



## **The Doberman Pinscher**

by Frank H. Grover

We had neighbors once who watched our Dobermans and then one day announced, "We have decided that a Doberman is a Cadillac of dogs". Most persons who have owned Dobermans will agree. There are other fine dogs; then there are Dobermans - the dog of dogs.

Talking about Doberman ownership is a little like trying to explain a family relationship, for a Doberman demands and takes a full place in your life. A Doberman either trains you, or is trained by you, and for most of us, it is a little of both. You can't put a Doberman away, forget about him, and take him out when you want to show him off. A Doberman isn't built that way; he wants to be with you, to help you, torment you, love you, and guard you. And, he will work out ways to get what he wants.

A Doberman is an affectionate animal; but his affection is noble. You can't bribe a Doberman with a pat on the head. He doesn't enjoy "just being petted" the way many other breeds do. He wants to be close to you, to have your hand on his head, to rest his head on your knee, or to sit on your shoe with his back to you. He won't leave you for a stranger who offers to scratch his ear. Scratching an ear may be nice, but it isn't as nice as resting his rump on your shoe. Seldom do you find a "licking" Doberman. A single kiss — a touch of the tongue - a touch of his nose to your ear - that is his way of special greeting. To lick (unless you have a wound that needs healing) would be too undignified for most Dobermans. Yet, with his black eyes, short tail, and graceful body he can tell you more plainly how special you are than could all the licking and rubbing or petting in the world.

A Doberman is an energetic dog with lots of strength, speed, and agility. He can run with a horse, maneuver quickly enough to catch a rabbit, track faster than a bloodhound, tree mountain lions, and beat you to the davenport every time if you let him.

A Doberman is a gentle dog with the firmness of the strong. He will let a baby teeth on his ears and nod with pleasure. He will take his six year old mistress walking to show her off and guide her with the mature judgment that knows it is well to let a six year old have her own way - unless it is dangerous.

A Doberman is a sensitive dog, keenly alert to your feelings and wishes. If someone visits you whom you don't like, watch the dog, for he will be watching your visitor. After he has been with you a few years, you will find often you don't need to speak a wish. He will know and respond. You become a part of him, and he becomes a part of you; and the only tragic part of owning a Doberman is that a part of you is buried with him when he dies.

### **The Usefulness of the Doberman**

Dobermans first were bred as a watch and guard dog. No breed excels them at this task. In Chicago, in 1955, one large university started using trained Dobermans to try to reduce vandalism. Not only was it reduced, it was eliminated. Last year, in our city newspapers, we had three accounts of



Dobermans that saved the lives of their owners protecting them from attack or armed robbery.

One of our club members credits his Doberman of only three weeks ownership with having saved his life when an armed robber invaded his home.

It is staggering to think of our city and the business and industries that could benefit financially and in providing safety for watchmen and employees through the use of trained Dobermans.

One of our club members owns a tavern and has kept Dobermans for years. The dogs mingle with the customers as long as the customers are in front of the bar; but if one tries to step behind the bar, he is met with a big black dog "on guard".

We know of no home or apartment where a Doberman is allowed to run at large that has been entered or robbed successfully. So great is the respect for these dogs that their presence is warning enough to intruders who "plan" an entry. To those who blunder into their crimes, the dog is better than a burglar alarm.

We have often wondered why insurance companies have not been alert enough to the values of Dobermans to offer special rates where trained Dobermans are used. The facts are there. Perhaps it only requires prompting to get action.

On the gentler side, the Doberman guides the blind. A few trainers of guide dogs have made statements to the effect that the Doberman is not suited to this work; but these are comments of the uninformed. Blind persons all over the country are using Dobermans, and one of the largest foundations specializing in guide dog work kept records on various breeds in training. They found the Doberman had the best training record, the best record for "rejects" and the best record for continued devotion. Naturally, not all Dobermans are suited to guide dog training, but those that are make wonderful "eyes" for their masters.

Did you ever think of the Doberman as a field dog? He has been successfully trained for retrieving and hunting. Many Dobs "point" naturally and work a scent as retrievers. They have been trained for big game, where their speed and stamina make them highly successful in tracking and treeing mountain lions and other big and dangerous predators.

Where police departments have been wise enough to see the many advantages of trained dogs, the Doberman has found a role in keeping order in human society.

Dobermans have been used to teach safety to children. Probably the most famous performer in safety education in the nation is a Doberman known as "Safety Girl". A Detroit policeman trained her to show primary grade children how to cross streets and he and "Safety Girl" have traveled all over the nation. In Ft. Wayne, Charles Dunifun, also a policeman, uses his Dobermans in the same way.

Dobermans have a unique spot in obedience trials in dog shows. The whole training movement in America came through Dobermans. Dobermans were taken from show to show giving demonstrations. Many of the founders of training clubs were Doberman people; and when it came to War Dog work, these Doberman



folk became the leaders. Today, those of us who want a great performing dog in obedience work usually turn to Dobermans. As one top professional trainer and exhibitor says, "In obedience a top working Doberman can be topped only by another Doberman. No other breed can compete for cleanness, speed and performance."

These, then, are some of the uses of a Doberman - guard, guide, field, police, stunt, and obedience. In all the Doberman excels and has a unique place.

### **The Beauty of a Doberman**

An all rounder judge once said, "Even a poor specimen of a Doberman is a truly beautiful dog. One lives near us and seldom do I drive home and see him running with the other dogs of the neighborhood but what I think, 'look at that gorgeous animal'. I know he isn't a very good specimen, but a Doberman stands out from all other breeds."

This quality is not an accident. Though the Doberman was originally bred for its character, the breed was taken over by a group of men who sought a geometrically and esthetically perfect dog. They bred to a design. The design was based on mathematical equation and function principles. They began with what they wanted the dog to do - to be a short-backed galloper, to be agile, to be fast, to be powerful, to be sturdy - and they worked out the proportions and principles of movement that would be necessary. A square dog, a dog with ample body, a dog with long muzzle, etc. His legs were to be just so long and angled a certain way to let him move true and to let him move with speed and quick changes of direction. They applied this ideal form to a breeding program, and in less than twenty years had evolved just about our present breed type. To this mathematical outline, they added features for beauty - a sleek, dry coat, with precise, clean markings; a long, arched neck for balance and nobility, a dark eye, almond in shape and set fairly deep, for appearance only. This is the Doberman you see today. A dog with "beauty built—in". There is no such thing as an ugly Doberman, today. There are some that are closer to perfection than others, that is all.

The Doberman in pose is a noble and lovely thing. But the most thrilling part of a Doberman's beauty is in action. When you take your dog out into a field and let him run and you see him lay out in a smooth flowing gallop - this is the Doberman that is without peer - a dog of dogs. An animal so natural you think that all evolution has been aimed at him; and yet the precise control of selected breedings of little more than 50 years is what has crystallized this form and motion.

### **The Character of a Doberman**

Each Doberman is different; yet each exhibits "Doberman characteristics of mind and disposition". We have never owned one that was not a "character". Some are more so than others.

Called the dog with the human mind, the Doberman will do just about everything but talk; and often a Doberman will hold quite lengthy conversations with you about something that is very important to him at the moment.



Probably the most distinguishing thing about a Doberman is the speed of reaction. Where another dog is doing one thing, a Doberman will do ten. They learn through watching; they learn through trial and error; and often they seem to reason things out.

It isn't unusual to have a Doberman that opens doors. One of ours has been known to move a chair over to the stove so as to climb up to steal a roast from the top of the stove. Another was known to methodically lift out petunia plants from a newly planted bed, and then get concerned because the bed didn't look right and spend ten minutes trying to put the plants back again.

Though deeply loyal, they are clowns with minds of their own. We have heard of one great obedience worker who would get a peeve on at his owner. When the dog was in one of his "peeves" the owner knew something would be done at the next show. Just what only time would tell. The dog was known to go out on his scent work and bury the articles. He was known to do his directed jumping in reverse. His prize performance came one day when he worked beautifully until he was left on the sits and downs. Just as his owner left the ring the dog left his position, scampered over, and swatted his owner on the seat of the pants and returned to the place he had been left and sat as if nothing had happened!

Another great obedience Doberman performed beautifully one hot day. On the long down, the owner was out of sight and the Dobe inched forward until she was in the shade. Just before the time was up for the handlers to return to the ring, she inched back again to her original position!

The loyalty of Dobermans is beyond most of us to be understood. It extends not only to their owners but to their companions. Males in particular become deeply attached to females with whom they are raised. It is not unusual to hear of Dobses that mourn to death for a lost mate. Nor is it unusual to hear of Dobermans that recognize a friend after years of separation.

The world of Doberman lore is so filled with stories it would take books to tell them all - the Doberman who loved ice cream and would charge up to neighbor children and bark in their faces until they dropped their cones; then she would grab the cone and eat it. "I used to have to buy more ice cream for my neighbor's children", her owner used to say. The Doberman who grew jealous of his mistress talking on the telephone and would go to the closet, bring out a pair of shoes, plop them down in front of her and threaten to chew them if she didn't hang up. The Doberman who tip-toed around the house whenever her mistress had a headache. The Doberman who sings for food. The Doberman who was not allowed to guard because his mate was the guard dog - but when she had pups, he took over guard duty until she weaned the pups; then he retired again and raised the pups himself. Sometime we hope to write a book filled with the stories of what Doberman "characters" have done, and when we do, we hope to have in it some of the accounts of what your Doberman has done. For each is different, but each is a character - a beloved character.