ever since . However it is only in the last 20 or so years that their popularity has risen and they have become known as Sprockers.



Anecdotal evidence suggests that Gamekeepers in Scotland initiated the breeding of Springers and Cockers to create a dual purpose working field Spaniel for the big estates, combining the best traits of both Spaniel types for flushing across varied ground cover. Sprockers found their way into family homes in ever increasing numbers and they have proved to be, like many Spaniels, the ideal family pet.

Today even recognised Cocker Spaniel & Springer Spaniel breeders have started using their Sires & Dams to produce litters of Sprockers. Many people assume that Sprockers are part of the current trend for designer dogs, however the Sprocker is clearly not a designer dog as he is the result of breeding two types of Spaniel rather than two different breeds and has probably been around ever since Springers and Cockers were bred from original land Spaniels.

It is difficult to estimate accurately how many Sprockers there are in the UK but it is probably between 5000 & 10,000 which would mean the Sprocker is one of the most popular Spaniel types right now. One online Facebook community, Recognise the Sprocker Spaniel has over 3000 members. Another, I love my Sprocker Spaniel has over 1000 members

