



TODAY'S BREEDER

A Nestlé Purina Publication Dedicated to the Needs of Canine Enthusiasts

Issue 91



BREED ACHIEVERS

Hallmark Jolei Shih Tzu

- KENNEL COMFORTS IN WINTER
- PURINA SPORTING AWARDS
- REDUCING THE RISK OF DOG FLU



PHOTO: JERRY NAUNHEIM

Breeder-owner-handler Stefanie Perrine and “Ghita” (GCH Everso’s Elephants & Flowers, JH) share a special moment after winning Best of Breed at the LRC National. Three weeks later, Ghita brought more joy to Perrine when she delivered a healthy litter of nine puppies.

LABRADOR RETRIEVER ‘GHITA’ FETCHES BEST OF BREED AT LRC NATIONAL

“Her versatility endears her to us. We are so proud that she enjoys everything we do with her from dog shows to hunting.”

— Stefanie Perrine

Wagging tails prevailed at the Labrador Retriever Club (LRC) National Specialty at the Purina Event Center in Gray Summit, Missouri. A showy exhibition of black, yellow and chocolate dogs were handled by true retriever lovers in the Best of Breed lineup.

Soft expressions captured the eager-to-please attitude of the highly biddable breed in which temperament is as much a defining characteristic as the otter tail. One by one, they effortlessly gaited down the ring and back, and then around the ring, taking well-balanced, easy strides.

A 5 ½-year-old black bitch called “Ghita” keenly watched breeder-owner-handler Stefanie Perrine of Wheat Ridge, Colorado. They stood among the retrievers and handlers that had made the final cut, eagerly waiting for judge Pluis Davern

to choose the winner. One last look, pausing at each dog, and Davern pointed to Ghita.

The Best of Breed winner simultaneously was awarded the Helen Ginnel Memorial Membership Award, breaking a 15-year hiatus since its last presentation. Named for the well-known breeder of Whygin dual-purpose Labradors, the honor is bestowed on a National Specialty winner that has earned an American Kennel Club hunting test title and whose owner is a member of the LRC. Ghita, who earned a Junior Hunter (JH) title in 2013, regularly hunts upland game and waterfowl with her owners.

“Ghita is a special dog,” Perrine says. “Her versatility endears her to us. We are so proud that she enjoys everything we do with her from dog shows to hunting.” ■

The Labrador Retriever Club National Specialty was held Oct. 3 to 10 at Purina Farms in Gray Summit, Missouri. The National included conformation, tracking, obedience, and agility. A 300-acre facility, Purina Farms is ideally suited for outdoor canine sports and indoor all-breed and specialty dog shows, which are held at the custom-made Purina Event Center. Contact Kaite Flamm to book an event at kaiteflamm@purina.nestle.com or 888-688-PETS (888-688-7387).

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Chesapeake Bay Retriever lover Linda Harger breeds dogs that are competitive in field trials and hunting tests. Some earn show titles and achieve status as dual champions.

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Hundreds of dogs became sick when canine influenza virus H3N2 hit Chicago last spring. A study is underway to learn how to prevent infectious diseases in group settings and better manage disease.

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Luke and Diane Ehricht have built a dynasty as breeders of beautiful Shih Tzu show dogs. Their careful attention to correct breed type and sweet, friendly temperament is exemplary.

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ON THE COVER

Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Hallmark Jolei Rocket Power was bred by Luke and Diane Ehricht, who co-own the 3-year-old gold-and-white male Shih Tzu with Patty Hearst Shaw. Cover photo by Mary Pencheff. See story on page 12.

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“Tempest,” an English Springer Spaniel, enjoys romping in the snow at Pine Shadows Kennel in Brainerd, Minnesota. See the Tips story on page 10 to learn how to make your kennel comfortable in winter.



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Fireweed Chessies breeder-owner-handler Linda Harger of Meridian, Idaho, poses with “Spurs” (Ruddy’s Cowgirl Up), left, and “Comet” (DC Yakity’s Shake Rattle ‘N’ Roll).

The Dual Champion Chessies of Fireweed

BY KAYLA MILLER

A dark deadgrass, wavy-coated 7-year-old Chesapeake Bay Retriever stood on the line, patiently waiting to be cast. It was the final series. Projecting power and intensity, “Ivy” drove straight toward the marks, stylishly bolting through the field to make the retrieve and win the 2015 American Chesapeake Club National Specialty Field Trial in October in Grahamville, Kentucky.

It was a significant achievement for AFC Fireweed’s Poison Ivy, earning her status as a new amateur field champion and becoming the only Chessie to qualify for the 2015 National Retriever Championship. It also was noteworthy for breeder-



Spurs, a 2-year-old Fireweed female, competes in dog shows.

owner-handler Linda Harger, as

Ivy is the third dog from her “Yakity” (DC Genny’s Yakity Yak Don’t Talk Back) litter to earn a field title, setting a breed record.

“It’s a thrill standing on the line with a dog that is running at her peak. It will never get old,” says Linda, who breeds Chessies with partner Dr. Tom Ivey under the Fireweed prefix in Meridian, Idaho.

After more than 40 years, Fireweed Chessies span eight genera-

tions. All of Linda’s dogs compete in field trials or hunting tests. Some also go on to earn conformation show titles under pro handler Ellen Cottingham of Amboy, Washington. Fireweed’s dual champion (DC) Chessies have definitely made a mark on the breed.

“Form and function go hand in hand,” Linda says. “My Chessies are good, all-around dogs. It’s important to me that they are physically and mentally sound.”

In 1972, Linda’s first Chessie, a dark sedge male called “Banner,” ignited her love for the breed known for its innate birdiness and recognized by its brown, water-resistant coat and webbed feet. Her passion for field trialing came to life less than a year later when she inquired about available pups from Banner’s breeder, Sue Martiniuk of Wildwood’s Chesapeake Bay Retrievers in Tok, Alaska.

Two pups were available, and Linda chose the one that boldly ran into the towering fireweed plants to retrieve. She later appropriately named the deadgrass bitch “Fireweed” (CH Wildwood’s Fireweed).

“Banner was the reason I became interested in the breed, but Fireweed was the first dog I trained and hunted with and why I got into breeding,” Linda says.

Although Fireweed never earned any field titles, Linda, a former quarter horse breeder and trainer, became serious about learning to compete in trials, training under Jerry Patopea of Junction City, Oregon. As she developed her own training method, Linda kept it simple by building a solid foundation and setting the standards high.

By the time they are 7 weeks old, pups are going for walks and learning to swim. As they mature, their retrieving skills advance to land and water marks and blinds, with setups becoming more challenging. “I ask a lot from my dogs, but they always step up,” she says.

Hard work pays off. In 1975, Linda bred Fireweed to “Surfbreaker” (FC-AFC Aleutian Surfbreaker), which produced her first field champion, “Widgeon” (FC-AFC-CFC Fireweed’s Aleutian Widgeon, ROMQ). She repeated the breeding twice, getting “Jasmine” (DC Fireweed’s Jasmine, WDQ), the first female dual champion Chessie, and “Ptarmigan” (Fireweed’s Ptarmigan, WD).

Next came all-time greats “Clipper” (DC Coot’s Gypsy Clipper, MH), the first male dual champion Chessie, and Yakity. “Comet” (DC Yakity’s Shake Rattle ‘N’ Roll), Linda’s fifth dual champion, is the only living retriever that has earned an AKC dual champion title.

“Chessies have to be retrievers in heart and soul before anything else,” Linda says. “I go into every breeding with the goal of producing a potential field champion.” ■

From left, Comet, Spurs and “Dylan” (Tangled Up In Blue) depict the breed’s coat colors deadgrass, sedge and brown, respectively.



“Form and function go hand in hand. My Chessies are good, all-around dogs. It’s important to me that they are physically and mentally sound.”

Linda Harger



Canine group settings, such as dog shows, are opportunities for canine influenza virus to spread. Experts do not attribute dog shows as the culprit for any flu outbreaks.



REDUCING THE RISK OF DOG FLU

When more than 1,000 dogs became sick with the highly contagious canine influenza H₃N₂ virus this past April in Chicago, the American Kennel Club (AKC) issued an advisory encouraging judges to ask exhibitors to open the mouths of their dogs when showing the bite during the oral examination. Calls from the fancy prompted the notice.

A logical scenario sparked worry. Opening a dog's mouth for the oral exam, a judge potentially could touch an infected dog, not showing signs or mildly affected, and unknowingly spread the virus to other dogs in the lineup.

In reality, the advisory reiterated the AKC's existing policy. "These have been our guidelines for years," says Tim Thomas, director of dog show judges for the AKC. "If judges find it necessary to conduct the oral exam, which is their prerogative, we advise them to sanitize their hands after examining each dog."

No dog show was ever linked to the initial spread of the H₃N₂ virus in the U.S. Having mutated from birds to dogs, the H₃N₂ avian flu virus had infected dogs in Asia since 2007. Although speculation about the origin of the new strain of flu was never confirmed, experts believed that H₃N₂ may have arrived in



The AKC advises judges who open a dog's mouth for the oral examination to sanitize their hands after examining each dog.

Chicago via infected dogs brought from China and Korea by well-meaning rescue groups.

“The canine H₃N₂ flu was a brand new strain of flu that crossed from birds to dogs, and then could migrate with the movement of dogs from Asia to the U.S.,” says Jason Stull, VMD, PhD, DACVPM, assistant professor of preventive medicine at The Ohio State University. “This type of disease movement has happened before, most notably when Hurricane Katrina dogs that had heartworm and various other infectious diseases were relocated to places where those diseases, and related prevention

Learnings from this year’s dog flu will help guide future preventive efforts. “Owner education is so important,” Schlikerman says. “Owners need to know to avoid areas where lots of dogs gather. Places like dog parks and doggy daycare are best to avoid, as well as using a dog walker who takes out several dogs.”

Edward J. Dubovi, PhD, professor of virology at Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, whose laboratory analyzed many of the Chicago flu samples, says he was surprised at how fast the flu spread. “This outbreak went into full force around the Easter holiday when a number of people probably put their dogs in kennels,” he says. “You had a higher collection of dogs in smaller environments, giving the virus an opportunity to expand very rapidly.”

Although Chicago was hit the hardest, a second peak of H₃N₂ influenza virus occurred in Atlanta in mid-June, with later reports of cases in Los Angeles and the East Coast. The transmission process is much like flu in people. A sick dog transmits the virus to another dog through saliva, coughing and sneezing, contaminated objects such as food and water bowls, toys, collars, and leashes, and by people moving between infected and uninfected dogs.

ASSESSING THE RISK OF DOG FLU

The risk of dogs developing canine flu is impacted by many variables, such as the age, health status, preventive care, immunity, and frequency of dog-to-dog and dog-to-environment interactions. To learn more, the AKC Canine Health Foundation is funding a two-year study to redefine ways to prevent infectious diseases in group settings.

“The goal is to assess disease risk for dogs in group settings to better manage disease, bearing in mind that risk is not uniform,” says Dr. Stull, who leads the study. “No two dogs are the same. In general, younger dogs are at greater risk to spread and acquire disease than dogs over several years of age that have been exposed to many diseases. Nonetheless, a perfect storm exists for the spread of infectious diseases in canine group settings.”

The Chicago H₃N₂ dog flu is probably the most well-known infectious disease outbreak, but there have been at least 20 others caused by 14 different



Pro handler Kellie Fitzgerald prepares to show the scissors bite of this English Springer Spaniel.

methods, were very rare. This movement may have increased the disease risk in those new locations.”

Becky Schlikerman with the Cook County (Illinois) Department of Animal and Rabies Control says ultimately about 1,800 dogs were reported by local veterinarians to have been infected by the H₃N₂ virus and 11 dogs were believed to have died. No formal tracking system exists for veterinary diseases so exact numbers are not known.

pathogens since 1970. Among them are parvovirus, brucellosis, coronavirus, and parainfluenza. All occurred in canine group settings such as kennels and boarding and training facilities.

An earlier canine influenza virus, H3N8, was identified in 2004 in a racing Greyhound community in Jacksonville, Florida. Another outbreak occurred in the fall of 2003, though it is not known when and where the first dogs became infected. Similar to the H3N2 virus that mutated from birds, the H3N8 virus transferred from horses to dogs. Eight of 23 Greyhounds in the outbreak identified as canine influenza virus died from severe pneumonia. The H3N8 infections continued in Greyhound tracks across the country from 2004 to 2006. Thousands of dogs in at least 38 states were affected.

A canine influenza virus vaccine was developed in 2008. Considered a lifestyle vaccine well-suited for at-risk dogs that also receive the parainfluenza vaccine to prevent kennel cough, the H3N8 vaccine reduces illness in dogs that become infected and reduces the likeliness of the virus spreading to other dogs by shortening the shedding interval

and the amount of virus shed. It is not known whether the H3N8 vaccine protects against the H3N2 virus that occurred in Chicago.

Dogs are particularly susceptible to the H3N2 virus because it is a novel virus in which they have no historic immunity. Ranging from mild to severe, H3N2 flu starts as an upper-respiratory illness depicted by a persistent cough, clear nasal discharge and low-

grade fever combined with lethargy and reduced appetite. Although there is no treatment for the viral flu, dogs can receive supportive care to boost immunity. H3N2 is not zoonotic, meaning dogs cannot transmit it to humans, though it can affect cats.

The clinical signs of H3N2 influenza virus are similar to tracheobronchitis, or kennel cough, which can make it challenging for veterinarians to diagnose. Blood testing and nasal and throat swabs are used to confirm diagnosis.

Most dogs recover in two or three weeks, though some cases advance to a more severe condition. "Secondary bacterial infections causing pneumonia are the predominate cause of death," Dr. Dubovi

An H3N2 infected dog is most contagious during the two- to four-day incubation period when they are shedding the virus in nasal secretions but not showing signs of illness.

TIPS ON REDUCING THE RISK OF DOG FLU

Here are tips from preventive medicine expert Dr. Jason Stull of The Ohio State University on ways to reduce the risk of canine flu and similar diseases.

- When an outbreak occurs, avoid going to heavily populated dog areas, such as dog parks, grooming salons, boarding kennels, dog shows, and sporting events
- If you suspect a dog has been exposed to the virus, keep him or her separated from other dogs for one week and closely watch for signs of disease
- Keep sick dogs, such as those showing signs of respiratory illness, separated from all other dogs for two weeks
- Routinely clean and disinfect kennel surfaces and food and water bowls using soap and water followed by a disinfectant to help prevent illness, keeping in mind that the virus seldom survives beyond 48 hours
- Practice good hygiene and sanitation with frequent hand washing and thorough cleaning
- Do not share bowls, brushes, toys, collars, and leashes among dogs that do not live together
- Consult your veterinarian about vaccination, depending on the strain of flu circulating, and other preventive measures



says. "Awareness of the veterinary community of this infection helped to prevent the secondary bacterial infections."

An H3N2 infected dog is most contagious during the two- to four-day incubation period when they are shedding the virus in nasal secretions but not showing signs of illness. Virtually all dogs exposed to the virus become infected; 80 percent of dogs develop a flu-like illness, and the 20 percent that do not become sick can still spread the virus to other dogs. Less than 10 percent of dogs die from H3N2 flu.

Months after the H3N2 flu outbreak in Chicago, anecdotal reports of cases still circulate. Unlike seasonal flu viruses affecting people, dog flu occurs year-round. The crucial thing for dog owners is to be aware of the potential for an infection to occur.

"The best prevention is keeping dogs separated as much as possible," says Dr. Dubovi. "The fewer contacts with other dogs, the less chance of a dog picking up a virus. In the big picture, all it takes is one infected dog to move to another area to start another outbreak." ■

HOW TO MAKE YOUR KENNEL COMFORTABLE IN WINTER

The weather outside may be frightful, but inside Pine Shadows Kennel in Brainerd, Minnesota, dogs find it delightful. Owner Mark Haglin who runs Pine Shadows, an *Orvis*-endorsed English Springer Spaniel breeding kennel, with wife Sophie and son Morgan, believes keeping dogs comfortable is the best way to maintain a healthy kennel environment in winter.

“We spend a lot of time taking care of our dogs,” Haglin says. “If anything, we overclean and overprotect, but we believe it is much easier to take preventive steps than to deal with problems after the fact.”

Here are tips from Pine Shadows on keeping dogs comfortable in winter.

1 PHYSICAL COMFORTS

A good night’s rest begins with a clean, warm bed. Each of the 64 indoor concrete runs at Pine Shadows includes dog bedding. Some dogs prefer raised beds with blankets, and others have cushy dog beds. A clean dog is a happy dog, Haglin says. Keeping dogs in good physical condition requires regular grooming and bathing. Care also is taken



to ensure that ice crystals and snow balls do not become impacted in paws. A comfy 68 to 70 degrees is the ideal kennel temperature.



2 MENTAL STIMULATION

Activity works wonders for keeping dogs’ minds sharp. Since Pine Shadows is an indoor kennel, dogs are walked and exercised four to five times a day when taken outdoors to eliminate. Older dogs that no longer do fieldwork still train and practice retrieving. Mental challenges include games like finding a hidden treat behind one of six sliding doors. Rawhides or *Nylabones* keep dogs busy, and soothing classical music plays constantly. Light plays a crucial role in affecting mood, says Haglin, noting that dimmer lights are used to gradually lighten and darken the kennel. Lots of exercise, one-on-one attention and a disciplined routine are fundamental to mental stability.



3

BEEFING UP ON NUTRITION

Starting in November and throughout winter, the hardworking springers at Pine Shadows are fed 20 percent more *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Formula* dog food to help meet their caloric needs. Dogs are monitored on an individual basis to ensure they are maintaining ideal body condition. The rule of thumb is to give dogs 7 percent more calories for every 10 degrees the temperature drops. Puppies are fed *Purina Pro Plan FOCUS* puppy food, and senior dogs are fed *Purina Pro Plan BRIGHT MIND Adult 7+* dog food. Giving ample water is important because of the metabolic changes that take place and to help process the extra food.



“Higgins,” an English Springer Spaniel, waits for Sophie to feed him. Working dogs receive about 20 percent more food in winter to meet their caloric needs.

4

KENNEL SMARTS IN WINTER

Many variables, such as insulation, ventilation and wind blocks, go into making a kennel comfortable in winter. The Pine Shadows kennel has 12-inch thick, well-insulated walls that help maintain a constant temperature. In addition, the ceiling has 16 inches of insulation. The wind is broken by shrubbery on the north and west sides, with trees all around. A unique feature is the constant air exchange in which cold air from outside is drawn in and warmed before circulating through the kennel. The constant flow of fresh air helps to lessen pathogens and reduce the spread of viruses. ■



Sophie Haglin walks English Springer Spaniels “TA” and “Pilot” following an early winter snowfall at Pine Shadows Kennel in Brainerd, Minnesota.

THE *Royal* SHIH TZU OF HALLMARK JOLEI

BY BARBARA FAWVER

One look at the luxurious flowing gold-and-white coat and dazzling topknot crowned with a sequin-studded blue bow, and you know the dog is Shih Tzu royalty. Wiggling with excitement, “Rocket” loves the attention. Capping off two years on the show circuit, the 3-year-old male has charmed his way into many winners’ circles.

Like his sire, grandsire and great-grandsire, Rocket (GCH Hallmark Jolei Rocket Power) wins Bests in Show. His grandsire, CH Hallmark Jolei Raggedy Andy, won 84 Bests in Show, succeeding the 83 won by Rocket’s great-grandsire, CH Charing Cross Ragtime Cowboy (“Joey”), to become the top-winning Shih Tzu of all time. “Andy” and Joey also took turns as the top Toy Group winners of all time. Now, it is Rocket’s turn. Not only has Rocket won more Toy Group Firsts this year than any other toy dog, he set a record for winning the most Toy Group Firsts in a year when he captured his 141st win in early December.



Four-month-old Shih Tzu puppies playfully scamper in leaves, showing the breed’s lively, happy nature that contributes to its popularity as a beloved companion.



Breeders Luke and Diane Ehricht hold GCH Hallmark Jolei Rocket Power, one of their top winners and the No. 1 Shih Tzu in 2014 and 2015. Both were Shih Tzu loyalists when they met, drawn to the breed's agreeable, easygoing temperament.

Hallmark Jolei breeders Luke and Diane Ehricht have built a dynasty of Shih Tzu winners. Their passion for the once-upon-a-time cherished Chinese palace pet shows in their career stats: 200 earned Bests in Show and 150 bred show champions. In 2008, the American Kennel Club named them the Toy Group Breeders of the Year. Their mastery of the drop-coated breed comes to life every time Rocket enters a show ring.

“Rocket is a really beautiful Shih Tzu,” says Luke, the handler. “He loves people, other dogs and puppies. He gets it from his sire (GCH Hallmark Jolei Austin Powers).”

This year’s campaign of the No. 1 Shih Tzu and No. 2 Toy dog (based on all-breed points) has frequently pulled the Hallmark Jolei team in different directions. On a recent visit to their home in Monclova, Ohio, Luke was preparing to fly with Rocket to the Ozark Mountain Fall Classic in Springfield, Missouri, and Diane and assistant Terry Eredita were planning to drive with clients’ toy dogs to the West Michigan Harvest Cluster in Kalamazoo.

A merry mood prevails in the busy Hallmark Jolei kennel. A cluster of retired champions, their show coats cut down, joyously runs about, pleased to meet a newcomer. Two parrots, “Chico,” a blue-front Amazon, and “Lola,” a medium sulfur-crested Cockatoo, spout orders to anyone who will listen.

Lying on a grooming table, Rocket has melted into relaxation mode as Luke fastidiously brushes his just-washed coat and warm air blows from the overhead dryer.

A seemingly therapeutic session for both, the celebrated Shih Tzu is getting a soothing full-body brushing, and Luke de-stresses with each stroke of the brush. Two hours a day are spent brushing that glamorous coat, and the topknot requires an additional 30 minutes. It takes two years with proper conditioning and care for a Shih Tzu to grow a full show coat.

Like all Hallmark Jolei Shih Tzu, Rocket was taught to be patient while being groomed. “By the time puppies are 4 months old, they have had several baths,” Diane says. “We want them to get used to the bathing and brushing that is part of being a show dog. We work the hair on the top of the head into a topknot. It doesn’t stay in long, but it is good experience for them.”

“Sixty percent of the breed’s judging is the head,” Luke says. “The Shih Tzu head should be large in size and shape, and they should have large, round dark eyes and wide nostrils. The rest of the judging is structure and movement. Balance is very important. A dog with proper shoulder placement moves correctly with a smooth, flowing, effortless gait. In breeding, it is easier to change the head than to change a dog’s structure.”

“Temperament is so important to us. We try to breed dogs with engaging, friendly personalities,” Diane adds. “Personality plus is what

“**Temperament is so important to us. We try to breed dogs with engaging, friendly personalities.**”
– Diane Ehricht



Luke brushes “Rocket” at home in the grooming room. The two-hour daily routine is part of the conditioning and care required to maintain the glamorous coat.

we're after," Luke agrees. "We hear from people all over the country who tell us they love the sweet personalities of our Shih Tzu."

Raised by their dams in a whelping box in the quiet, secluded master bedroom, Hallmark Jolei puppies transition to a nursery in the grooming room at 4 weeks of age. The activity, including the parrots' chatter, adult dogs running and playing, radio and TV sounds, and people talking, helps to social-



The two-story brick farmhouse features stylish country décor. The kennel, converted from a three-car garage, adjoins the house.

ize them. At about 12 weeks of age, puppies start traveling to dog shows to familiarize them with the motor home and show environment. They also start learning to walk on a lead with short walks in the driveway.

Puppies' outgoing personalities take shape in the hectic, happy Hallmark Jolei home. The comfortable two-story country chic brick farmhouse, built in the late 1800s, features a spacious kennel that was transformed from a three-car garage when Luke and Diane

married 23 years ago. The union of the two Shih Tzu lovers has proved to be a mighty collaboration.

STACKING UP SHIH TZU WINS

Luke Ehricht and Diane Kijowski had known each other about 10 years when the independent and highly motivated Sagittariuses began dating in 1990. They shared an early start in showing dogs, having both finished their first show champions as teenagers.

Luke, who grew up in Toronto, Canada, where he won his first Best in Show at 17 years old, delved straight into a career as a professional dog handler. Diane, a native Ohioan, followed her grandmother and mother's love of dogs, using their kennel prefix of Jolei, which is French for jolly. She was 18 when she won her first Best in Show with a solid black Shih Tzu named "Blacka." Diane worked 11 years for an accounting firm while handling dogs on weekends before deciding to become a full-time pro dog handler.

Although Luke and Diane had shown other breeds — his original breed was Lhasa Apso and she had started with her mother's Miniature Schnauzer — they were drawn to the agreeable,



Diane cuddles 4-week-old Shih Tzu puppies. "They all are our pets," she says.

easy temperament of the Shih Tzu. Luke's first Shih Tzu to win a Best in Show was "Brandy" (CH Shente's Brandy Alexander), who also won the American Shih Tzu Club (ASTC) National Specialty in 1988 and 1990, as well as two Canadian Nationals and Best of Breed at the Garden at 11 1/2 years of age. Brandy's wins included taking Best in Show

at the Canadian Kennel Club Centennial Show in 1988. Meanwhile, in 1991, Diane won the ASTC National Specialty with CH Naysmith Jolei Jackpot (“Potsy”), a Shih Tzu she and her mother owned.

When the couple married in 1992, they adopted Hallmark Jolei as their kennel prefix. “We wanted to add something to the name,” Diane says. “Hallmark came to me one day, and it stuck. Hallmark Jolei is a tribute to my mom and grandmother.”

Luke and Diane’s accomplishments in the ring carried over to their Shih Tzu breeding program. Their pedigrees are woven with closely related linebred dogs that complement one another’s characteristics. Their homebred champions have stacked up an impressive collection of all-breed and specialty wins.

A LOVER OF EVERYONE

Known for their loving, sweet personalities, the Shih Tzu of Hallmark Jolei are excellent examples of the temperament required for the companion breed. “They love everyone,” says Luke. “They are not terribly loyal, but they are very trusting.”

“Shih Tzu are great family dogs, but they shouldn’t be left alone,” Diane says. “They really like companionship and do well with another dog or even a cat or other animal in the house.”



**Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH
Hallmark Jolei Rocket Power**

One of the most glamorous and popular companion breeds in the U.S., the Shih Tzu ranked among the top 10 breeds in American Kennel Club registrations in the early 2000s. This lively toy dog, with a distinct, proud carriage and tail curved gracefully over the back, is a solid, substantial dog weighing from 9 to 18 pounds. Shih Tzu compete in dog shows, obedience and agility.

The history of the Shih Tzu (pronounced Sheed Zoo) is tied to Buddhism and the efforts of Chinese and Tibetan lamas to breed toy dogs that resembled lions. Believed to be the oldest and smallest variety of Tibetan holy dogs, the Shih Tzu became a highly valued and prized palace pet. A favorite pastime of Imperial rulers was breeding the small “Lion Dog.”

Behind Andy, Jezebell and 11 other Hallmark Jolei champions from four litters is a female named “Tinkerbelle” (CH Hallmark Jolei Tinkerbelle), the breed’s top-producing bitch. “Without a doubt, she was our most influential dog,” Luke says. “Tinkerbelle was one in a million. She was strong-willed and one of the funniest dogs we’ve ever had.” She also was long-lived, dying at age 16 from pancreatitis.



Standing by their motor home, Diane holds “Austin” (GCH Hallmark Jolei Austin Powers), and Luke has “Stella” (CH PMT Queen of Hearts).

Her legacy carried on in later generations. A grandson, “Willy” (GCH Hallmark Jolei Bells Will Be Ringing), became Luke and Diane’s youngest

During a 20-year period, Luke and Diane handled 17 ASTC National Specialty winners. Their winning streaks included taking Best of Breed with “Brandon” (CH Shente’s Jolei In Your Dreams) in 1993 and 1994, followed by winning with “Reggie” (CH Keepsake’s Dream Catcher) in 1995. Rocket’s great-grandsire Joey won in 1998 and 1999, and “Muffin” (CH Hallmark Jolei Ragamuffin) won in 2000. Rocket’s grandsire Andy, the top-winning Shih Tzu of all time, won in 2001, 2002 and 2003. “Sammy” (CH Hallmark Jolei American Beauty) won in 2007. Austin, Rocket’s sire, won in 2009 at 11 months old from the Bred-By Exhibitor class, and then repeated the win in 2010 and 2011.

Austin also captured the breed and placed third in the Toy Group at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in 2010. Earlier Garden winners were females “Jezebell” (CH Hallmark Jolei Jezebell), who won in 2005 and 2006 and who Luke says “is the best bitch we ever bred and the winner of 17 Bests in Show,” and “Gidget” (CH Hallmark Jolei Surfer Girl), who won in 2008 at 21 months of age. When Diane handled Gidget to her win, Luke handled Sammy to an Award of Merit.

Her legacy carried on in later generations. A grandson, “Willy” (GCH Hallmark Jolei Bells Will Be Ringing), became Luke and Diane’s youngest

show champion finishing at 8 ½ months old in 2009. Her grandson Austin would sire Rocket, this year's high achiever.

Along with their own success, Luke and Diane have handled hundreds of toy dogs of clients to champion and grand champion titles. Shih Tzu, Maltese and Yorkshire Terriers are the breeds they commonly take on the circuit. They have weathered the hectic pace of their dual handling careers and a temporary but serious health setback in December 2009 when Luke, who thought he had a chest cold, suffered from pulmonary embolism, or arterial blockage in both lungs due to blood clots.

The life-threatening condition came at the end of Austin's first year of showing. After spending 10 days in intensive care followed by three days in a



Puppies enjoy Purina Pro Plan FOCUS Puppy Small Breed Formula. Adult Shih Tzu are fed Pro Plan NATURAL Grain Free Adult Small Breed Chicken & Egg Formula, and senior dogs receive Pro Plan BRIGHT MIND Adult 7+ Small Breed Formula.

cardiac unit and then leaving the hospital on oxygen, Luke was resolved to show Austin at the Garden in February. He did exactly that, winning the breed and then Group Third.

That resolve is the framework behind Hallmark Jolei. Luke and Diane agree they share the same ethics but have different perspectives on how to achieve them. "Luke can be too particular about certain things," Diane says, smiling.

Luke laughs. "Until I was 35, I would stay up all night before a show bathing the dogs so their coats would be fresh," he says.

"I've let down my guard a bit you could say."

Maybe not. Meticulously brushing Rocket's coat for hours the day before the Ozark Mountain Fall Classic, it is apparent that here is the reason that Hallmark Jolei Shih Tzu are royalty. ■



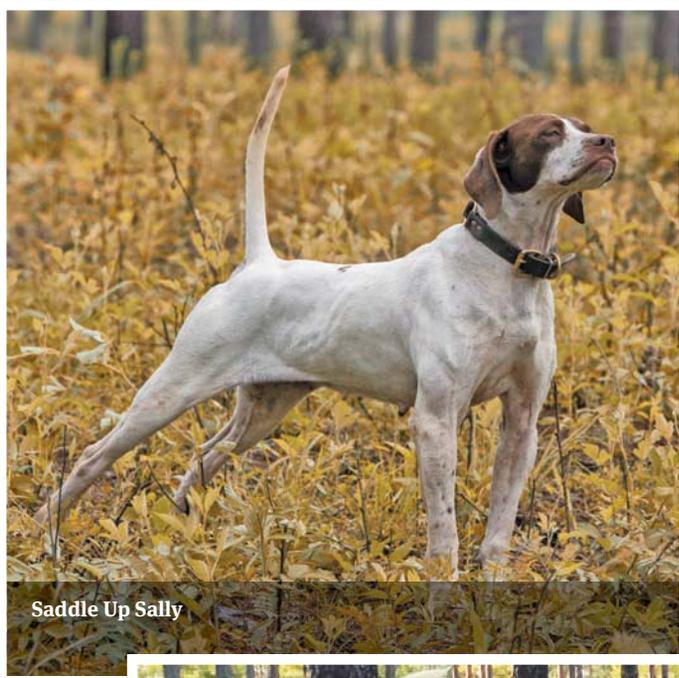
Team Rocket poses at home on the front porch. Luke and Diane say assistant Terry Eredita, center, who came from Beijing to work at Hallmark Jolei, is their "No. 1 son."



Miller's Dialing In



Sugarknoll War Paint



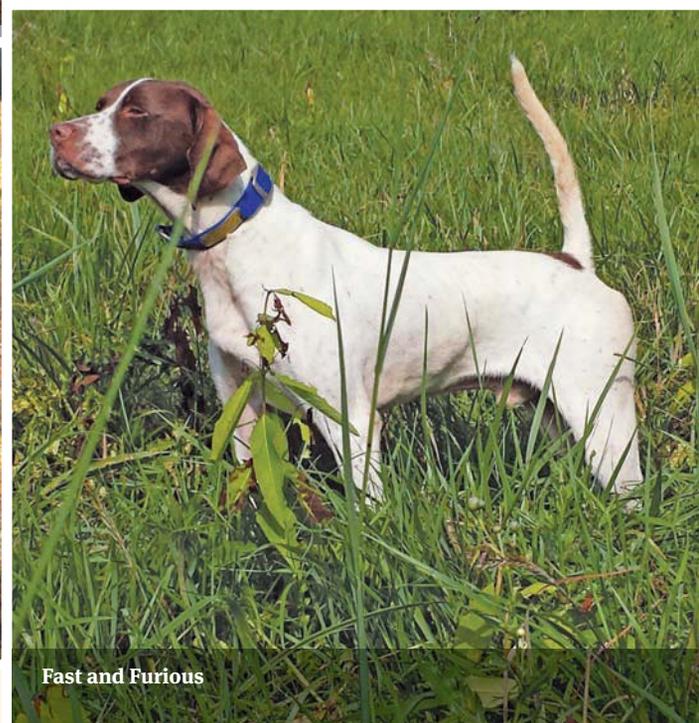
Saddle Up Sally



Lester's Prime Poison Lane



Dunn's Tried 'N True



Fast and Furious

PURINA AWARDS TOP SHOOTING DOGS AND ALL-AGE BIRD DOGS

High-achieving all-age and shooting dogs gave strong performances this year to become Purina Award winners. Celebrating their achievements, enthusiasts gathered in Montgomery, Alabama, in June to honor this year's Purina Award winners.



Pro handler Luke Eisenhart wins his third Purina Top Field Trial Handler Award in four seasons.

With style and determination, a 5-year-old orange-and-white Pointer called "Spec" captured the Purina Top Field Trial Bird Dog Award. "His willingness to please, consistency in finding birds and excellent conformation contributed to this win," says owner-handler Gary Lester of Gracey, Kentucky. The award capped an impressive season for Miller's Dialing In, the 2015 National Champion for Field Trialing Bird Dogs.

Passing on his determination, stamina and good nose, Spec is the sire of "Jack," the Purina Derby Top Field Trial Bird Dog. The talented young white-and-liver Pointer, Dunn's Tried 'N True, is owned by first-time

Purina Award winners Will and Rita Dunn of Lebanon, Kentucky, who say Jack is "driven, eager to please and has a lot of heart."

The 2-year-old male is handled by pro Luke Eisenhart of Albany, Georgia, the Purina Top Field Trial Handler Award winner, his third in the past four seasons. Having won with a string of 12 talented dogs, Eisenhart says, "It takes an outstanding team to win. A good handler needs good scouts, dogs and owners. I'm lucky to have them all."

It was a happy ending for "Sally," a white-and-liver Pointer who escaped her kennel and survived a brutal Montana winter 35 miles from home as a 1-year-old. After being rescued, Saddle Up Sally, now 6 years old, dominated the circuit to be named the Purina Amateur Top Field Trial Bird Dog. "Most dogs lost at a young age would never survive, much

less become a champion," says owner-handler Larron Copeland of Bronwood, Georgia. "Sally is a small dog with a huge heart."

Veteran pro George Tracy of Glenville, Pennsylvania, ruled the shooting dog circuit with an 11-dog string, including father-son duo "Duke" and "Bull," to win the Purina Top Shooting Dog Handler Award. "I have many wonderful owners, and they are who win at the end of the day," Tracy says. "They provide me with outstanding dogs."

Having surged ahead of the pack toward the season's end, Duke was knighted with the Purina Top Shooting Dog Award. "Winning proves your dog is a consistent champion," says Tracy. "Duke's heart, brain, style, and nose sets him apart." Sugarknoll War Paint, a 5-year-old white-and-orange Pointer, is co-owned by Peter and Christine Del Collo of Pamplin, Virginia, with Allen Linder of Livingston, Tennessee.

A Duke son, Bull gifted owners Bill and Muriel Primm of Cream Ridge, New Jersey, with the Purina Top Shooting Dog Derby Award. The 2-year-old liver-marked male named Fast and Furious charged through field trials under the direction of Tracy, who says, "Bull is intelligent and willing-to-please. He works with you, not against you."

A 3-year-old liver-marked Pointer called "Rip" tore through the competition to win the Purina Top Shooting Dog Amateur Award. Lester's Prime Poison Lane is owned by handler Brian Peterson of Cecil, Alabama. "An important part of training was going to the field every day. It built trust between Rip and me," Peterson says.

All the winners are fueled by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Formula. ■



Veteran pro George Tracy has earned a record-setting 12 Purina Top Shooting Dog Handler Awards.

PURINA
PRO CLUB
Circle of Champions

BRUSSELS GRIFFON 'PENNY' FOLLOWS IN SIRE'S FOOTSTEPS



Following in her sire's footsteps, a 5-year-old smooth red bitch called "Penny" has become a prominent breed record setter. The top-winning Brussels Griffon bitch in history, Multi-BIS GCH Fist Face A Penny For Your Thought captured the honor when she won her 13th Best in Show in August. The toy dog is reminiscent of her sire, Multi-BIS GCH Cilleine Masquerade, the winningest Brussels Griffon of all time with more than 70 Bests in Show. Pro handler Paul Catterson of Smithville, Missouri, credits Penny's "gregarious charm and genuine love of people" for her winning record. The No. 1 Brussels Griffon since 2014 was bred by Rod and Linda Vance of Bloomington, Illinois. Owned by Carol and the late Larry Pagacz of Overland Park, Kansas, Penny is fueled by *Purina Pro Plan FOCUS Sensitive Skin & Stomach Formula*.

Dynamic and outgoing, "Penny" is the winningest Brussels Griffon bitch in breed history.

**VIZSLA NAMED 'DRIVER' STEERS TO WIN
VCA NATIONAL FIELD TRIAL**

A flawless performance in the last 10 minutes of the second series of the Vizsla Club of America (VCA) National Field Trial drove home a championship win for a hard-charging 3-year-old male named "Driver." Outperforming more than 40 dogs, NFC-FC Mira's MR Playmaker ranged far and efficiently to win the horseback stake. "Driver transforms when the competition begins," says owner Michel Berner of Fairchild, Wisconsin. "His total focus is finding game." Bred by Jonathan Peck of Battle Creek, Michigan, Driver is trained and handled by Brian Gingrich of Winnebago, Illinois. Winning his fifth trial of the year, Driver is powered by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula*.

"Driver" won the Vizsla Club of America National Field Trial in October at Horse Creek Ranch in Cheyenne, Wyoming, with a hard-charging performance.





ENGLISH SETTER 'JAKE' WINS NATIONAL PRAIRIE CHICKEN CHAMPIONSHIP

In an intense one-hour horseback stake run the first day of the weeklong National Prairie Chicken Shooting Dog Championship, a 6-year-old blue-belton male English Setter called “Jake” made an impression that counted. Stylishly pointing a covey of the elusive wild birds, Conecuh Pressure Test outperformed 60 dogs to win the championship. “The objective is to start strong and end strong,” says handler Doug Ray of Waynesboro, Georgia. “Jake pushed through to the end and never slowed down.” Bred by Buddy Smith of Collierville, Tennessee, Jake is owned by Becky and Tony Gibson of Union Springs, Alabama, who also own the Runner-Up Champion, CS Coldwater Rex, a 3-year-old white-and-orange male Pointer. Both dogs are powered by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula.

“Jake” proved he had endurance and stylish pointing and flushing skills to win the National Prairie Chicken Shooting Dog Championship in September in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin.

KEESHOND NAMED 'CUBIT' MAKES BREED HISTORY AT NATIONAL

An outgoing 5-year-old male called “Cubit” gaited his way into breed history in May by winning Best of Breed and the prestigious Top 25 Award at the Keeshond Club of America National Specialty plus Best of Breed at the California Sierra Keeshond Club Regional Specialty held the same weekend. The No. 1 Keeshond since 2014, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Skyline’s Unit of Measure “makes an impression with his full mane and richly plumed tail,” says co-owner and handler Jean Gauchat-Hargis of Sacramento, California. Breeder-owners are Kristen and Susan Cullen of Prior Lake, Minnesota, and co-owner is Joshua Hargis of Sacramento, California. Cubit is powered by *Purina Pro Plan FOCUS* Sensitive Skin & Stomach Formula.

One of the winningest Keeshonds in breed history, “Cubit” swept Best of Breed and the Top 25 Award at the National.



Please visit the Circle of Champions on the *Purina Pro Club* website at purinaproclub.com to read about top-performing show and sporting dogs powered by *Purina*.

PURINA HONORS BRACE BEAGLE WINNERS



Owner-handler Alfie Williams poses FCB Sun-Dell Lil Brave.

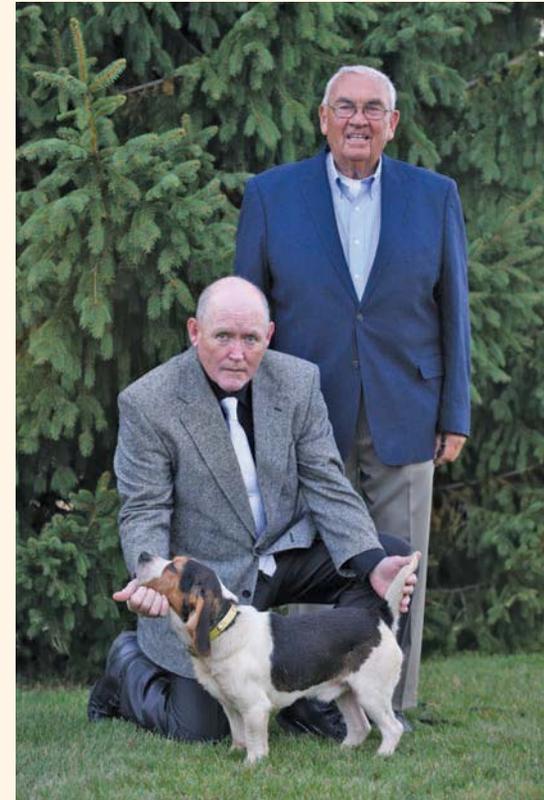
Rabbit-tracking hounds outperformed the competition and the cottontails to win this year's Purina Brace Beagle Awards. The winners, along with their owners and handlers, were honored in October in Pittsburgh.

FCB Sun-Dell Lil Brave was named the Purina Outstanding Field Trial Brace Beagle after three wins and three second places in six Federation field trials. The 2-year-old 13-inch tricolor male called "Brave" gave owner-handler Alfie Williams of Finleyville, Pennsylvania, his first Purina Futurity Award. "It has truly been an outstanding year," says Williams.

The Purina Champion Award went to 2XNBC-FCB Bee Lick Braveheart for the second consecutive year. Stamping his name in the history books, "Braveheart" is a two-time AKC National Brace Championship class winner and Purina Derby Award winner. The 4-year-old 13-inch tricolor male also is the sire of Brave. Proud breeder-owner-handler Marty Parker of Taylorsville, Pennsylvania, says, "Braveheart has matured into an even better dog than when he was young." Co-owners are Niki Happel of Pittsburgh and Williams.



Breeder-owner-handler Marty Parker presents 2XNBC-FCB Bee Lick Braveheart, with co-owners Alfie Williams and Niki Happel.



Breeder-owner Bill Pope positions FCB Veteran's BJ, and Russ Arend, co-owner and handler, stands behind.

Teamwork contributed to the success of this year's Purina Derby Award winner, FCB Veteran's BJ, a 1-year-old 13-inch tricolor male. Breeder Bill Pope of Bessemer, North Carolina, co-owns the dog with Russ Arend of Macclenny, Florida, who handled "BJ" in the first three derby-age field trials. Pro handlers Bob and Lynette Coil of Bulls Gap, Tennessee, secured the win by handling BJ in the last three trials. "You don't see dogs like BJ every day," says Pope, the proud recipient of his first Purina Award. ■



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Breed Snapshot

SPANISH WATER DOG: AN ANCIENT WORKING BREED

An ancient breed distinguished by his curly, wooly coat and love of hard work, the Spanish Water Dog has worked his way into the American Kennel Club as one of the new breeds of 2015. Although the exact origin of the Perro de Agua Español is not known, this multipurpose farm dog is believed to have descended from water dogs such as the Poodle, Barbet, Portuguese Water Dog, Lagotto Romagnolo, and Puli and to have come from the hilly, rocky, arid Andalusia area of southern Spain near the Iberian Peninsula.

Intelligent and fiercely loyal, the Spanish Water Dog is a powerful, athletic dog. His desire to please has endeared him as a herding dog, hunter, guardian, and water dog assisting fishermen. Even today, the breed thrives when given a purpose, making this highly active dog not for everyone. Conformation, herding, agility, obedience, water sports, retrieving, flyball, lure coursing, and barn hunt are among the sports in which he competes.

Beloved for his clownish, quirky personality, the Spanish Water Dog has a nonshedding coat that may be shown in natural curls or rustic cords with tapering tips. Medium-sized, dogs are 17 ½ to 19 ¾ inches tall at the withers and weigh 40 to 48 pounds, and females are 15 ¾ to 18 inches tall and weigh 31 to 40 pounds.

Source: *The Complete Dog Book*, Official Publication of the American Kennel Club. i-5 Publishing, Irvine, CA. 2015.

