

# TODAY'S BREEDER

A Purina Pro Plan Publication Dedicated to the Needs of Canine Enthusiasts

Issue 97

HIGH-PERFORMANCE TRAINING  
**Black River Retrievers**

- WESTMINSTER WINNER 'FLYNN'
- **NEW** PURINA PRO PLAN SAVOR WITH PROBIOTICS
- MUTATION DISCOVERY LINKED TO IVDD





Above, from left: "Jude" (CH Esmonds Hey Jude V Turstadt CD PT RE), a 5-year-old male owned and handled by Michelle Amtower of Asheville, North Carolina, works sheep on the way to earning a herding started course A sheep (HSAs) title at Rottiewe Farm in Wright City, Missouri. "Cruz" (CAN BISS/RBIS AM/CAN GCHX Big Beach's Low Rider At Wathamam AM/CAN RN), a 7 ½-year-old male owned by Erin Smith and handled by her mother, Heather Smith, of Shaughnessy, Alberta, Canada, excels to earn carting started and carting intermediate team titles.

## ROTTWEILERS SHINE DOING WORK AT ARC NATIONAL

Simply put, the Rottweiler is a working dog. At the American Rottweiler Club (ARC) National Specialty, held May 14 to 19 at Purina Farms in Gray Summit, Missouri, the ingrained work ethic of this noble breed, passed down from the ages of ancient Roman drover dogs, shone through in the mix of highly challenging competitions.

The versatility of the intelligent, powerful Rottweiler was captured in dynamic herding, carting, obedience, rally, tracking, agility, barn hunt, diving dog, sieger show, and conformation events. More than 680 Rottweilers, making up 915 entries, traveled from around the country and Canada with their owners and handlers to take part.

Historically, in his native Germany, this dependable, rugged, willing worker earned his keep driving cattle to be slaughtered and then pulling carts laden with meat to market. The Rottweiler Metzgerhund, or butcher's dog, was a fearless guardian trusted to carry the butcher's proceeds in a purse around his neck.

Centuries later, many generations removed from those early German ancestors, the virtues of this courageous, all-purpose breed have stood the test of time. Even more than the competitions, the enthusiasm and shared love for Rottweilers of those attending the National Specialty spoke to the steadfast appeal of this working breed. ■



Above, from left: "Bono" (CH Twin Creeks Stand Out In A Crowd DM DS ), a 4-year-old male owned by Sharon Baublitz of Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, takes a flying jump at the North American Diving Dog Association event. "Psych" (CH CT PACH2 Kanosaks Psych to the Very End Valeo VCD4 UDX3 OM3 RAE MXP8 MXP8 MJP8 MJPG PAX2), an 8 ½-year-old female handled by co-owner Cathy Fleury of Elgin, Illinois, clears the high jump in utility directed jumping at the obedience trial.

The American Rottweiler Club is one of 38 parent clubs, a record number, to hold its National Specialty this year at Purina Farms in Gray Summit, Missouri. Located one hour from St. Louis, Purina Farms is home to the Purina Event Center and outdoor competition areas used for herding, tracking, lure coursing, earthdog trials, barn hunt, and outdoor dog shows. For information, please contact Kaite Flamm, Purina Farms Senior Manager of Programming, at 888-688-PETS (888-688-7387) or by email at [kaite.flamm@purina.nestle.com](mailto:kaite.flamm@purina.nestle.com).



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FC-AFC Lil Bit's Tête de Cuvée ("Bubbles") is a 6-year-old female Labrador Retriever owned by Victor Garcia of Durham, North Carolina, and trained by Alan Pleasant of Black River Retrievers in Angier, North Carolina. Cover photo by Mark Atwater. See story on page 12.

### THIS PAGE

CH Sidekick Sanchu Gilbey On Ice ("Gilbert"), a 3 1/2-year-old Grand Basset Griffon Vendéen, was bred by Brent Humphrey and Corey Benedict of Sidekick Kennels in Lady Lake, Florida, with Laura Offerdahl. See story on page 20.



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## PRO PLAN

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# ‘FLYNN’ STEALS THE SHOW AT WESTMINSTER

Wagging his tail happily every time Best in Show judge Betty-Anne Stenmark walked by, “Flynn” (Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Belle Creek’s All I Care About Is Love) charmed his way into the spotlight to win the 142nd Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in February at Madison Square Garden in New York City.

The almost 6-year-old Bichon Frise, named for Billy Flynn from the musical “Chicago,” serendipitously stole the show.

“My husband loves musicals,” explains Belle Creek breeder-owner Lorrie Carlton.

Only the second Bichon Frise in history to be featured in the Westminster winner’s circle, Flynn shared the glory with his breeders, owners and handler. By the way, Flynn is distantly related — seven generations removed — to the 2001 Best in Show winner, “JR” (CH Special Times Just Right).

With their instant celebrity status, Flynn and handler Bill McFadden got up in the wee hours the next day for a media tour that included stops at “Good Morning America,” “Fox & Friends” and “The View.” They ceremoniously rang the opening bell of the New York Stock Exchange and appeared on stage in the Broadway musical “Kinky Boots.” The tour continued for months, as they crisscrossed the country to headline special events where Flynn warmed the hearts of all he met.



A showstopper with his happy, merry disposition, “Flynn” wins Best in Show at the 142nd Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show.

“People would pet Flynn and exclaim, ‘Oh, he’s so fluffy like a marshmallow,’” says McFadden, of Acampo, California, a two-time handler of a Westminster winner, having shown the Kerry Blue Terrier “Mick” (CH Torums Scarf Michael) to Best in Show in 2003.

When they took out on the show circuit in December 2015, McFadden and Flynn bonded quickly. “He’s an easy dog to fall in love with,” McFadden says. “Flynn loves dog shows, and he loves people. He has a lot of energy and makes people happy. It’s been really great to be part of Flynn’s team.”

A second-generation breeder and handler, Lorrie bought her parents’ Belle Creek kennel in 1979 after having bred her first Bichon litter in 1977. She married veterinarian Dr. Larry Letsche in 1989 and together they opened Remrock Farms Veterinary Services in Plymouth, Michigan.

Belle Creek has produced about 180 champions. Many have been Best in Show and

Best in Specialty Show winners; some have earned performance titles. All were bred to be companions cherished for their merry temperaments and lively antics.

Without a doubt, Lorrie is the mastermind behind the Belle Creek breeding program. Always eager to see what each breeding produces, she trains potential show dogs and handles them in the classes. Thus, Lorrie handled Flynn to his championship,



several Bred-By Exhibitor wins, including a special attraction Best Bred-By at the 2014 Bichon Frise Club of America (BFCA) National Specialty, and Best in Specialty Show at Indianapolis.

Layered with supporters who co-breed and co-own many of the Belle Creek Bichons gives Lorrie and Larry the resources needed to successfully campaign a Special. Besides Lorrie and Larry, the co-breeders of Flynn are Lindsay Van Keuren of Parker, Colorado, and Glenda Blue of Orlando, Florida, and the co-owners include Van Keuren and Patrina and Bruce Odette of Denver.

Flynn, the only male in a litter of five puppies, came from a tight line breeding of an aunt to her nephew. "We expected either the best or worst traits. We got the best," Lorrie says.

Flynn's dam, "Roxy" (GCH Belle Creek's Razzle Dazzle) — another name taken from "Chicago" — was the No. 1 Bichon bitch in 2011, the same year she won Best Veteran at the BFCA National. "Roxy was a beautiful show dog with a lovely face and head and an amazing attitude, but she lacked rear angulation and her coat could have been better," says Lorrie. "When it came time to breed Roxy, we looked at her strong and weak points and 'Governor' (GCH Glenleigh Gangs N' Roses) was a standout to complement her."

Governor was a singleton puppy out of "Rosey" (CH Glenleigh Rose Medallion). Owned by Dr. Karen Tormey of St. George, Utah, Governor proved to be a wonderful show dog having won five Bests in Show and then he became a great producer, Lorrie says.

Governor's sire, Roxy's brother, is "Rascal" (CH Belle Creek's Me and My Gang), one of four males in a litter of five. All became show champions, putting their dam — Flynn's granddam — "Glory Be" (CH Belle Creek's Risgae Glory Be) in a tie for Non-Sporting Brood Bitch of the Year in 2009. Rascal and Roxy's sire — Flynn's grandsire — was "Rudy" (CH Belle Creek's Double The Fun).

"Rudy was a puppy we almost didn't keep," Lorrie says. "He had no major faults, but he also didn't have a show-off attitude at that time. Something about him spoke to me and said to keep him. I am so glad we decided to do that."

Among the wonderful traits that Rudy passed on to his offspring was beautiful head type, including the correct three-to-five muzzle to the top of the skull and the equilateral triangle from the outside corner of the eyes to the nose. Rudy had good balance, good shoulder placement and length of neck, and lovely round eyes as a Bichon should have.



#### SNAPSHOT OF WESTMINSTER WINNER 'FLYNN'

- 2018: Best in Show, Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show
- 2017: No. 1 Non-Sporting Dog of the Year
- 2015-2017: No. 1 Bichon Frise, All Systems
- 2015: Best of Breed, Bichon Frise Club of America (BFCA) National Specialty
- 2015: Reserve Best in Show, AKC National Championship
- 2014: Best Bred-By Exhibitor at BFCA Special Attraction
- Career Bests in Show: 44

Fed Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula

Belle Creek Bichon Frise breeders Lorrie Carlton and Dr. Larry Letsche enjoy time at home with Flynn, who has been on a media tour most of the year since winning Westminster.

Roxy, who lived with Van Keuren in Colorado, was sent to Michigan to be bred to Governor. The litter was whelped at Lorrie and Larry's house, so they could keep a close eye on the puppies. When the puppies were weaned at 6 weeks, Roxy returned home to Van Keuren.

"Flynn was the puppy in the litter who demanded attention from the start," Lorrie

says. "He used his cuteness to get what he wanted, and he always was the first to do everything. As the puppies started to become mobile, it was obvious that he had good balance and movement, and he always had that 'attitude.'"

When it was Flynn's turn to begin his Specials campaign, the village was ready to back him. "Patrina and Bruce (Odette) supported Flynn financially, and Patrina hired photographers to do photo shoots and managed Flynn's advertising. Patrina and Lindsay (Van Keuren) worked on his Facebook page — Flynn the Bichon Frise — and Lindsay managed our website. Larry and I took care of entry fees," Lorrie says.

The stars aligned perfectly. "We are thankful to those who believed in a little ball of white fluff named Flynn," says Lorrie. "We are so happy that Patrina, Bruce and Lindsay shared this wonderful journey. Mostly, we attribute everything that has happened to Flynn, who is happy just to be Flynn." ■

# MUTATION DISCOVERY

## LINKS DOGS' SHORT LEGS & ABNORMAL INTERVERTEBRAL DISCS

Deciphering how breeders will benefit from the discovery of the genetic mutation that causes chondrodystrophy (CDDY) in some of the most popular short-legged, long-backed dog breeds — breeds also at risk for paralysis caused by intervertebral disc disease (IVDD) — entails taking a slow, cautious approach.

The marriage of the short-legged phenotype and a predisposition to IVDD was likely an ancient occurrence. As dogs became domesticated from wolves, variation in the size and shape of purebred dog breeds transpired from breeding selection. One of the most extreme examples of breed differences was in limb length, with extremely short limbs defining many breeds.<sup>1</sup>



Dr. Danika Bannasch of the University of California-Davis is shown with her 2-year-old Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever, “Genes” (Aqueus Wild Type JH). A Toller enthusiast, Dr. Bannasch recognized the breed’s short-legged phenotype and growth plate abnormalities, which helped her team discover the *FGF4* retrogene mutation on canine chromosome 12 that occurs in many breeds.

“The chondrodystrophy-associated mutation occurred a long time ago,” says Emily Brown, PhD, DVM, a genetics graduate student at the University of California-Davis who contributed to the mutation discovery. “There are descriptions of short-legged

dogs dating over 4,000 years ago, and even before this, short-legged dogs were depicted in carvings in ancient Egypt.”

A common theory blamed the long back of IVDD-affected breeds. “Their backs are not so much long as their legs are short,” says Danika Bannasch, DVM, PhD, the Maxine Adler Endowed Chair of Genetics at UC Davis, whose laboratory made the gene discovery.

Extensive examination of growth plates has been performed on many short-legged breeds prone to IVDD. The list includes Dachshunds, Pekingese, French Bulldogs, American Cocker Spaniels, and Beagles. Histopathological analysis of the bones of puppies from these breeds has shown that their short stature is due to defects in endochondral ossification, the process whereby cartilage is replaced by bone in the developing limb. Their vertebral bodies also are affected, and their discs are abnormal by 1 year of age.<sup>1</sup>

The UC Davis research team identified a functional fibroblast growth factor 4 (*FGF4*) retrogene insertion on canine chromosome 12 that is the causative variant attributed to the CDDY phenotype seen in many breeds. CDDY is a condition of short legs due to dysplastic, shortened long bones and susceptibility to Type I IVDD, or abnormal intervertebral discs in which the discs degenerate prematurely in young dogs. In contrast, Type II IVDD occurs in older dogs and is usually limited to a single intervertebral disc.

An earlier *FGF4*-retogene insertion discovery on canine chromosome 18 explains a short-legged phenotype known as chondrodysplasia (CDPA) that also occurs in several breeds.<sup>2</sup> A research team at the National Institutes of Health studying breed sizes and morphology made this finding in 2009. The autosomal dominant

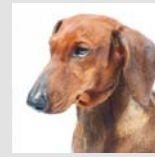
### UNDERSTANDING TYPE I IVDD

Type I IVDD is an inherited disorder caused by chondrodystrophy (CDDY), a condition of shorter legs and abnormal intervertebral discs in which the discs degenerate prematurely. Having a gelatin-like core surrounded by a fibrous coating, the intervertebral discs, located between the vertebrae, protect and cushion the spinal column. In dogs with Type I IVDD, the discs calcify and harden, predisposing them to herniation of the discs into the spinal canal. As the discs press on the nerves of the spinal cord, a dog may experience pain, nerve damage, loss of bladder and bowel control, and/or paralysis.

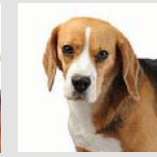


## DOG BREEDS IDENTIFIED WITH THE *FGF4* RETROGENE INSERTION GENOTYPE

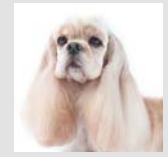
Some of the most popular short-legged, long-backed dog breeds express the *FGF4* retrogene mutation on chromosome 12 that contributes to chondrodys trophy (CDYY). The mutation, likely an ancient occurrence, affects breeds from all over the world and across American Kennel Club Groups, as shown here.



Dachshund<sup>1</sup>



Beagle



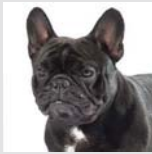
American Cocker Spaniel



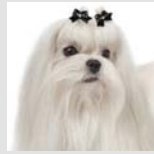
Coton de Tulear<sup>2</sup>



Miniature Poodle<sup>2</sup>



French Bulldog



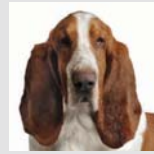
Maltese



Pekingese



Pembroke Welsh Corgi



Basset Hound



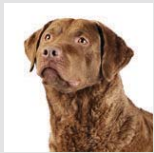
Bichon Frise



Cardigan Welsh Corgi



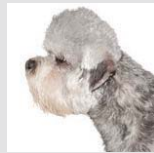
Cavalier King Charles Spaniel



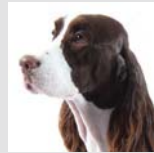
Chesapeake Bay Retriever



Chihuahua



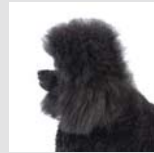
Dandie Dinmont Terrier



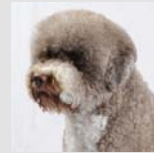
English Springer Spaniel



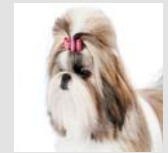
Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever



Toy Poodle



Portuguese Water Dog<sup>3</sup>



Shih Tzu

<sup>1</sup> Disc calcification in Danish Wirehaired Standard Dachshunds was mapped to the same region previously found in Portuguese Water Dog (see reference 3). Morgensen MS, Karlskov-Mortensen P, Proschowsky HF, et al. Genome-Wide Association Study in Dachshund: Identification of a Major Locus Affecting Intervertebral Disc Calcification. *Journal of Heredity*. 2011;102(Suppl 1):S81-S86.

<sup>2</sup> Identified in short-legged dogs of this breed

<sup>3</sup> Effect on long-bone length in this breed was previously identified. Quignon P, Schoenebeck JJ, Chase K, et al. Fine Mapping a Locus Controlling Leg Morphology in the Domestic Dog. *Cold Spring Harbor Symposia on Quantitative Biology*. 2009;72:327-333.

inheritance of the *FGF4*-18 insertion means dogs need only one gene copy from a sire or dam to inherit CDPA. Interestingly, some, but not all, CDPA-affected breeds are at risk for IVDD. For example, neither the Cairn Terrier nor the West Highland White Terrier has IVDD.

The *FGF4*-12 insertion mutation causing CDDY affects height phenotype in a semi-dominant inheritance, whereby dogs with two copies of the mutation are smaller than those with one copy. The mutation impacts the IVDD phenotype with a dominant inheritance, thus dogs require only one copy of the retrogene insertion to be predisposed. Notably, some dogs have both *FGF4*-12 and *FGF4*-18 mutations, which results in a more drastic reduction of leg length.

Odd though it may seem, a medium-legged breed, the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever, helped the UC Davis researchers discover the *FGF4*-12 mutation. The smallest of the retriever breeds, Tollers were used because they are commonly affected by a form of skeletal dysplasia that causes short-legged individuals and abnormalities such as long-bone bowing, physéal (growth plate) widening and joint incongruity.

A Toller enthusiast, Dr. Bannasch recognized the breed's short-legged phenotype and growth

### WHAT IS A RETROGENE?

The mutation that causes dogs' short legs and susceptibility to IVDD is a functional fibroblast growth factor (*FGF4*) retrogene insertion on canine chromosome 12. A retrogene results from the retrotransposition of processed mRNA (messenger RNA). The normal process of turning the code within the DNA into protein involves going from DNA to RNA and then protein. In the cell's nucleus, DNA is transcribed into RNA, which then exits the nucleus and is translated into protein. In this case, the mRNA is copied back into DNA and inserted into the chromosome. It is called "retro" since it is going backward to make a DNA copy from RNA. Only a small percent of retrogenes encode functional proteins, such as *FGF4*-12.

plate abnormalities. Using a genome-wide association study (GWAS), they compared Tollers with severe skeletal dysplasia and Toller controls without severe skeletal dysplasia and found the short-legged ones had an *FGF4*-12 retrogene insertion similar to the one found previously on chromosome 18 in some short-legged breeds.

"Since the skeletal dysplasia phenotype is not uncommon among dog breeds, we investigated haplotype sharing across breeds and saw that a portion of this haplotype, or genetic variance, was shared with Beagles and American Cocker Spaniels — two breeds considered classically chondrodystrophic," Dr. Bannasch says.

The researchers then performed a second GWAS for Type 1 disc disease across breeds, including mixed breeds, and found, indeed, the same region was associated. To pinpoint the causative variant for skeletal dysplasia and IVDD, they sequenced the genomes of a skeletal dysplasia-affected Toller, an IVDD-affected Dachshund and 83 unaffected controls.

"We found that this second *FGF4* retrogene insertion in the canine genome is not only responsible for skeletal dysplasia in



“Hildie,” who developed IVDD at age 2 ½ and was partially paralyzed for the rest of her life, was breeder MaryAnn Teal’s first Smooth Standard Dachshund to have the disease. “Caring for a paralyzed dog is emotionally, financially and physically draining,” says Teal of Williamsburg, Virginia.

## DACHSHUNDS: THE POSTER BREED FOR IVDD

No breed better exemplifies extremely short legs and a propensity for developing intervertebral disc disease (IVDD) than the Dachshund. The highest occurrence of IVDD is in this breed, with an estimated disease incidence of 19 to 24 percent.<sup>1</sup>

Dachshund breeder MaryAnne Teal of Williamsburg, Virginia, has dealt with IVDD in her dogs more times than she would have liked. Despite her efforts to study bloodlines and breed away from the debilitating disease known for its high mortality rate and high cost of surgical and veterinary care, Teal has not been successful.

The owner of Smooth Standard Dachshunds for 30 years, Teal’s love for her Dachshunds is seen in the top-quality care she has given her dogs with IVDD. Decompression surgery and rehabilitation did not always help her dogs regain walking ability. When these efforts did not restore mobility, she outfitted her dogs with carts and her home with ramps and gates to keep them safe.

“IVDD has pretty much affected our lives in every possible way,” Teal says. “We have stressed our own backs and knees lifting and carrying our dogs. It is absolutely heartbreaking when a dog never walks again. Caring for a paralyzed dog is emotionally, financially and physically draining.”

Teal’s first dog with IVDD was partially paralyzed after being diagnosed at 2 ½ years old. Her second dog, a show champion and Hound Group winner, was bred before being affected with IVDD. Although the dog recovered, she produced a daughter that developed IVDD at 4 years old. The dog recovered partially with treatment, though she struggled for the rest of her life with ataxia, or muscle incoordination.

“We are optimistic that someday there will be more hope for Dachshunds and an ability to breed away from IVDD,” Teal says. “This has been a difficult, heartbreaking journey for us, but our love for our dogs has carried us through.”

<sup>1</sup> Ball MU, McGuire JA, Swaim SF, et al. Patterns of Occurrence of Disk Disease Among Registered Dachshunds. *Journal of the American Veterinary Association*. 1982;180:519-522.

Tollers but also for chondrodystrophy, including the predisposition to Type I IVDD across all dog breeds,” says Dr. Bannasch.

The research team looked at other breeds that are considered chondrodysplastic and found the same mutation on chromosome 12. Some of the breeds had mutations on both chromosome 12 and chromosome 18; however, the chromosome 12 mutation that causes CDDY is found in more dogs with IVDD than the chromosome 18 mutation that causes CDPA.

“We realized that the long-held belief that all short-legged ‘dwarf’ dogs result from the same chondrodysplasia condition is wrong,” Dr. Bannasch says. “There are two independent genetic mutations caused by separate mutations of the same retrogene that contribute to slightly different types of dwarfism.”

The best advice for breeders pondering how to interpret the *FGF4-12* mutation discovery and use the DNA tests for CDDY and CDPA available at the UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Laboratory is to take a slow, cautious approach, advises Dr. Bannasch. “In some cases, genetic testing may potentially help breeders eliminate Type I IVDD,” she says.

“The most important factor is how widespread the *FGF4-12* mutation is in the gene pool, as there must be sufficient variation at that locus to breed away from IVDD,” explains Dr. Bannasch. “I think it is important for breeders to understand that the *FGF4-12* mutation is very common in most predisposed breeds.”

Although the discovery is exciting it will not quickly solve the problem of IVDD. “We are not sure how common or genetically set chondrodystrophy is across the breeds, so selection against it should be done very slowly and may not even be possible if CDDY is homozygous,” she says.

More research is needed to better understand the impact of the discovery on a breed-specific level. “We are eager to collect more genetic samples and continue this work,” says Dr. Bannasch. “As we learn more about the effect of these mutations in individual breeds, we expect to gain insights to help breeders lessen the burden of IVDD without losing the short legs and long backs that they love about their breeds.” ■

### TESTING FOR CDDY & CDPA

The UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Laboratory offers DNA testing for chondrodystrophy (CDDY) and chondrodysplasia (CDPA). The results for the CDDY test will indicate whether a dog is at risk for IVDD and leg shortening, as well as the impact from potential breeding decisions. The CDPA test results will identify dogs with the mutation causing leg shortening. For testing information, visit: <https://bit.ly/2LXSS58>

<sup>1</sup> Brown EA, Dickinson PJ, Mansour T, et al. *FGF4* Retrogene on CFA12 Is Responsible for Chondrodystrophy and Intervertebral Disc Disease in Dogs. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 2017;114(43):11476-11481. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1709082114>.

<sup>2</sup> Parker HG, VonHoldt BM, Quignon P, et al. An Expressed *Fgf4* Retrogene Is Associated with Breed-Defining Chondrodysplasia in Domestic Dogs. *Science*. 2009;325:995-998.

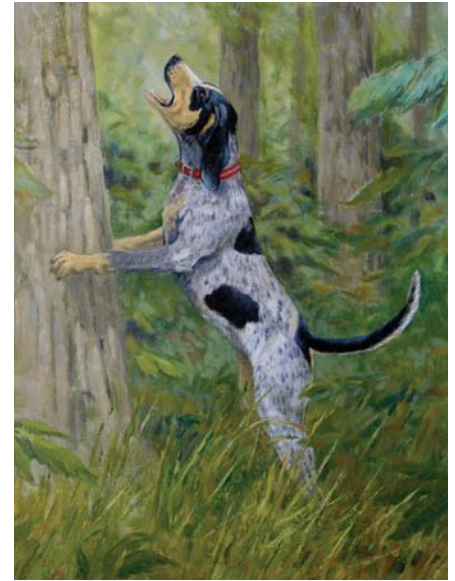




NSPC FCGD McDaniel's Lil Country Music, the Purina Outstanding SPO Field Trial Beagle



GR CH 'PR' Champs Backwoods Beauty Queen, the Purina Outstanding Bench Show Coonhound



GR NITE CH 'PR' Mullins Sandfork Blue Sadie, the Purina Outstanding Nite Hunt Coonhound

## 'MUSIC,' 'IZZY' AND 'SADIE' ARE PURINA AWARD HOUND WINNERS

Standing out in the pack, a top-performing Small Pack Option (SPO) Beagle, a striking bench show Bluetick Coonhound and a stellar nite hunt Treeing Walker Coonhound were the 2017 Purina Award winners in their respective sports. The three female winners were honored this spring at award programs.

A two-time winner of the Purina Outstanding SPO Field Trial Beagle Award in back-to-back years, only the second hound to do this in the 19-year history of the program, "Music," a 13-inch tricolor Beagle, proved unstoppable at tracking rabbits. Earning a total of 165 points, Music's campaign was boosted when she won her class at the 2017 AKC (American Kennel Club) SPO National Championship. NSPC FCGD McDaniel's Lil Country Music was handled by breeder-owner Cody McDaniel of Kentwood, Louisiana, and Gary Moorman of Pontotoc, Mississippi. "Music is a special hound who is absolutely unrelenting and quickly takes control of the pack," Moorman says.

A top-tier, consistent bench show winner, "Izzy," a 5-year-old Treeing Walker Coonhound, showed her heart out for breeder-owner-handler Danielle Champ of Duck, West Virginia, and co-handler Andi Emory of Landrum, South Carolina, to become the Purina Out-

standing Bench Show Coonhound. Living up to her name, GR CH 'PR' Champs Backwoods Beauty Queen accumulated 240 points by winning Grand Champion Treeing Walker Female at the UKC (United Kennel Club) Winter Classic, Opposite Sex at the UKC World Bench Show and 17 state championships. This is the first Purina Award for Champ, who has been competing in bench shows for eight years, and her husband and co-owner, Gary Champ. "Izzy is my once-in-a-lifetime hound," Champ says.

The Purina Outstanding Nite Hunt Coonhound Award was presented posthumously to "Sadie," a 6-year-old Bluetick Coonhound who passed away unexpectedly in February. GR NITE CH 'PR' Mullins Sandfork Blue Sadie, bred and owned by Tony Baer of Fredericktown, Ohio, and handled by Terry Jessup of Rural Hall, North Carolina, accrued an impressive 700 points. She won the UKC Winter Classic plus eight state championships. Sharing a special bond with Sadie during their months on the road to winning, Jessup says, "Sadie had an incredible heart, and it was an honor to compete with her. She was my hunting companion and friend."

These hound winners were fueled by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Formula. ■





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Maintaining nutritional balance can be challenging on the road to dog shows and field trials, though doing so is essential if a dog is to radiate brilliance in the ring or perform with gusto at a trial.

One way to support digestive health is by feeding a dog food that includes probiotics. *Purina Pro Plan* recently added guaranteed live probiotics to SAVOR dry formulas to positively impact digestive health by balancing the levels of bacteria in the gut.

“A healthy gut microflora balance supports digestive health, which is important to a dog’s total well-being,” says Gail Czarnecki-Maulden, PhD, Purina Senior Research Nutritionist. “We’ve studied probiotics for many years. The probiotic we chose for the *Pro Plan SAVOR* formulas is known for being robust and stable and can survive until it reaches a dog’s bowl.”

The guaranteed live probiotics are being added in a phased rollout that began earlier this year to all the *Purina Pro Plan SAVOR* dry dog formulas. This includes puppy, adult small breed, adult large breed, regular adult, senior adult, and grain-free adult formulas. Look for the specially marked bags showing formulas with probiotics. *Purina Pro Plan* is sold at pet specialty and through online retailers.





GUARANTEED LIVE  
**PROBIOTICS**  
TO SUPPORT DIGESTIVE HEALTH

### Benefits of Probiotics in *Purina Pro Plan SAVOR* Dog Food

- Positively impact digestive health via maintaining the microflora balance in a dog's gut
- Robust enough to survive the manufacturing process and storage conditions
- No risk of damaging or killing the probiotics when mixed with wet dog food

### *Purina Pro Plan SAVOR* Offers Advanced Nutrition

- High-Quality Protein: Including real chicken, salmon, lamb, or beef as the No. 1 ingredient
- Shredded Blend Taste & Texture: A combination of crunchy kibble and tender, meaty pieces that dogs love
- Healthy Skin & Coat: Vitamin A and linoleic acid, an omega-6 fatty acid
- Antioxidants: Help promote a healthy immune system
- Protein-to-Fat Ratio: Helps dogs maintain ideal body condition

### It's OK to Combine *Pro Plan SAVOR* Dry Food & *Pro Plan Veterinary Diets FortiFlora*

You may already give your dog *Purina Pro Plan Veterinary Diets FortiFlora* canine veterinary probiotic supplement and wonder whether it's all right to combine *FortiFlora* with *Purina Pro Plan SAVOR* dry dog food with probiotics. The answer is: Yes.

Different probiotic strains can have different health benefits for your dog. *FortiFlora* is a supplement for the dietary management of puppies with soft stools and adult dogs with diarrhea. It also promotes a healthy immune system. Both *FortiFlora* and the probiotic in *Pro Plan SAVOR* dry formulas help maintain a dog's digestive health. Consult your veterinarian if you have questions about the right diet and probiotic approach for your individual dog.





# BLACK RIVER RETRIEVERS' COMPETITIVE FIRE

Setting up a single-mark retrieve for a magazine cover photo is a meticulous process involving sorting out the best spot to cast a seasoned field trial retriever that will give the dog a takeoff vantage and allow for a spectacular, dynamic dive across the water. It is daybreak, perfect timing to capture the water's reflection of the first rays of sunlight and the intensity of a hard-charging retriever driven by natural desire and ability.

Pro trainer Alan Pleasant of Black River Retrievers lines up a 6-year-old yellow female Labrador Retriever named "Bubbles" (FC-AFC Lil Bit's Tête de Cuvée), owned by Victor Garcia of Durham, North Carolina. The serious-minded workaholic is patient and accommodating, though he is anxious to get on with his regular training drills.

Wearing shorts, rubber boots to his knees, a white handler's jacket, and a Green Monster whistle hanging on a lanyard around his neck, Alan fully recognizes the hours are waning before the weekend. By then, the Black River team and their string of

17 retrievers will be 232 miles away at a field trial in Farmville, Virginia. After the trial, they'll be headed to upstate New York, following the trial circuit North for summer.

One and a half hours from home in Angier, North Carolina, Alan and his team are training in Rocky Point, North Carolina, at the 1,250-acre aquatic wetland property of the late John W. Thomas Jr., who was a good friend and client.

Although it is overcast, the humid mid-May morning is holding off on the forecasted rain. "Weather people tell more stories than dog handlers," jokes Alan, grinning.

His husky, weathered voice is thick with a Southern accent that rolls off words reflecting his Southern manners. "Yes, ma'am, Bubbles is going to the National Amateur in about a month in Roseburg, Oregon," he says.

The single mark retrieve is an old-school lesson for the capable retriever, who qualified for the 2017 National Open Retriever Championship. Alan tosses a white bumper 20 feet across the



Professional retriever trainer Alan Pleasant prepares to cast "Bubbles," a 6-year-old female Labrador Retriever, while training in Rocky Point, North Carolina. The training grounds, owned by the late John W. Thomas Jr., are protected from development with a conservation easement and teem with aquatic wildlife providing a rich waterfowl habitat.

Right: "Tank," a 6-year-old male and one of the last dogs owned by Thomas before he died in 2017, delivers a powerful, intense retrieve.









“Google,” a 5-year-old male who qualified for both the 2018 National Open and National Amateur Retriever Championships, focuses intently on a mark while waiting to be released.

pond, where it falls at a 20-degree angle from where they are standing. Bubbles watches intently, waiting.

“Bubbles!” Alan says, releasing the retriever. She makes a beautiful arcing line to the bumper, gracefully picks it up, then delivers it directly to her handler’s hand.

“Nice,” exclaims pro retriever photographer Mark Atwater of Donalsonville, Georgia, positioned 40 yards away in the shallow marshes with his high-tech Nikon strapped to his body. A stand-out photographer known for his up close and wide shots, Atwater speaks the same retriever language as Alan.

Switching dogs, assistant Martin (pronounced Martene) Ramierz hands off “Google” (FC-AFC I’m Your Search Engine), a 5-year-old black male Labrador owned by Leon Stepanian of Manakin-Sabot, Virginia, and takes Bubbles back to the truck. With tail-wagging enthusiasm, Google comes to the line and waits for the magical moment when his name is called.

Google is released and straightaway shoots to the bumper, snorting on the retrieve. Stylishly, he turns and swims back, gently delivering the bumper. Taking his finished position beside Alan, he shakes hard, water flies everywhere.

“Google is why I photograph dogs,” says Atwater offering a photographer’s point of view about the handsome male.

It is halftime on the retriever circuit for Black River Retrievers — 10 trials down and 10 to go before the National Open Retriever Championship Nov. 10 to 17 in Paducah, Kentucky. A rebuilding year after having a record 10 retrievers qualify for the 2017 National Open, with two making the 10th series and one a Finalist, the team is putting together the next-generation of superstar retrievers.

“If you work hard, a lot of things go your way,” says Alan, on his way to the truck to change to a blue polo shirt.

Blue, the color of a first-place ribbon, is this handler’s favorite color, though white is the color of choice for field trials because it is easier for retrievers to see the handler from afar. With a streak of superstition, Alan is known for switching shirts when things are not going as he would like at a trial.

“When we go to a trial, we take seven days’ worth of shirts and hats,” smiles Alan’s wife, Gwen, considered an assistant on the team, though she jokes she has tried to get fired several times. “We never break out new things on trial weekends, as he has certain things he likes and sticks with.”

“Alan is definitely at the pinnacle of the retriever world,” says Atwater, who knows the sport and the competitors from shooting the National Open and National Amateur.

A pro trainer since 1985, Alan has carved a reputation for being widely successful at molding retrievers into champions. He has been ranked the No. 1 retriever handler for six of the past eight years, based on retriever trial results, and he won the Purina High Point Open Dog Award four consecutive years — the first handler in the history of the program to do so.

These High Point Open retriever winners were “Cane” (FC-AFC Ragin Eye Of The Storm), who won in 2013, and “Bullet”



(NFC-AFC Robber's Stray Bullet), the first three-time winner, having won in 2014, 2015 and 2016. Alan also handled Bullet to his win at the 2014 National Open Retriever Championship.

Inducted into the Retriever Hall of Fame in 2017, Cane was owned by Thomas, who described the retriever as "a phenomenal dog, intelligent, full of desire, with the innate ability to make decisions." Thomas, himself, was a 2014 Hall of Fame inductee.

The cream of the crop gets a spot on the Black River truck. Two Purina High Point Derby Award winners transitioned to Alan. FC-AFC Flawless Execution – FLEX, a 4-year-old owned by Johnny and Kathy Armstrong of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, is one. Flex was the youngest retriever to qualify for the

2017 National Open.

FC Seaside's Gorgeous George, called "Clooney," a 5-year-old owned by Frank and Rita Jones of Vernon, Florida, is another one. Clooney is a big male weighing 95 pounds, compared to the average weight of 70 pounds for males. Clooney was the youngest retriever to go 10 series at the 2017 National Open.

The cover shot done, Alan and Martin move the dog truck about 100 yards south to begin running multiple marks and blind retrieves. Each retriever gets three to four setups six days a week, not counting field trial weekends. While Alan and Martin get the setup configured, a thrower, some-

times called a gun or gunner, takes position 350 yards away behind a camouflage cover.

Meanwhile, in another part of the grounds, training assistant Malcolm Sykes is working a group of younger retrievers that are in transition. This group includes dogs owned by longtime clients Monte French of Montpelier, Virginia, and George and Susan Metka of Schwenksville, Pennsylvania.

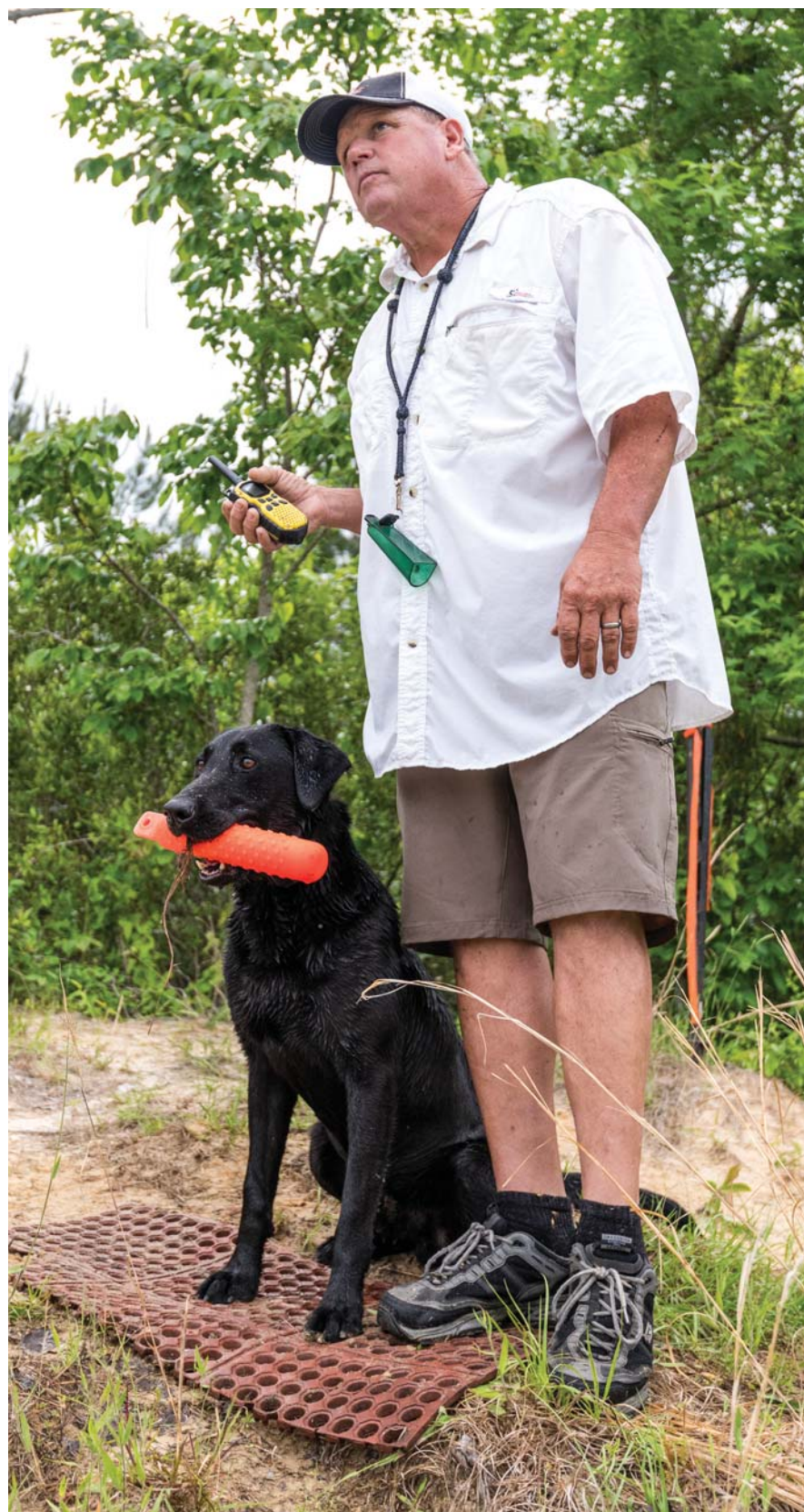
"This is a very important stage of the dogs' training," Alan says. "Malcolm is one of the best."

"This is a very important stage of the dogs' training," Alan says. "Malcolm is one of the best."

The retriever field trial sport has matured since the early years when marks were 150 yards. Binoculars come in handy today to follow a dog retrieving marks up to 450 yards — four and a half times the distance of a football field. Blind



Alan signals to the gun, or thrower, while practicing honoring with Bubbles and Google. In retriever stakes, a dog must show an ability to honor a dog sent on a retrieve without moving.



Alan waits for the next mark to be thrown while working "Spice," a 5-year-old male. He uses a walkie-talkie to communicate and cue multiple throwers located hundreds of yards from the mat.



retrieves, in which the dog doesn't mark the game but instead follows the handler's direction, are often more difficult.

"Dogs and trainers keep getting better and better," says Alan of the profession that consumes his 24/7 with a fiery passion. "It's more complex."

"Alan has a genuine love of the dogs and competition," Gwen says, proudly.

Ready to roll on training, Martin brings Alan a 6-year-old black male, "Chase" (FC-AFC Holland Cliffs In Hot Pursuit), owned by Alvin Hatcher of Huntingtown, Maryland. Having qualified for both the 2017 and 2018 National Opens, Chase is working on blind retrieves and directed casting.

Among the older dogs on the truck, Chase is developing into a team player, a 50/50 partner. "Heel, heel," Alan says, as he directs the dog to a 2-by-2 foot rubber mat used for training precision positioning. Alan uses slight movement and voice commands of "heel" or "here" to align the dog left or right.

Outright hot, the humidity is climbing as is the sun peeking through low-hanging gray clouds. Chase takes off with momentum running at an angle. A few seconds later, the dog veers off toward a diversion mark area. Alan blows his Green Monster whistle and brings the dog to a stop. He raises his left hand and brings the dog back on the correct line to finish the blind retrieve. Alan praises the dog with a "good boy."



Emotions run high as Alan watches a retriever working.

"When setting up, we use factors such as wind, water, cover, terrain, and scent to add to the decision-making process," explains Alan. "There are a lot of decisions to be made, and it adds to the difficulty. We train for focus and intensity."

"This is real-world extreme obedience," says Atwater, capturing high-lights using a powerful zoom lens.

Watching Alan's face change expression as the dogs work is like watching a slow-motion movie. He grimaces slightly, then he puts his hand over his mouth and squints his eyes. As the performance improves, he smiles big.

Martin takes Chase and stakes him out in the shade near the truck. This allows the dogs to dry off and cool down when it is hot and to stay loose when it is cool.

After more than 40 years working with retrievers, Alan has a profound love for the sport and complete understanding of the mutual respect and mentor role one must have to be a successful trainer. Growing up in Angier,

North Carolina, Alan says, "It is a Southern tradition to dove and duck hunt, and I hunted every day until I was in my 30s. We hunted on the Black River, and that's how I came up with Black River Retrievers."

A pre-vet major at North Carolina State University, Alan changed career paths when he went pro in 1985 as a trainer of retrievers for hunting and hunting tests. In the beginning clients turned to him for help developing their gundogs for North American Hunting Retriever Association (NAHRA) trials. When the AKC (American Kennel Club) began its hunting test program, Alan started running these, entering the first Master National in 1991 at Glasgow, Delaware. In 1999 he switched to field trials and in 2001 competed in his first National Open.

Gwen was on board early as his wife and retriever partner, helping to support them with her job at the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation. "We'll be married 32 years this December," she says. "This is not the easiest occupation on family life."

The couple has two daughters, Paige (Jonathon) Dorman and Anna (Josh) Koch. Both live in Angier, where Alan and Gwen live from October to mid-May. The rest of the year, they live in Copenhagen, New York, only 44 miles from Ontario, Canada.

The training team is an integral part of Black Rivers' success. Martin has been with Alan 15 years, and Malcom eight years.

"Martin is the glue that keeps us together," Gwen says.



In the foreground of this photo of Alan and Gwen is a Labrador Retriever hood ornament given to Alan by Hall of Famer Bachman Doar. A retired professional trainer, Doar logged 1 million miles with the ornament adorning his truck.



"I would be lost without Martin," Alan agrees. "He's my right-hand assistant. He keeps the dog kennels in order, feeds them twice a day and can always tell you if something is not right with one of them. Martin knows what comes next without me having to tell him.

"Malcolm is instrumental in helping train and develop the young dogs. He gets them ready for what comes next, and I'm able to stay on top of their progress," he says.

Black River Retrievers are fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 and Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice formulas, mixed with a little bit of water. "*Pro Plan* works well for our dogs," says Alan. "They have good stool, good weight and good coats. Their stamina is super."

"One of the biggest reasons for our success is the people we work for," Gwen says.

She rattles off the names of owners who have had several dogs with them. In addition to those already mentioned, Mark Menzies of Charlotte, North Carolina, owns FC-AFC Delpond's Aunt Jemima ("Jemma"), who has qualified for multiple Nationals, including the 2017 National Open, and won a double header in 2017 with Menzies. David Opseth of Etlan, Virginia, is the owner of FC-AFC Contrails Sky Queen ("Reina"), a Finalist in the 2016 National Amateur and a qualifier for multiple National Opens and National Amateurs.

Black River clients often join Alan for training sessions to get tips to help them handle their dogs in amateur stakes, letting the pro take them into open all-age. Many have been Finalists in both the National Open and National Amateur, and some have had great success.

Jane Sutter won the 2005 National Amateur with FC-FTCH Days End Northern Express, and Ken Neil won the 2007 National



Alan prepares to feed the Black River Retrievers *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Formula. "People don't realize what great athletes these dogs are, and the excellent source of nutrition they get from *Pro Plan* allows them to excel," he says.

Amateur with FC-NAFC Good Idea's Whoa Nellie and the 2007 National Open with NFC-AFC Candlewood's Something Royal. Anne Marshall handled her black male, CNFC-FC-AFC Comstocks Bodacious, to his win at the 2005 Canadian National Amateur Retriever Championship.

Joining today's training, Marshall comes to the casting mat with "Tank" (FC Tidewater's Let Him Roll), a 6-year-old black male she co-owns with Jerald and Debra Wilks.

She bends slightly at her waist, getting ready to cast Tank.

"Move your leg next to him just a little," Alan says. "That will help him line up."

Her hand steady, showing him the direction to go, Marshall releases Tank, who sprints fast and furiously in that direction, his ears flying out. A crosswind blows through, and Tank is off the line.

"Let's bring him back," Alan says.

Marshall blows her Green Monster whistle, and Tank returns to try again. She recasts him.

"That is a much better start," says Alan. "Good job!"

As Tank works, Marshall says, "Alan does very well with different sorts of dogs. He also is good at teaching us owners how to succeed. Some of my dogs, it's a miracle how well they did."

Eight hours since that early morning cover shoot began, a gentle rain has begun. With a bit of persuasion, Alan agrees to go to lunch, which is rare for him.

"Every now and then, Alan takes a fishing day," Gwen says. "At the end of the day, you feed him, and he's done. He is so competitive, and there is no quit in him."

Even when he's not training, Alan is working out training problems in his head, trying to figure out what might help an individual dog. The nonstop pace, tiring to some, stokes the competitive side of Alan Pleasant and fuels the fire of Black River Retrievers on the road to winning field trials. ■



The Black River Retrievers' team are, from left, Martin Ramierz, Malcolm Sykes, Alan and Gwen.



# ENGLISH SETTER ‘TREVOR’ IS A 4-TIME NATIONAL SPECIALTY WINNER

Sometimes the unthinkable happens, and you have to pinch yourself to be sure you're not dreaming.

When Eileen Hackett handled a serious-minded, strikingly handsome orange-belton male named “Trevor” (Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Stargaz’R ‘N Wingfield Time Will Tell) to his fourth English Setter Association of America (ESAA) National Specialty win in 2017, it was one of those surreal experiences.

“When I was 17 or 18 if anyone would have told me that I would have the dogs I have today, I would not have believed them,” says the Pendleton, Indiana, English Setter breeder (Chebaco prefix) and professional handler. “I only dreamed of having a dog that would win the National, let alone win it more than one time.”

Trevor is one of four setters from a charmed litter sired by a two-time ESAA Best of Breed winner, “Ross” (Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS CH Chebaco Blame It On Trabeiz), out of “Maisie” (Multi-BISS CH Stargaz’rs Simply Amazin’). He, his brothers, “Teller” (Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Stargazer’N Wingfield Wait Wait Don’t Tell) and “Tommy” (GCH Stargaz’R ‘N Wingfield Don’T Ask Don’T Tell), and sister “Lola” (CH Stargazr ‘N Wingfield Gift to Paisley), all finished their championships with specialty wins.

When Eileen, Kate Hanlon, her Chebaco business partner, and Don and Pat Coller (Wingfield prefix), of Madison, Georgia, planned the Ross-Maisie breeding in 2008 with the co-breeders and owners of Maisie, Tom and Pat Skol and Lois Bedrion, all of Chicago, they knew what they wanted the cross to produce. “No one part is greater than the whole dog,” Eileen says. “You have to have a vision of the whole body.”

Ross, the sire, owned by the Collers and co-owned by Eileen, gave Eileen her first Best Bred-By Exhibitor in Show at the 2007

AKC National Championship, topping 900 dogs. The No. 1-ranked English Setter in 2008, Ross tallied 33 Bests in Show during his career. His beautiful movement, smooth, easy gait and powerful reach and drive came from a top-notch pedigree. His maternal granddam, “Chiquita” (CH Trabeiz Premonition Of a Dream JH), bred and owned by Judi Hunter (Huntwood

prefix), was Eileen’s first ESAA Best of Breed winner, and his maternal great-granddam, CH Lampliter Attah Tud of Trabeiz, was a two-time ESAA Best of Breed winner.

Adding to Ross’ attributes, Maisie was a big bitch with a beautiful head and outline. “I loved Maisie’s type,” says Eileen, who leased the orange-belton bitch from the Skols and Bedrion for the breeding.

When the star-studded litter of three boys and one girl was old enough to be placed in homes, the female, Lola, went to Elizabeth Buege in Eaton Falls, Michigan.

The Collers became owners of the male puppies, with Eileen as co-owner. Longtime English Setter enthusiasts, the Collers have owned many of Eileen’s top winners. “Their guidance and belief in the dogs they have allowed me to campaign have helped us achieve such success,” says Eileen.

First focusing on training Teller for shows, Eileen sent Trevor to Georgia to live with the Collers. Tommy stayed at the Chebaco

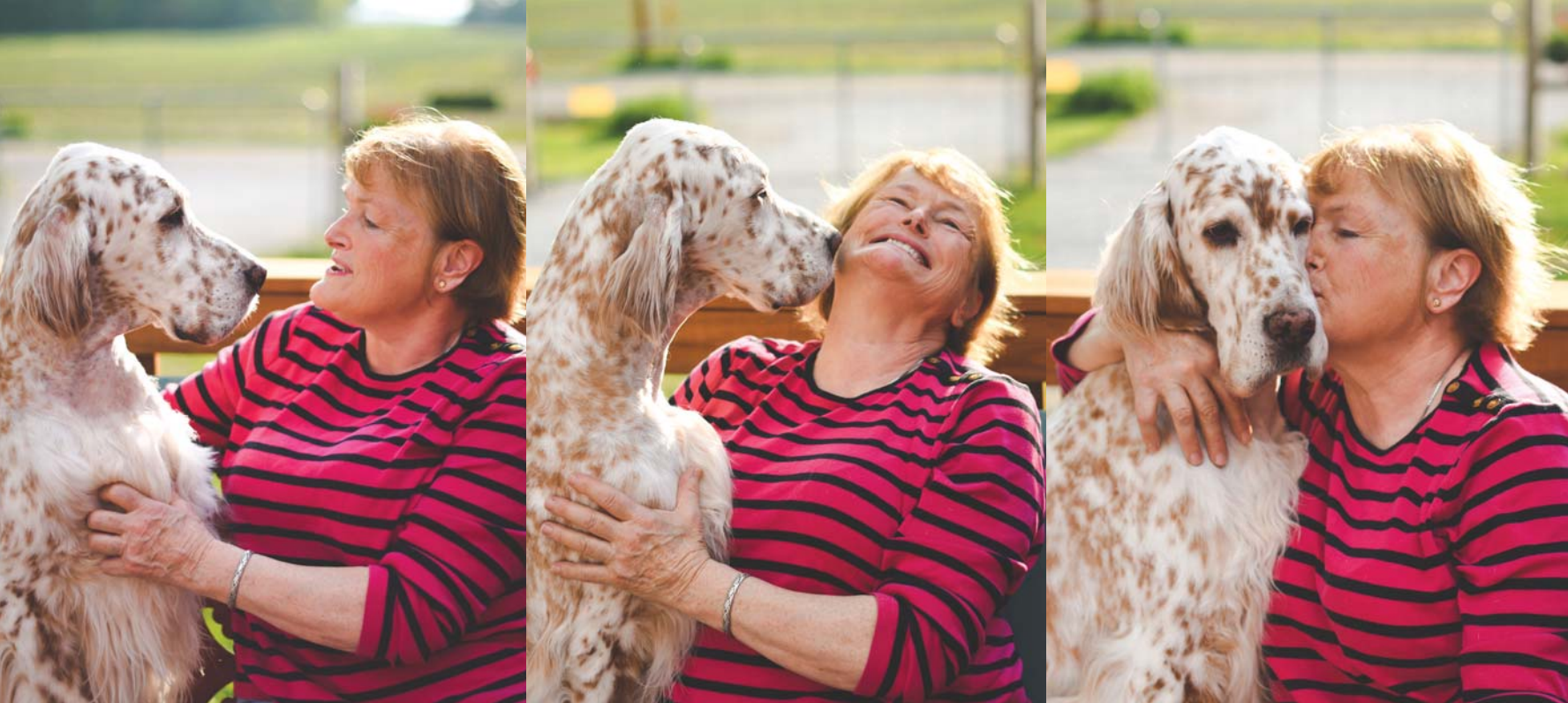
kennel where assistant Jenna Curtis doted attention and training on the flashy male.

Eileen finished Teller and began campaigning him as a Special in 2009. He won several Bests in Specialty Show and took a Best in Show. “I had never showed a dog this young,” says Eileen. “When Teller was 2 years old, I said to myself, ‘OK, now you can sit for a while and grow up.’”



Pictured in 2008, Eileen Hackett of Pendleton, Indiana, holds “Trevor,” left, and “Lola,” 9-week-old littermates from a breeding that produced two record-setting breed winners. Trevor is the top National Specialty winner, and his brother, “Teller,” became the top-specialty winning dog of all time.





Trevor (Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Stargaz'R 'N Wingfield Time Will Tell), shown at home with Eileen, is the winner of 34 specialty shows, including four English Setter Association of America National Specialties. Now retired at almost 10 years old, Trevor, loved going to dog shows, where his reliability and willingness to please led to his success in the ring.

She sent Teller to the Collers and brought Trevor to Indiana to start trying him out as a Special along with Tommy, who already understood stacking and down and backs from training with Curtis. Eileen's first weekend out with Tommy he garnered two Sporting Group placements. Trevor's first weekend outing as a Special he took two Bests of Breed at North Carolina specialty shows and then won his first Best in Show.

It was a good problem to have these extraordinary males to show, but a challenging one from a time-management standpoint. "We sent Tommy to a junior handler, Grace Freeman, in Columbia, Missouri," Eileen says. "Grace and Tommy qualified two times for Westminster Juniors, taking second in their class in 2017, and they have won several Groups and many owner-handler Bests in Show."

Eileen brought Teller out again when he was 5 years old, and he quickly became the No. 1 English Setter. By 2015, Teller had set a breed record as the top specialty-winning dog of all time with 36 Bests in Specialty Show. He also won 34 Bests in Show, one more than the 33 won by his sire, Ross.

The next year, the victories turned bittersweet when Teller died unexpectedly at age 7 from lymphosarcoma. Only 10 days before, Teller had won the Sporting Group in Columbus, Ohio.

"Teller was always the life of the party," Eileen remembers fondly. "When he went off his food, I knew something was seriously wrong."

Heartbroken and shocked, Eileen carried on making up for lost time with Trevor. They won the ESAA National in 2016 and again in 2017, after having won in 2013 and 2014, setting a record as the breed's top National Specialty winner. Derek Beatty handled Trevor in 2014, while Eileen showed Teller to Select

Dog. Including his four ESAA National Specialty wins, Trevor won 34 specialty shows, not far behind Teller's record.

"Trevor is the most serious of the bunch, but he is a 'steady Eddie' who will do anything you ask him to do," she says. "He loved going on the road to shows. We would open the van door, and there he was sitting shotgun as though to say, 'I'm ready.'"

Now a retired house dog at Eileen and Kate's place, Trevor rules with a take-charge energy that puts him in the middle of everything going on.

The new setter on the road with Eileen and Kate is a Ross grandson named "Langdon" (GCH Wingfield 'N Chebaco Just So You Know). As Ross did 10 years before Langdon, the 3-year-old bested 700 dogs to win Best Bred-By Exhibitor in Show at the AKC National Championship in 2017. True to her roots, Eileen is very proud when she is recognized for her breeding efforts, as she is the co-breeder and co-owner of Langdon. The Collers are the breeders and owners of the striking male.

As good breeding fortune would have it, Langdon's dam, "Desi" (CH Stargaz'r 'N Wingfield Another Time), is one of three bitches from a repeat Ross-Maisie breeding.

Trevor's success as the top National Specialty-winning English Setter is not to overshadow Eileen's success as the handler of six ESAA Best of Breed winners. There was Ross' granddam "Chiquita," her first winner; Ross, who won in 2008 and 2010; and Trevor, whom she handled to his wins in 2013, 2016 and 2017.

"Really, none of these successes would have been possible without Don and Pat's vision and Kate's critical eye," she smiles. "They gave me the chance to be at the end of the leash of these wonderful dogs." ■



# SIDEKICK KENNELS' GRAND PLAN

When Brent Humphrey and Corey Benedict began remodeling a run-down cinder block horse barn on their Lady Lake, Florida, property into a new home for their Sidekick Kennels, little did they know it would turn into an extreme makeover stretching out over one and a half years.

Converting the 4,500-square-foot horse barn, essentially a shell-like structure with horse stalls, into an ultramodern, environmentally friendly, energy-efficient 7,000-square-foot kennel took vision and tenacity. Hiring a general contractor helped keep the project moving, and their ideas and choices steered the project from its concept.

"We considered whether it would be best to build new or simply remodel the horse barn, but we felt the existing building

would give us a leg up," Brent says. "Everything was completely thought out. We built this kennel like a home."

The breeders of English Springer Spaniels and Grand Basset Griffon Vendéen (GBGV), a new American Kennel Club breed that became fully recognized in January 2018, Brent and Corey have more than 40 years' experience with dogs. Taking the favorite parts of their first kennel in nearby Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida, and adding numerous features to the new one, they have created a stunning kennel that represents their tastes and their love for their dogs.

*Today's Breeder* was on hand in May when Sidekick's springers and GBGVs moved into their new home. Here is a peek at the new kennel. ■



Brent Humphrey, left, with English Springer Spaniels "Knobbie" (CH Telltale's American Pharaoh) and "Cassie" (Sidekick's Singular Sensation), and Corey Benedict, with GBGVs "Brico" (Help Des Hautes Clauzes) and "Sage" (Sidekick's Spice of Life), stand in front of the oversized 10-by-16-foot garage door made to fit the high roof of their dog show van. Inset photo: The attractive kennel exterior features a cedar post entrance and a moisture-resistant, wood-grain siding.





Right: Brent and Corey, pictured with “Viva” (Qui Viva Verra Du Greffier Du Roi) and “Henley” (CH Sidekick’s Life In The Fast Lane), loved the Dutch door at their first kennel, so they included two Dutch doors made of alder wood at the new one.

Below: All the indoor kennels have dog beds, such as the one Cassie is lying on.



Each kennel has a weathertight, unbreakable dog door with a guillotine overlay enclosure on the inside.







Above: The 5-by-20 foot outdoor kennel runs are protected by a screened enclosure that allows ample natural light and helps to maintain cleanliness and reduce the insects and spiders common in Florida.

Right: Right: The 20 indoor kennels are 5-by-8 feet. They are set on a beautiful concrete floor with a marbled look that was made by combining a semitransparent stain and triple-layer epoxy finish. To keep the kennel cool even on the hottest days, there are eight ceiling fans, an attic fan that works as an exhaust fan by quickly exchanging the air, and two high-efficiency heat pumps that support the dual-zone air conditioner. Hard coat walls have a durable, heavy stucco-style finish, and the warm colors and complementary dark cabinetry give the kennel a warm ambiance.







Corey, who works for Purina's conformation team as the Northeast Area Manager, bathes English Springer Spaniel "Kalia" (CH Sidekick's Hawaiian Beauty) in the stainless steel tub. The flooring in the bathing room has a grip texture to lessen the risk of falls.

The grooming room, where Corey is grooming Henley, is part of a large multipurpose room that includes an office, sitting area and small dining table.



Corey fills a water bucket from the hose mounted on the kennel wall.





# INVESTIGATING LEPTOSPIROSIS IN DOGS

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Purina and the AKC Canine Health Foundation have worked together since 1997 to support canine health research to benefit all dogs.

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Linking a dog's subtle signs of leptospirosis, occasional bouts of less energy and lack of appetite, with having been exposed to the potentially deadly bacterial pathogen, *Leptospira interrogans*, can be a lifesaver. The sooner treatment begins, the better.

A zoonotic disease found throughout the U.S., leptospirosis is transmitted via contact with urine from infected animals and areas and objects contaminated with this bacteria. Wet environments and stagnant water, particularly in locations with lots of raccoons or rodents, could possibly teem with the pathogen that can live for many months. As dogs splash through streams and ponds, lapping a drink as they go, they become vulnerable to contracting the pathogen.

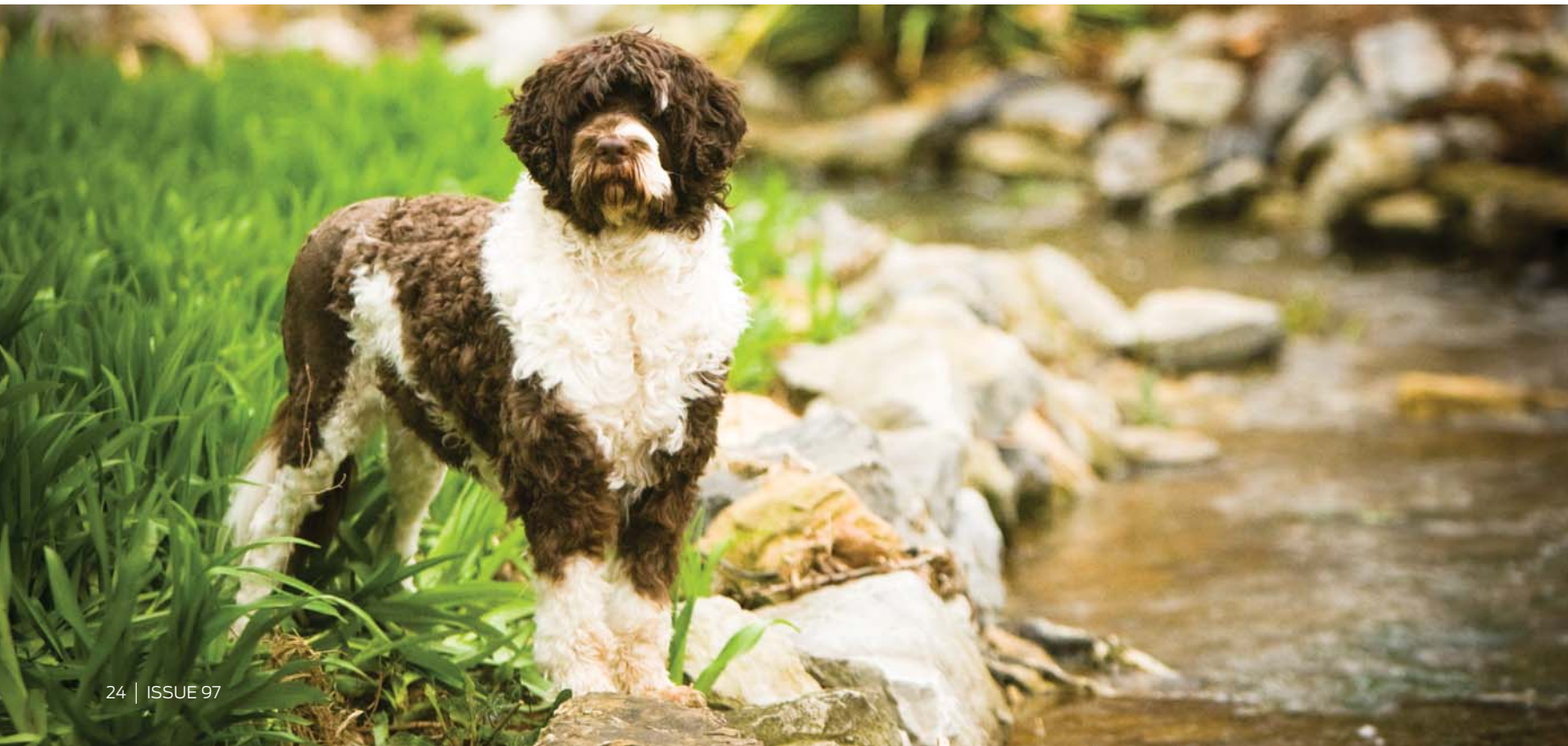
A tricky disease, leptospirosis in some dogs causes no illness, yet other dogs become severely ill or die. Regardless of clinical signs, all infected animals may shed the pathogen in their urine for months or longer. Thus, an infected dog can bring the disease home and infect other dogs that come in contact with their urine. Water bowls, bedding, blankets, and soil can be contaminated

with *Leptospira* and potentially infect other animals, including dogs and people.

Vaccination to protect dogs from four of the eight common strains of *Leptospira* bacteria is offered in a non-core vaccine and as part of core vaccines. Annual revaccination boosters are required. Consult your veterinarian to learn whether an individual dog's lifestyle, including where they live or travel, merit vaccination.

Infected dogs require swift antibiotic treatment, as how quickly a dog improves often depends on how quickly the disease is diagnosed and treated. Those that progress to an advanced stage may require hospitalization, intravenous fluids and careful monitoring.

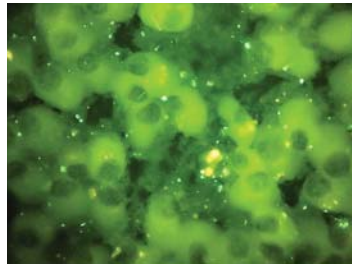
Leptospirosis has long been recognized by researchers and veterinarians as a "watch-out" disease, though there have been few investigative studies in dogs. The AKC (American Kennel Club) Canine Health Foundation is working to change this by funding two studies that aim to better understand disease prevalence and geographical risk areas and immune response to ultimately lead to an improved vaccine and therapy.





## WHAT IS LEPTOSPIROSIS?

Leptospirosis is a potentially fatal illness transmitted when dogs come in contact with urine from wildlife or rodents infected with the bacteria *Leptospira interrogans*. Warm, wet stagnant environments — lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, and puddles — can harbor the pathogen for many months.



A liver culture shows numerous *Leptospira* bacteria.



A kidney infected with leptospirosis.

IMAGES PROVIDED BY DR. SREEKUMARI RAJEEV, ROSS UNIVERSITY

Infected dogs can have vague signs and be challenging to recognize as having leptospirosis; however, others may show signs of severe kidney or renal disease. Some dogs are chronic asymptomatic carriers, while others are stricken by full-blown disease. Regardless, all infected dogs excrete the bacteria in their urine, contaminating the environment and contributing to the transmission cycle.

**To learn more, go to:** <https://bit.ly/2Lv1XR0>

## TIPS ON DISEASE PREVENTION

- **Vaccinate dogs** that frequent high-risk leptospirosis areas, especially those that spend time in environments where *Leptospira* are often found. The current vaccines protect against four of the eight common bacterial strains, or serovars, causing leptospirosis. Two doses are required for the initial series, then an annual booster revaccination.
- **Be informed** about geographical regions designated high-risk for leptospirosis. Try to reduce the risk of exposure by avoiding slow-moving or standing water and areas with high raccoon, rodent and other wildlife populations.
- **Isolate** a dog suspected of having contracted leptospirosis to prevent risk to other dogs or people and use precautions such as gloves and clothing to protect yourself and help ensure you do not spread the bacteria to other areas. Make sure your veterinarian knows there are other dogs in a kennel or household where a dog has been diagnosed, as they may need treatment as well.
- **Consult your veterinarian** about your dog's lifestyle and sporting activities to help plan for routine vaccination and be prepared to help prevent a fatal outcome.



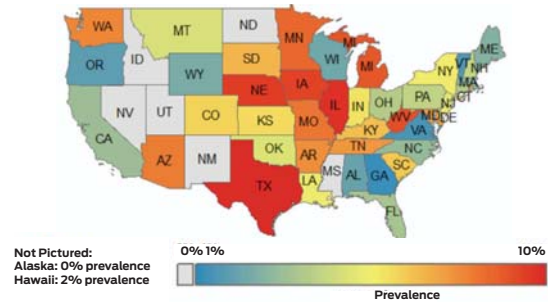
## RESEARCH TO LEARN MORE

Designated a top health concern to dogs by the AKC Canine Health Foundation, leptospirosis is being investigated through two funded research studies. Here are highlights of the studies.

### Estimating Prevalence & Identifying Risk Factors

A map of the U.S. showing positive canine leptospirosis cases from 2009 to 2016 is being developed at The Ohio State University and the University of Prince Edward Island to shed light on “hot spots” of infection. The study team, led by Jason Stull, VMD, PhD, DACVPM, assistant professor, aims to increase awareness about areas of greatest risk. Additionally, his team is studying the behaviors and practices of owners of leptospirosis-infected dogs in order to identify how to successfully reduce the risk of this disease.

**Go to study online:** <https://bit.ly/2J0aESx>



Canine leptospirosis prevalence across the U.S. is shown for 2015–2016, based on PCR (polymerase chain reaction) positive test results from IDEXX Laboratories, as developed by Dr. Stull's research team at The Ohio State University. They are expanding the prevalence timeframe from 2009 to 2016 with their current study.

### Understanding Innate Immune Response

Deciphering why some dogs exposed to *Leptospira* bacteria are protected from illness, yet others become severely sick lies in better understanding an individual dog's innate immune response to the pathogen, says Sreekumari Rajeev, BVSc, PhD, DACVIM, DACVP, professor of veterinary bacteriology at Ross University. This study seeks to unravel the factors involved in fatal disease, chronic asymptomatic infection and bacterial clearance by focusing on the role of the dog's innate immune cells, types of white blood cells and the first line of defense against an infection.

**Go to study online:** <https://bit.ly/2sklZXz>

## RECOGNIZING CLINICAL SIGNS

Often unrecognized, leptospirosis in dogs typically begins as a nondescript infectious illness. Decreased appetite, lethargy and occasional vomiting provide few clues for an accurate diagnosis. Savvy owners whose dogs have been in high-risk leptospirosis areas will share this information with their veterinarian to aid a quicker diagnosis before more severe clinical signs occur.

In some dogs the disease progresses with signs of kidney or liver failure that may include:

- Sudden increase in drinking (polydipsia) or urinating (polyuria)
- Severe weakness, weight loss, and muscle pain and weakness
- Not eating and vomiting
- Jaundice, blood in stool and disorientation
- Difficulty breathing, excessive panting and exercise intolerance



# Circle of Champions



A big-hearted white, orange and ticked Pointer, “Jo” searched for quail with speed and purpose, finding his first covey in a record 20 seconds into the three-hour brace, to win the 2018 National Championship.

## POINTER NAMED ‘JO’ IS A 2-TIME NATIONAL CHAMPION

A classy Pointer with exceptional bird-finding ability named “Jo” delivered a riveting performance netting nine quail finds to win the 2018 National Championship for Bird Dogs in March at Ames Plantation in Grand Junction, Tennessee. It was the second straight year the 4-year-old male, formally known as Lester’s Sunny Hill Jo, handled by co-owner Gary Lester of Gracey, Kentucky, and scouted by Mark Haynes of Brownsville, Tennessee, won the prestigious championship. “All dogs can point birds sometimes, but not many can throw that head up and go across the yard and point a covey of birds like Jo can,” says Lester, the handler of four National Champions. Besides Jo’s two wins, Lester won in 2009 with Lester’s Snowatch, the sire of Jo’s dam, Miller’s White Wall, and in 2015 with Miller’s Dialing In. Bred by Chris George of Thomasville, Georgia, Jo is co-owned by David Thompson of Edmonton, Kentucky. Ferrell Miller of Murray, Kentucky, started Jo on birds and recognizing his promise sent him to Lester as a puppy. Miller’s insights led to this year’s outstanding results for Team Sunny Hill Jo. The powerful Pointer is fueled by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Formula*.

## ‘CONRAD’ IS THE NO. 1 SHETLAND SHEEPDOG

An all-around natural show dog, a 4-year-old blue merle male Shetland Sheepdog named “Conrad” is gaining momentum in his first year as a Special. The No. 1 Sheltie and No. 3 Herding dog, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Syringa-Akadia The Corsair AOM, handled by co-owner Tyler Crady of Bella Vista, California, has garnered seven Bests in Show and 25 Herding Groups Firsts in only six months on the circuit. The shining Sheltie finished his championship at 1 year of age handled by breeder-owner Deborah Sirdofsky of Syringa Shelties in Idaho Falls, Idaho. At 18 months old, Conrad took an Award of Merit at the 2016 American Shetland Sheepdog Association National Specialty, while his sire, NBIS/Multi-BISS GCH Syringa Treasure Trove ROM, won Best of Breed with breeder-owner-handler Sirdofsky. “Conrad has the mindset of a champion,” Crady says. “He is great structurally and has excellent balance and movement.” Co-bred by Shannalee Waller-Michalsky of Akadia Shelties in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Conrad is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Formula*.

With many top qualities, “Conrad” stands out at shows. He is noted for having excellent balance and movement, a lovely head with pretty dark eyes, and a solid build.





## 'BIGGIE,' THE PUG, IS ON A WINNING STREAK

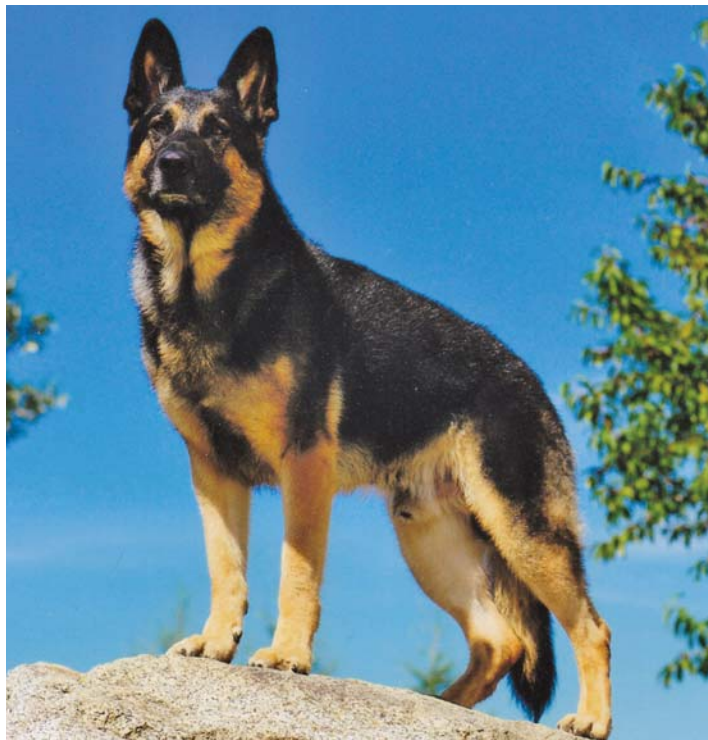
A happy, comical 3 ½-year-old fawn male Pug named “Biggie,” who loves people and going to dog shows, has been winning in a big way. Since the beginning of April, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Hill Country’s Puttin’ On The Ritz has sparked excitement in show rings, winning 15 Bests in Show and bringing his career total to 24 Bests in Show. Currently the No. 1 Pug, No. 1 Toy dog and No. 5 in all-breed, Biggie is owned by Carolyn Koch of Riversong Pugs in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and handled by Esteban Farias of Pittsboro, North Carolina. A Pug lover for 30 years, Koch’s last three Pugs, all bred by Kristy and Kevin Ratliff of Hill Country Pugs in Llano, Texas, collectively have held the No. 1 Pug ranking since 2013. “JJ” (CH Hill Country’s Tag I’m It) was No. 1 from 2013 to 2015, and “Rumble” (GCH Hill Country’s Let’s Get Ready To Rumble) was ranked No. 1 in 2016. Biggie finished 2017 as the No. 1 Pug and this past February won the Toy Group at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. “Biggie is a stunning dog who moves like a little machine in a tiny body,” Farias says. Biggie is fed *Purina Pro Plan FOCUS Sensitive Skin & Stomach Salmon & Rice Formula*.



With an outgoing attitude, “Biggie” became the No. 1 Pug in 2017, though his Specials campaign did not begin until August, and has kept the winning going this year to become the No. 1 Toy dog.

## 'T-REX' IS 1ST GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG TO WIN 3 TITLES

The first triple champion German Shepherd Dog, “T-Rex,” earned his titles according to the plans of his late breeder-owner-handler, Phyllis Dobbs, of Maryville, California. TC PAM T-Rex vom Kriegerhaus VCD3 UDX7 OM6 VER RE TDX HSAs HICs HXCsm MX MXJ OF RATCHX RLFIIs CGCA BH AD became an obedience champion in 2014, as Dobbs believed obedience training would help them accomplish their future goals. On the way to a dog show in 2015, Dobbs and T-Rex stopped in Kansas to compete in obedience when she slipped on ice and hit her head, requiring emergency surgery. Dobbs’ husband, Jim Dobbs, a well-known retriever trainer, flew in and drove her and T-Rex to Tennessee, where T-Rex became a show champion handled by Julia Foster-Hess of Leasburg, Missouri. T-Rex and Dobbs earned the third title, a herding championship on C course sheep, in April 2017. Before passing away in March 2018 after a long illness, Dobbs lovingly described T-Rex: “He has a very willing temperament, that rare quality of yielding to direction, which is the ultimate working attitude.” T-Rex, now 10 years old, lives in California with Jim Dobbs. The record-setting German Shepherd Dog is fed *Purina Pro Plan BRIGHT MIND Adult 7+ Chicken & Rice Formula*.



“T-Rex,” bred from the late Phyllis Dobbs’ “T” litter, helped prove the versatility of her Kriegerhaus line by earning obedience, conformation and herding championships. He also holds a Barn Hunt Championship Excellent title as well as titles in agility, tracking and rally.



## BORDER COLLIE 'BEN' WINS 2 NATIONAL NURSERY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Never in the 30-year history of the United States Border Collie Handlers' Association's National Nursery Championship had a dog won two times, until a talented tricolor male named "Ben" did just that in 2016 and 2017. Breeder-owner-handler Joni Tietjen of Clearmont, Wyoming, says, "Ben's really special. He was bred to be a working dog first, and we run competitions on the side for fun." A herding event for dogs under 30 months old, the National Nursery Championship identifies the best sheepdog and handler team in the U.S. and Canada. Raised on Tietjen's ranch, Ben began training at 6 months old and today his job is to gather and sort the livestock. "Ben has a solid, reliable temperament and a nonaggressive approach that does not shake up the livestock," says Tietjen, who has bred Border Collies for 20 years. "He also has a crazy desire to please me. He is very confident and brave." Ben is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice* and *Salmon & Rice* formulas.



A working dog on a Wyoming ranch, "Ben" excelled with his calm, easy approach and solid reliability to win two straight national championships for young dogs.



A muscular, balanced American Staffordshire Terrier depicting great strength, "Louie" stays in shape by swimming and free running.

## AMSTAFF NAMED 'LOUIE' SETS BEST IN SHOW BREED RECORD

A powerfully built 4 ½-year-old red brindle American Staffordshire Terrier named "Louie" won his 30th Best in Show at the Greenwich (Connecticut) Kennel Club Dog Show in June and set a breed record. Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Roadhouse's Life of the Party CA CGCA DN was bred by William Roadhouse of Louisville, Kentucky, and Danny Casanova of Barcelona, Spain. The No. 1 Amstaff and No. 2 Terrier showed promise early. "Even as a puppy, his movement and structure were beautiful and his attitude was awesome," says handler Kimberly Rudzik of Westfield, Massachusetts, who has had Amstaffs for 30 years. "He's an amazing example of his breed." At his first dog show at 18 months of age, the Mid-Hudson (New York) Kennel Association Cluster, Louie took Reserve Best in Show and Terrier Group First, followed by two Terrier Group Firsts. A three-time breed winner at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, Louie took Terrier Group Second in 2018 and Group Three in 2017. He won Best of Breed at the 2017 Staffordshire Terrier Club of America National Specialty and took Best in Show at the 2017 Montgomery County Kennel Club all-terrier show. Louie, who is owned by Roadhouse, Dave Berrey of New York City, and Ellen Bannin of North Port, Florida, is fed *Purina Pro Plan FOCUS Grain Free Chicken & Egg Formula*.



## BOXER NAMED 'WILMA' IS BREEDER'S TOP WINNER

Noted for her beautiful, ground-covering stride, "Wilma," a 2 ½-year-old flashy fawn female, the No. 1 Boxer in 2017 (*Dog News* point system) and currently No. 1 in all systems for 2018, has surpassed her breeder's wildest dreams by winning 31 Bests in Show and 19 Bests in Specialty Show. Bred by Bonnie Wagaman of Fallbrook, California, and Nicole Manna of Flower Mound, Texas, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH CinniBon's Bedrock Bombshell took five Bests in Show in May, winning two shows at Scott County, Iowa, and three shows at Monroe, Louisiana. "Wilma's side gait is breathtaking," says Wagaman of her top-winning Boxer since she began breeding in 2009. "When she moves around the ring, she looks weightless, and her topline stays steady and true." Handled by Michael Shepherd of Aubrey, Texas, Wilma is co-owned by Keith and Cheryl Robbins of Tybee Island, Georgia, Wagaman and Deborah Caywood of Staunton, Virginia. The standout Boxer is fed *Purina Pro Plan* FOCUS Sensitive Skin & Stomach Salmon & Rice Formula.

Built solidly with beautiful bone, "Wilma" catches attention when she moves around the show ring with an effortless gait.



## 'JAXX,' AN ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIEL, WINS NATIONAL AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP

Topping 94 dogs with natural talent and a high level of trained abilities, a 4 ½-year-old black-and-white male named "Jaxx" became the 2017 English Springer National Amateur Champion last November in Newton, Utah. Completing the rigorous five series with co-owner and handler Clay Earl of Woodstock, Ontario, NAFC AFC CFC CAFC Pheasant Feather Jaxx of Tazzman proved his innate ability. "These were big finds, with driving flushes and pinpoint retrieving performed by a dog who was running in touch with his handler. Jaxx gracefully adjusted himself against the rolling terrain and wind," says Earl, a passionate 30-year competitor of springer field trials. The win brought a big smile to the face of co-owner Frank Wiseman of Fisherville, Ontario. Trained by Earl since he was a puppy, Jaxx had early success as the 2016 Canadian Amateur High Point Dog and currently leads the Canadian Open High Point Dog ranking. His sire, "Taz" (FC AFC CAFC Flushingwing Tazzmanian Devil), had four National placements during his career, and Jaxx is a littermate to the all-time Springer Spaniel High Point Dog, "Annie" (NAFC CNAFC FC AFC CFC Flushingwing Annie). Jaxx is powered by *Purina Pro Plan* SPORT 30/20 Performance Formula.

A consistent, intelligent bird dog, "Jaxx" found pheasants with authority to win the National Amateur Championship.

Please visit the Circle of Champions on the *Purina Pro Club* website at [purinaproclub.com](http://purinaproclub.com) to read about top-performing show and sporting dogs powered by *Purina Pro Plan*.



# 'ZUMA,' 'MICKEY' AND 'LARRY' TAKE TOP PURINA RETRIEVER AWARDS

Three top-notch Labrador Retrievers, the winners of the 2017 Purina Outstanding Retriever Awards, were honored in April at a celebratory dinner held in Corning, California. Two males and a female, the respective Open, Amateur and Derby winners, delivered many impressive field trial performances on their way to the top of the yearlong circuit.

A two-year comeback after suffering a strained supraspinatus tendon injury in 2015, guided by the watchful, patient approach of pro trainer Greg Bartlett of Centerview, Missouri, was the remedy needed for "Zuma," a 9-year-old male, to win the Purina Outstanding Open Retriever Award. Garnering 38.5 points, including winning four Open stakes, FC Magic Trick's Zuma showed his strength as a "level-headed competitor with the innate ability to solve complex tests week after week," Bartlett says. Bred by Robert Hayward of Oregon, Wisconsin, and owned by Dr. David Aul of Arlington Heights, Illinois, Zuma also earned a spot as a Finalist at the 2017 National Retriever Championship.

Trained from the get-go by owner-handler Robby Bickley of Gainesville, Texas, "Mickey," a 4-year-old male, sweetened the story by winning the Purina Outstanding Amateur Retriever Award with 30.5 points and four wins in Amateur stakes. "Mickey is an incredibly smart dog,

Watching him perform sends chills down my spine," says Bickley, a first-time handler of a Purina Award winner. FC-AFC Hockley Creek's Switch Hitter was bred by James Roberts of Claremore, Oklahoma, and Joe O'Brien of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Added to his standout achievements, Mickey qualified for both the 2017 National Open and National Amateur Retriever Championships.

Spunky energy, natural marking ability and the spot-on training of pro handler Danny Farmer of Anderson, Texas, took Larry, then a 2-year-old female, to the top to receive the Purina Outstanding Derby Retriever Award. Eight wins and 25 placements from 35 starts earned 79 points for the retriever named She Was Perfect Thursday. Larry is the fourth Purina Award winner Farmer has handled. Owner Jill Finch of Cashiers, North Carolina, says, "Winning this award is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that means so much." The precocious retriever was bred by Susan and Garth Clark of Port Rowan, Ontario, and Dr. Ed Aycock of Sanger, Texas.

All three Purina Award-winning retrievers are powered by *Purina Pro Plan*, with Zuma fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula* and Mickey and Larry fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Formula*. ■



FC Magic Trick's Zuma, the Purina Outstanding Open Retriever



FC-AFC Hockley Creek's Switch Hitter, the Purina Outstanding Amateur Retriever



She Was Perfect Thursday, the Purina Outstanding Derby Retriever



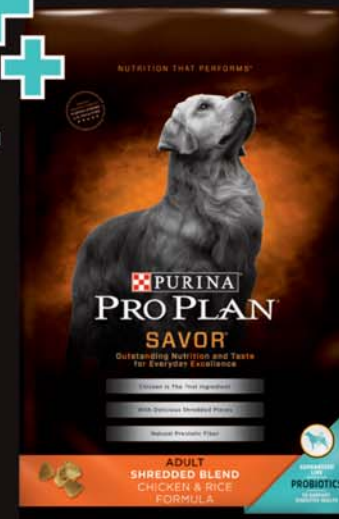
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## Breed Snapshot

# BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG: A VERSATILE FAMILY COMPANION

A strong, sturdy, agile breed with a calm, easygoing nature, the Bernese Mountain Dog originated on Swiss farms near Bern, where he is known as the Berner Sennenhund. Adept working as a draft dog, pulling carts or wagons, and as a drover dog, moving livestock to pasture, the Berner was an ideal companion dog bred to also watch over livestock, farm and family. Today, the striking tricolored breed is recognized for his versatility, intelligence and gentle disposition.

An ancient breed, the Bernese Mountain Dog was nearly forgotten until the late 19th century when Swiss fancier Franz Schertenleib began looking for breeding stock. The search was a long one, as the Berners he found were practically unrecognizable from the original breed. With help from Professor Albert Heim, a geologist, canine researcher and judge, they formed a specialty club in 1907 that helped to revive the breed as working farm dogs and affectionate companions in homes.

A gorgeous double-coated, longhaired breed with an expressive head and distinctive facial markings, requiring weekly grooming, the Bernese Mountain Dog enjoys cold weather and snow. A willing, quick learner, the Berner is active in carting, herding, tracking, obedience, agility, conformation, and as a therapy dog. Males are 25 to 27 ½ inches tall at the withers, weighing 80 to 115 pounds, and bitches are 23 to 26 inches tall, weighing 70 to 95 pounds. Most endearing is this large working breed's love of people and human companionship.

Source: *The Complete Dog Book*, Official Publication of the American Kennel Club.

