

 PURINA
PRO PLAN

TODAY'S BREEDER

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

Issue 92



PERFORMANCE DRIVEN BREEDER

Mohawk Mill Bird Dogs

- GROOMING DOGS COMPETITIVELY
- DEALING WITH ATOPIC DERMATITIS
- PURINA RETRIEVER AWARDS

'RUMOR' WINS THE PURINA PRO PLAN CHAMPIONS CUP



A year's hard work chasing points on the dog show circuit culminated brilliantly for "Rumor," the No. 1 all-breed dog in the country in 2015, and breeder-owner-handler Kent Boyles of Edgerton, Wisconsin. The 4-year-old female German Shepherd Dog topped off the year by winning the 2015 [Purina Pro Plan Champions Cup](#).

The naturally dynamic Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Lockenhaus' Rumor Has It V Kenlyn consistently conveyed a joy for showing every time she was in the ring. "Rumor is one of a kind," Boyles says. "She turned out to be an incredible show dog. She has beautiful breed type combined with great balance and a really enthusiastic zest for life."

Tallying 348 points, compared to 277 points for the second-place Champions Cup winner, Rumor accrued 93 Bests in Show and 154 Herding Group Firsts to win the award. More than 200 *Purina Pro Plan* sponsored dog shows comprised the year-long competition.

As the winner, Rumor was bestowed with a \$10,000 cash prize, an oil painting by dog portrait artist Linda Draper and a keepsake trophy. Her name will be engraved on a permanent trophy displayed at the Purina Event Center in Gray Summit, Missouri. Cash prizes also were given to the second, third and fourth place winners.

Rumor was co-bred and is co-owned by Pamela McElheney of Maumee, Ohio. Other co-owners are Deborah Stern of Calabasas, California, Pamela Buckles of Columbus, Ohio, and Patti Dukeman of Urbana, Illinois. The Champions Cup winner is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice* and *SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice* formulas. ■

Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Lockenhaus' Rumor Has It V Kenlyn, the 2015 *Purina Pro Plan* Champions Cup winner

Introduced in 2000, the [Purina Pro Plan Champions Cup](#) promotes excellence in the sport of purebred dogs through conformation dog shows. The dog earning the most points, based on Bests in Show and Group placements at more than 200 Purina Pro Plan sponsored dog shows, receives a \$10,000 cash prize, an oil painting by dog portrait artist Linda Draper and a keepsake trophy. Cash prizes also are awarded to the second, third and fourth place winners. To learn more, visit <https://www.purinaproclub.com/awards-recognition/champions-cup>

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CH Mohawk Mill Jacob, a 7 1/2-year-old white-and-black English Setter, was bred by David Whitaker and is owned and handled by Gary Winall. Cover photo by Chip Laughton. See story on page 12.

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Producing healthy puppies, such as this 12-week-old English Cocker Spaniel, is an important goal. See the Tips story on page 10 to learn more.



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A member of two Groom Team USA World Championship teams, Lindsey Dicken hand strips “Layla” (CH TNC’s Simply Irresistible Layla), an Airedale Terrier, at her Fetching Canine grooming salon in Longwood, Florida.

STRIKING GOLD

WITH GROOM TEAM USA

BY RACHEL LIKERT

Nearly 100 groomers representing more than 20 countries filled the arena of the piazzetto dello sport in Verbania, Italy. Brows furrowed as they bent over their assignments, grooming dogs brought from home with purpose and precision.

Despite the noise and excitement of the 2015 World Groom Team Championship held last October, Lindsey Dicken of Altamonte Springs, Florida, worked feverishly, hand stripping a handsome Welsh Terrier. Although time was short and the competition was fierce, she recalls pausing to remember another Welsh Terrier nearly a decade earlier.

Long before qualifying for [Groom Team USA](#) and going to the World Championship, Lindsey groomed a different Welsh Terrier at her first competition. Telling the story today, she chuckles as she reminisces about her handiwork.

"I clipped his back and was so proud of myself," Lindsey says. "Looking back, I did it all wrong, but at the time I thought he looked amazing. I was sure I was going to win. Needless to say, I didn't."

Coming a long way since that first competition, Lindsey has been the No. 1 groomer in the U.S. for the past five years. She has represented the U.S. in four Groom Team World Championships, which have taken her around the world to Dachau, Germany, in 2009; Kortrijk, Belgium, in 2011; Barcelona, Spain, in 2013; and Verbana, Italy, last October. As a member of Groom Team USA, Lindsey helped the team capture golds in 2009 and 2013.

Lindsey entered the world of competitive grooming under the wing of a series of influential mentors, the first of whom was her hometown mentor Francie Penn, of Jackson, Michigan, a member of the first [Groom Team USA](#). After moving to Florida in 2007, Lindsey studied under well-known groomer Karen Tucker, whose mentorship helped Lindsey excel at grooming competitions. It was through Tucker that Lindsey received her first competition dog as a gift from renowned groomer, Liz Paul.

"Karen was picking up some of Liz's dogs to care for them while Liz was ill," Lindsey says. "I happened to tag along, and Karen mentioned that I was interested in grooming competitions. Without hesitation, Liz picked up a little Bichon Frise and said 'take this one.'"

The Bichon, who was named "Eve" (Ardynas Shimmering Moon), would become the foundation bitch of Lindsey's conformation breeding program. In the beginning as she worked with Eve, Lindsey dove into learning her craft. Driven to educate herself and learn everything she could, she attended dog shows to study how handlers groomed their dogs.

She started competing in every grooming competition she could. Tallying points by outperforming competitors, Lindsey rocketed to the top of the national rankings and maintained her position. Participating in the four classes of competition, Hand Stripping,

Poodles, Sporting and All Other Purebreds, Lindsey excelled at Poodles and All Other Purebreds, the class she competed in with Eve and "Zoey," a Bichon owned by a client who traveled the world with her and helped Team USA capture gold in 2009 and 2013.

When Lindsey made [Groom Team USA](#) last year, she was thrown for a loop when she was assigned to the Hand Stripping class for the World Championship. Conceding it was not her



Lindsey poses with Miniature Dachshund "Ember" and her homebred conformation Bichon Frise, from left, "Eli" (CH Solstice Winter Elixer), "Eve" (Ardynas Shimmering Moon), "Elliott" (CH Solstice Frostfire), and "Quin" (CH Solstice Stormbringer).



Some of the medallions and trophies Lindsey has won in grooming competitions.

strongest class, Lindsey had less than a year to master the skill. To perfect her technique, she borrowed a Welsh Terrier named "Clark" (CH Bayleigh Shaireab's Man Of Steel) from a good friend and hit the grooming competition circuit. Ready or not, when October rolled around, Lindsey and Clark boarded a plane to Italy.

"I was very nervous when we left for the World Competition," she says. "I worked so hard the past year, but when you have the honor of representing your country, you can't help but think, 'Was it enough?'"

As the competition began, the stress and nervousness faded away, Lindsey says. Taking a step back, she was able to see the result of her training. Although she was feeling more confident, Lindsey did not expect what came next. She won the Hand Stripping class. In the end, Lindsey's score helped the U.S. team place second in the overall competition.

"Given the amount of talent in the competition, it was extremely satisfying to win the Hand Stripping class," Lindsey says. "I can't help but think about how it all started with a Welsh Terrier. It was amazing to have come full circle." ■



Seven years into treatment, “Henry” is healthy and handsome, and his coat is thick and shiny.

HYPOSENSITIZING DOGS TO ATOPIC DERMATITIS

Cracking the code to successfully manage the environmental allergens that ailed “Henry,” a gentle, loving chocolate Labrador Retriever, turned into a strategic operation against a plethora of pollens, molds, dust mites, and dander to which he was sensitized.

Frequent itchy spells starting when Henry was around 1 year of age caused him to scratch and lick incessantly, making his ears, belly, underarms, and groin area fire-engine red and often wet. Scabs dotted the exterior corners of his eyes, which were commonly void of brows and lashes due to his rubbing. His coat turned thin and patchy, with streaks of scabs running down his back and legs.

Blood allergy testing showed that Henry was allergic to virtually all 43 allergens on the test. He began allergen-specific immunotherapy (ASIT) consisting of “vaccine” injections made from the allergens to which he tested positive. Antifungals and antibiotics were prescribed for the yeast and bacterial infections present in Henry’s ears and sores, and a steroid was given to curb the itchiness, though it made him thirsty and hungry.

As the male retriever turned 2 years old, having cycled through spring and fall allergy seasons and treatments that offered only temporary relief, Henry’s primary veterinarian referred owners Janice and Kevin Butler of Phenix City, Alabama, to a specialist at Auburn University. Robert Kennis, DVM, MS, DACVD, professor of veterinary dermatology, began a tactical approach to dealing with Henry’s atopic dermatitis that centered on keeping him as clean as possible via frequent bathing combined with ASIT and supportive medications and supplements.

Henry is among 10 percent of dogs affected by atopic dermatitis, a chronic inflammatory skin disease caused by an inappropriate immune reaction to environmental allergens that are mainly absorbed through the skin, orally or from breathing. Affected dogs lack skin barrier protection against allergens, which allows them to penetrate the skin and trigger allergies. It is

BREEDS PREDISPOSED TO ATOPIC DERMATITIS

Breeds considered prone to developing atopic dermatitis include the following, though this listing is not all-inclusive.

Basset Hound	Dalmatian	Labrador Retriever
Bichon Frise	English Setter	Lhasa Apso
Boston Terrier	English Springer Spaniel	Maltese
Boxer	French Bulldog	Pug
Bull Terrier	Golden Retriever	Rhodesian Ridgeback
Bulldog	Hungarian Vizsla	Shih Tzu
Chinese Shar-Pei	Irish Setter	Terriers (All)
Cocker Spaniel		Tibetan Terrier

believed to be the most prevalent skin disease in dogs, with about 60 breeds, including Labrador Retrievers, considered predisposed. A lifelong disease, atopic dermatitis is, at best, managed but never cured.

“Atopic dermatitis is a multifactorial genetically predisposed disease of variable expression in which exposure to allergens affects a dog’s sensitization,” explains Dr. Kennis. “Allergy shots (ASIT) help about 75 percent of dogs, but these dogs may need additional therapy during allergy season and may still get periodic infections. Regardless, allergy shots are much better than long-term use of steroids or other drugs that suppress the immune system.”

“I began keeping a journal of Henry’s itching,” Janice Butler says. “By recording his allergy behavior, it helped me to be aware of when we were having a low- or high-allergy day and adjust the vaccine serum accordingly.

It has been a process of trial and error to find out what works best for Henry. What really made the difference is keeping him clean.”

Seven years into treatment, Henry is healthy and handsome, and his coat is thick and shiny. Most people who meet him have no idea of his allergy regimen. He is bathed on Wednesdays and Saturdays with a medicated shampoo and then sprayed with a bacterial and fungal preventive. He also is sprayed regularly with a soothing solution



Ragweed

that restores natural oils to his coat. Besides twice weekly allergy shots, Henry takes allergy relief pills (antihistamines) as needed and an omega-3 fatty acid supplement.

The Butlers spend about \$300 a month caring for Henry. "I sometimes wonder what would have happened to Henry if he didn't have owners like us," says Janice Butler. "Giving up on him was never an option. We are very lucky to have Dr. Kennis. We don't see the flare-ups now like we did, thanks to him."

A COMPLEX DISEASE TO DIAGNOSE

The second most common allergy in dogs after flea bite allergy, atopic dermatitis can be challenging to diagnose partly because the clinical signs of scratching, rubbing, chewing, and excessive grooming overlap with signs of other allergies. Adding to the complexity of diagnosing

the disease, dogs can have concurrent allergies. Henry, the Labrador Retriever, for example, tested positive for flea bite allergy, one of the 43 allergens to which he was hypersensitive.

Dogs typically are affected around 1 to 3 years of age. Allergies occur when allergens trigger an inappropriate immune response resulting in the production of allergen-specific IgE (immunoglobulin E) antibodies.

"These immunoglobulins bind to mast cells and then become cross-linked by specific allergens, leading to mast-cell degranulation and the development of urticaria, a type I hypersensitivity reaction," Dr. Kennis says. "When this occurs, many cytokines are upregulated, causing pruritus (itching) and inflammation."

Allergy testing can be performed to help detect a dog's allergies once

a veterinarian confirms a diagnosis of atopic dermatitis. Intradermal testing (IDT) in which small injections of allergens are made into the skin on one side of a dog's body where the coat is shaved is considered the gold standard. An alternative method, allergen-specific IgE serology (ASIS), or blood allergy testing, has advantages over IDT because no sedation is required, it is less traumatic without repeated

injections, and there is less risk of interference from anti-inflammatory or antipruritic medications that a dog may already be taking. Both types of allergy testing ultimately produce information to formulate ASIT, or allergy shots, to reduce clinical signs.

There are many ambiguities related to understanding the genetics and clinical features of atopic dermatitis. To learn more about this skin disease, the [AKC Canine Health Foundation](#) is funding research. A study recently completed at Texas A&M University focused on better understanding the skin microbiome of normal and atopic dogs. Meanwhile, a soon-to-be completed study at the University of Florida is examining how to boost the body's natural antimicrobial defenses against allergens.

"Canine atopic dermatitis is a chronic disease that is expensive to treat and challenging for both dog owners and veterinarians," says Diane E. Brown, DVM, PhD, DACVP, Chief Executive Officer of the Canine Health Foundation. "The AKC Canine Health Foundation is committed to funding research to improve understanding of the pathophysiology, environmental triggers and exacerbating factors that contribute to this disease in an effort to improve outcomes for dogs that suffer from this condition."

INVESTIGATING ATOPIC DERMATITIS

Imagine being able to build a better skin barrier to help protect dogs against allergens that cause allergies. Aline Rodrigues Hoffmann, DVM, PhD, DACVP, assistant professor of veterinary pathology at Texas A&M University, believes it is possible. She is an investigator of a study that used bacterial and fungal DNA sequencing to describe the natural bacterial and fungal microbiome of canine skin and to identify changes that occur in allergic dogs.

"We have found that allergic skin disease results in lower diversity of the microbiome possibly because the skin of allergic dogs becomes more permissive to the proliferation of certain bacterial and fungal groups," Dr. Rodrigues Hoffmann says. "This skin barrier dysfunction is important for the pathogenesis of canine atopic dermatitis."

Dr. Rodrigues Hoffmann hopes to better understand how multiple factors, such as age, sex, breed, and environment, can influence the microbiome of healthy dogs and dogs with atopic dermatitis. "We are just beginning to learn about the skin microbiome in animals," she says. "We also want to identify the good bacteria and perhaps



Owner Janice Butler and "Henry" are shown with Dr. Robert Kennis, a veterinary dermatologist at Auburn University, who helped them deal successfully with the chocolate Labrador Retriever's atopic dermatitis.



Maple

TIPS ON CARING FOR A DOG WITH ATOPIC DERMATITIS

1 Never allow dogs with atopic dermatitis to stick their head out a window of a moving vehicle. This exposes them to pollens that can be absorbed through the skin or inhaled.



3 Wipe off a dog's feet when they come in from outdoors to help reduce pollen in between their paw pads. This is particularly important in dogs that frequently lick their feet.



2 Antihistamines can be helpful in reducing clinical signs of atopic dermatitis, but some antihistamines have a sedating effect and thus could affect a dog's performance. Consult your veterinarian to find an appropriate antihistamine for your individual dog.



4 Bathing dogs after swimming or working in the field may help reduce allergens on their coats.

develop probiotics that could compete with pathogenic bacteria to reduce the use of antimicrobial treatment.”

As in humans with allergies, atopic dogs have altered skin barrier function, transepidermal water loss and decreased ceramide concentrations, and some dogs are believed to have abnormal fillagrin expression. Domenico Santoro, DVM, MS, DrSc, PhD, DACVD, DECVD, assistant professor of veterinary dermatology at the University of Florida, explains, “Fillagrin is a protein associated with filaments that bind to keratin fibers in epithelial cells. It is essential for skin barrier function, and in people fillagrin mutations are associated with a subtype of atopic dermatitis. Ceramides are important because they allow the stratum corneum layer of the skin to stretch and bend by fluidizing the lipid barrier on the surface. Defects in ceramide can result in poor barrier function.”

In his current study, Dr. Santoro aims to discover a revolutionary treatment for atopic dermatitis by looking at antimicrobial peptides (AMPs), small proteins that defend against pathogens. “We want to know if allergic dogs, like people, have lower AMP secretion,” he says.

“Our hypothesis is that defective secretion of AMPs by allergic skin cells is associated with reduced microbicidal effects by atopic keratinocytes,” says Dr. Santoro. “Keratinocytes are highly active immunological cells involved in the acute and chronic phases of skin inflammation via production of chemokines and expression of surface molecules. Keratinocytes from genetic skin disorders like atopic dermatitis may show intrinsic abnormalities in their capacity to respond to trigger factors. This results in bacteria not being effectively killed due to the retention of a higher amount of AMPs by allergic skin cells. Ultimately, this could cause the recurrent infections associated with atopic dermatitis.”

The abnormal immunological response of atopic dogs to common allergens could be due to a defect in the

skin barrier or it could be the allergic response itself induces the skin abnormality, Dr. Santoro says. “Because allergies are so common in dogs and frequently are associated with recurrent, antibiotic-resistant skin infections, it is important to identify ways to boost the ability to help dogs fight infection,” he says.

STAYING ON TOP OF ALLERGIES

Atopic dermatitis is a life-changing disease for dogs and the owners who love them. It requires diligence from owners to monitor their dog's allergic responses and to work closely with their veterinarian to help keep them comfortable.

Janice Butler has come a long way with 8-year-old Henry. “Even simple things changed for us,” she says. “Henry can never just jump in a lake to retrieve a bumper or toy because lakes are filled with pollen. He can only swim in clean swimming pools. Despite all we've been through, Henry is the perfect dog for us.”

Veterinary experts caution breeders not to breed dogs diagnosed with atopic dermatitis due to the genetic inheritance of the disease. “These dogs should not be bred, especially in cases where the sire and dam are severely affected,” Dr. Santoro says.

The good news is that studies such as the skin microbiome work of Dr. Rodrigues Hoffmann and the antimicrobial peptide investigation of Dr. Santoro may soon lead to new treatments that may help the nearly 8 million dogs in the country that suffer from environmental allergies. In the meantime, watching out for an atopic dog's response to seasonal allergies should become second nature to owners. ■



Dandelion



THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT DOG BREEDING

Planning a litter of puppies? Margaret V. Root Kustritz, DVM, PhD, DACT, professor of small animal reproduction at the University of Minnesota, answers frequently asked questions from breeders preparing to breed that promising next litter.

1

WHAT'S A NORMAL HEAT CYCLE?

Bitches should have an obvious heat cycle by 24 months of age. Although bitches vary in the frequency of their heat cycles, an average female goes through heat about every seven months. A bitch is not considered abnormal unless she has not had an obvious heat cycle for one year.

2

IS IT OK TO BREED A BITCH IN BACK-TO-BACK HEAT SEASONS?

That depends on how many puppies she whelped the first season and how well she maintained her body condition during pregnancy, whelping and lactation. If she had several puppies and was thin by the time they were weaned, she probably cannot regain normal body condition before she is in heat again and thus should not be bred. If she had few puppies at the first breeding and is in excellent body condition, she potentially could be bred again. Every circumstance and every bitch should be evaluated individually.

3**WHAT SHOULD YOU FEED A PREGNANT BITCH?**

A growth or performance food is best to feed a pregnant bitch because they are nutrient dense and thus require less food to sustain her increasing energy needs. Particularly later in the pregnancy when her uterus takes up much of the space of the abdomen, she may have trouble eating a significant amount of food. At whelping, a bitch should weigh 5 to 10 percent more than before breeding. Try to avoid obesity as it is associated with difficulty whelping, increased birth defects in neonates and stillbirths. Likewise, a thin body condition can cause conception failure, abortion and low-weight pups.

4**WHY SHOULD PUPPIES NURSE IMMEDIATELY AFTER BIRTH?**

Puppies cannot make their own antibodies at birth so it is important that they receive their dam's first milk, colostrum, which is rich in disease-protecting antibodies. Puppies can absorb these antibodies from their intestinal tract for only about the first 24 hours of life. Don't be concerned if your bitch does not nurse until all the puppies are born. This is common behavior that generally causes no risk to puppies.

5**WHAT CAUSES SMALL LITTERS?**

The most likely culprit is breeding at the wrong time. The optimal breeding day for litter size is two days post-ovulation, as determined by your veterinarian based on progesterone measurements. Other possible causes of small litters are hypothyroidism, uterine infection and advanced age of the bitch.

6**WAS THE RUNT CONCEIVED LATER THAN HIS LITTERMATES?**

Probably not. Runt puppies most likely are the same age as their littermates but had poor placentation. Bitches release all their eggs over a 24-hour span. Even if the conception of that small pup occurred later than conception of the other puppies, all pups float around free for 17 days before implantation and formation of the placenta.







THE BIRD DOGS

OF MOHAWK MILL

BY BARBARA FAWVER

On a picture-perfect day with plenty of sunshine and blue sky, the Virginia countryside reels in a pair of white-and-liver male Pointers honed in on the fresh scent of game after a good, hard spring rain. The poker straight tails, chiseled muscles and stylish pointing of this father-son duo are captivating.



At left: Mohawk Mill Pirate points a covey of quail, and his son, Mohawk Mill Image, honors him. Above: Gary Winall on Tennessee walking horse "Tim" works with Mohawk Mill Last Chance and Mohawk Mill Tradition.

Beautifully honoring the point, Mohawk Mill Image, 2 years old, is a carbon copy of his sire, Mohawk Mill Pirate, 9 years old. Several moments pass, and “Image,” just finishing his derby-age year of all-age trials, begins to creep forward in a stealthy fashion.

“Take your time, set him back up,” says Gary Winall to his partner, Ellen Clements, from atop a Tennessee walking horse, a 17.2 hand silver roan stallion called “Tim,” fondly known as “Tiny Tim.”

“We worked hard to get that Pointer trained, now let’s keep him trained,” he says, smiling. “They can be kind of hardheaded like me.”

Quickly approaching the wayward bird dog, the pretty redheaded woman with a long braid tucked under a pink Purina cap gently nudges the back of the tail and softly taps under the chin, easing the dog back into position.

An amateur competitor in all-age field trials sanctioned by the [American Field Trial Clubs of America](#) (AFTCA), Gary, the Mohawk Mill patriarch, has an undeniable “whisperer” way with his dogs. His training grounds, the

100-acre homestead in Powhatan and a 1,600-acre farm nearby in Amelia Springs, are where he magically transforms promising puppies into polished field trial competitors.

“Pirate” is one of those polished competitors. The winner of the Amateur All-Age Invitational in 2015, Pirate never ceases to dazzle the gallery, including Gary, his breeder-owner-handler. “I want to run dogs that are a thrill to watch,” he says. “Pirate is all of that and more.”

A consistent performer with a classy, solid pointing style, Pirate also is treasured for his adept bird finding ability and elite athleticism giving him the stamina to cover lots of ground and run stakes that are an hour and longer. Those virtues contributed to his winning the [Purina Amateur Top Field Trial Bird Dog Award](#) in 2011-2012 at 4 years old, garnering two times more points than the second-place finisher.

Pirate’s award made Gary a back-to-back Purina Amateur Award winner, [having won the previous season](#) with another 4-year-old white-and-liver Pointer, Mohawk Mill Blaze. The dogs are linked through Mohawk Mill

Sportster, the paternal grandsire of Pirate and maternal grandsire of Blaze. “Sport,” Gary’s first Purina Amateur Award winner, won the award in 2008-2009, the second year it was given. Sport also won the prestigious National Amateur All-Age Invitational Championship in 2009.

Special dogs take hold of a dog lover’s heart, and “Sport” was one of those dogs. “Sport was a strong, stylish bird finder and very natural,” Gary reminisces. “He tried very hard to please me and always gave me his all. I most enjoyed running him when it was just him and me.”

Capitalizing on everything he loved about Sport, Gary tapped into the Pointer’s Hall of Fame pedigree by breeding him as a foundation sire. Sport’s dam, Mohawk Mill Frankie, was a full littermate to Calico’s Thrillology, a male inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2009. Their dam, Calico’s Rebellious Sue, was a 2005 Hall of Fame inductee. Sport’s sire, Mohawk Mill Snap, was sired by 1999 National Champion Whippoorwill Wild Card.

The 25-year veteran of all-age field trials swings his leg around to dismount Tim. Calling Pirate and Image to him, Gary is greeted by their enthusiastic wagging

tails as they vie for his attention.

A formidable team, Gary and Ellen have enjoyed a phenomenal season with the Mohawk string of 10 dogs



Ellen Clements bench trains Mohawk Mill Mister P, a white-and-orange male Pointer, the winner of this spring’s Virginia All-Age Amateur.

competing in Derby, Amateur and Open stakes. They have won more than a dozen events, often sweeping multiple places.

“There is an old saying that if you really love training and conditioning dogs, you should go to trials to see if the dogs are as good as you say or think they are,” says Ellen. “Gary absolutely loves bird dogs, and he believes in going to field trials.”

As the field trial season starts each October, the pair hits most of the regional championships and trials held at the Robert Gordon Wildlife Management Area of Hoffman, North Carolina. They frequent the Continental Amateur and National Amateur All-Age Championships at Dixie Plantation in Greenville, Florida, and the National Amateur All-Age Invitational Championship at Ames Plantation in Grand Junction, Tennessee.

Ellen is field trial secretary for the Association of Virginia Field Trials Inc. and Virginia Amateur, and president of the Cockade trial. The Virginia Amateur and Cockade run back to back in the spring at Ahoskie, North Carolina. She stepped in to help run the Virginia Amateur trial for one of Gary’s early mentors, Dr. Aubrey Morgan, a lifelong bird dog enthusiast, member of the Purina Top Field Trial Bird Dog Committee and a veterinarian, now retired. Dr. Morgan helped found the Purina Amateur Award that Gary has won three times.

Gary is president of the Association of Virginia Field Trial Clubs and vice president of the Virginia Amateur and Cockade. A trustee for the AFTCA’s Region 3 for 20 years, he also chairs the Nominations Committee. Reporting on many trials for the sporting dog journal *The American Field*, Ellen writes detailed first-person accounts of field trials and championships.

Most of the Mohawk Mill bird dogs are Pointers, though English Setters Mohawk Mill Jacob, 7 ½ years old, and his son, Mohawk Mill Snow Squall, 2 years old, are impressive far-ranging, stylish competitors. “Jacob” is Runner-Up Champion of this spring’s Carolina Lean Breed Amateur, a field trial well-suited for dogs capable of extreme running due to its one-hour callback. The white-and-black setter who Gary describes as being “as natural as they come” won the Region 3 Amateur All-Age Championship last December, and for the fourth year in a row has won the George Evans Top Amateur All-Age Setter Award. Meanwhile, “Snow Squall,” who is just beginning his career, won and placed in several derby-age trials this past season.

Another early mentor, the late Keith Severin, a field trial judge, secretary of the Futurities and longtime member of the Purina Top Shooting Dog Committee, a sport that Gary competed in for about 10 years, would say, “Gary develops dogs, while others train them.”



Mohawk Mill Glory, being set up by Gary, will begin field trialing this fall in derby-age competition.

Explaining the difference, Gary says, “When you develop a dog, you can see what you accomplished at the end of the day.”

Each evening, Gary can’t wait to review photos Ellen has taken of the dogs they worked that day. He studies them, analyzes them and makes plans. He loves seeing subtle accomplishments like when Image mastered backing Pirate.

Not one to linger on where he’s been or what he’s done, Gary is ready to move on. “I am always in forward motion, thinking two years down the road,” he says.



Mohawk Mill Jacob, a 7 ½-year-old male English Setter, won the Region 3 Amateur All-Age Championship last December and is a four-time winner of the George Evans Top Amateur All-Age Setter Award.

A 'TRUE BLUE' AMATEUR

Sometimes a person's name coincidentally tells something about him. Take Gary's surname of Winall (Win-All), for example. A tour of the Winall residence, particularly the upstairs trophy room filled with gold cups, platters, trophies, rosettes, and oil paintings of winning dogs, would lead you to think he definitely likes to win it all.

Ellen counters that view. "Winning doesn't matter," she says. "Gary really enjoys running the dogs."

"It is the thrill of competition, the ability to be competitive that is important to me," Gary says.

The not-so-long-ago memory of Mohawk Mill Blaze winning Runner-Up Champion at the 2011 National Amateur All-Age Invitational at Ames Plantation despite inclement ice and heavy mud on the last day is a vivid account of the glory of winning. Blaze edged to the front of the competition during 2-hour runs over the first two days and a 1-hour final run the last day.

A two-time winner of the National Amateur Quail Championship at Dixie Plantation, having won in 2011 and 2013,

Blaze consistently delivered a riveting forward performance, finding bobwhite quail with speed, range and endurance. Many said he gave one of the best performances they had ever seen at the 2013 National Amateur, which brought Ellen to tears.

Reflecting on what he loves about being an amateur competitor, Gary says, "The beautiful part is that I can choose which dogs I run. I like a good challenge, a dog that everyone else has given up on."

Mohawk Mill Last Chance, aptly named, was one such dog. A littermate to Image, the stud puppy from a litter out of Mohawk Mill Pirate and Bevy's Mean Girl, "Chance" came to Gary late and behind Image. After months of slow developing and patience, Chance now braces with elegant style and bird-finding intensity.

Sports-minded and competition savvy, Gary got his start as a wrestler in high school. His garage is filled with paraphernalia related to his sporting interests of fly and spin fishing, kayaking, canoeing, and hunting. The hunting part seems to dominate with Gary enjoying hunting ducks, doves, turkeys, grouse, woodcocks, rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, and, of course, the bobwhite quail that his bird dogs field trial over.

Gary has a breed of dog to match virtually all his hunting interests. Besides the Pointers and English Setters that he field trials, his kennel includes a Chesapeake Bay



Gary feeds [Purina Pro Plan SPORT 30/20 Performance Chicken & Rice Formula](#) to all his dogs, including puppies.

Retriever, yellow Labrador Retriever, English Cocker Spaniel, Mountain Cur, and two of the best gundog Beagle rabbit packs anywhere.

"I am fascinated by any dog sport," he says. "I went bird hunting with my uncle when I was 12 and was amazed at the way they pointed. When I was in my 20s and 30s, we hunted hard. When there were few wild birds left, I started field trialing."

In the '80s and '90s, Gary got involved in shoot-to-retrieve competitions, a walking hunting sport. He then tried amateur shooting dog trials, a horseback stake, before discovering all-age stakes.

"Shooting dogs you should be able to see from atop a horse," Gary explains. "But with all-age bird dogs, you watch them from atop a horse atop a hill and may only see the dogs one-third of the time of the stake. The rest of the time they are out of sight."

The joy of developing far-ranging, fast-paced all-age dogs begins at the Mohawk Mill Kennel in the puppy pen, where young dogs learn to lead, to come, to find game. "You want them to make mistakes because they learn from them," Gary says. "We let them tell us when they are ready to learn more."

Ellen does much of the hands-on puppy training and socializing as well as the foundation training. She patiently places young dogs on a bench to teach the "whoa" command, pushing their chins into the air to simulate the style they will need in the field.

"They become much better afield from bench training," she says. "Every part of their body is being touched. It gives them a sense of having to stand. They become polished, and I hope this transfers to pointing birds in the field."

As dogs physically mature, Gary and Ellen begin road working them to build muscles and condition them for the work they will do in trials. "It takes time to build muscles," Ellen says. "We try do resistance training every other day with bird work in between."

"We try to never let them get out of shape," adds Gary.

A true partner in the Mohawk Mill dogs, Ellen scouts for Gary during field trials. Knowing the dogs well helps when trying to scout. "I love the dogs and being outdoors," she says.



Mohawk Mill Lighthouse, a 4-year-old male Pointer, took first place at the Richmond County Amateur All-Age trial last October.

She also loves helping Gary with breeding and raising Tennessee walking horses. "When we met, I had never had a horse from a baby," she says. "We went to Kentucky and bought three yearlings, and then the next year got five more."

"The colts are a great project," Gary says. "We are expecting six this year. The quality is good. They are sensible horses with big bones and a good foundation."

Family is everything to Gary, and his family lives close. His 90-year-old mother, Frances, who still drives and loves to snow sled in winter, lives beside Gary and Ellen. Gary's sons, Jeff and Jason, who are business partners with Gary in the construction company bearing his name that he founded over 40 years ago, live across the road with their families. Most Thursday evenings in the spring and summer, they

meet for cookouts at the gazebo on Gary's place.

"We've got a great life," Gary reflects pensively.

As each day comes to an end, Gary can be found outside making one last round on a colt, checking for quail, turkeys or rabbits, or running puppies. The best part comes when he retires to the house to study Ellen's dog pictures and see what progress they accomplished that day. ■



The Winall family, shown in front of the barn that doubles as a kennel, are: front row, from left, Will with "Image," and Jordan with "Pirate"; back row, from left, Michele and Jeff, Ellen, Gary holding Mady, and Jason and Jessica.

THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER SECRETS

IN SHOWING DOGS

BY SUE VROOM

Owners who buy their first prospect show puppy from a good breeder and ultimately find their way to the dog show ring have long been the backbone of the sport. These enthusiasts have competed alongside professionals since the inception of dog shows. Getting the edge in competition is the most sought-after secret in dogs. How does one go about having an impact on a judge's decision-making process in the pursuit of a ribbon?

Winning dog shows is not entirely a Saturday and Sunday occurrence. Winning is a Monday through Friday process long before one sets foot on the show grounds. The culmination of those long hours of practice and conditioning preparation becomes the show ring result on Saturday and Sunday.

Whereas the weekly schedule of pro handlers is woven around daily coat and muscle conditioning regimens for the dogs they are being paid to oversee, the owner-handler typically has less time to devote to this process. Consequently, owner-handlers must wisely use their expendable time and resources.

Setting up a weekly routine and sticking to it is an important path to success. Devoting time on off-show days to coat and muscle conditioning specifically designed for your breed and your dog's needs is key. Training classes are useful for both the dog and owner because they provide a socialized atmosphere and the opportunity to work on ring presentation. Confidence in your dog and your ability is important. Your body language



goes a long way in conveying a message to fellow competitors and the judge. Looking and acting the part are the basic tools of the professional.

An owner-handler has the distinct advantage of knowing his or her dog intrinsically well. The professional handler must quickly assess a dog's temperamental quirks and physical characteristics and adjust accordingly. He or she often does not have the advantage of time to get to know his charge as does the owner-handler.

It helps to pick up on a judge's pattern before you go in the ring. Try to observe when and where the judge gives the most looks and where he or she puts his hands on the dog in the exam, which could indicate where the priority lies. Anticipating a judge's preferences and tendencies in the course of breed judging is useful information.

Maintaining credibility and visibility in the ring is vital to getting the edge. Credibility is conveying a confident, proficient demeanor at all times. Your actions in the ring should deliver the message that you are there to win. Visibility is the strategic use of time and space. You should focus and be ready to show your dog's best features at the optimal time during class judging. Judges quickly lose interest and patience when an exhibitor is not ready for "his moment." Two minutes of a judge's allotted time for each entry does not allow time for exhibitor mistakes in presentation.

When baiting your dog make it count. If you have a dog that is inconsistent in taking bait, stay away from using it. Nothing looks more desperate than when a judge is evaluating expression and your dog is turning away from a treat he does not want. Knowing how and when to use bait is important. Shoving a piece of liver in a dog's mouth as a judge is attempting to examine the teeth never goes well. Training the dog to stand attentively in a free stack is the best use of the bait when a judge is viewing the side silhouette.

One effective way of gaining an edge outside the ring is in becoming an active member of a kennel club. Volunteering for club offices and assisting in putting on club events give you a perspective of all sides of the sport and help you learn how all the wheels turn. It also provides another road to gaining credibility and visibility.

You should maintain a positive attitude and don't inadvertently discourage other newbies by making negative statements about judges, handlers and other participants. It does nothing for your image or how people perceive you. Keep an open eye to the prize and your own personal goals. ■

A professional all-breed handler for 32 years, Sue Vroom and her late husband, Corky Vroom, won hundreds of Bests in Show during their career. Vroom, of Shady Shores, Texas, works as an Executive Field Representative for the American Kennel Club. For information, contact Vroom by email at suevroom@centurytel.com.



TIPS FOR OWNER-HANDLERS FROM A PRO

- » **Take advantage of training classes**, as they provide opportunities for socialization and practicing ring presentation.
- » **Set a weekly routine** for coat and muscle conditioning and stick to it. Remember winning a dog show is the result of the effort you put in Monday to Friday.
- » **When showing, remember to convey a confident demeanor** at all times and be ready to show your dog's best features at the optimal time.
- » **Make baiting count** by training a dog to stack attentively in a free stack when a judge views the side silhouette.

Circle of Champions

'JANA' SETS BEST IN SHOW RECORD FOR SMOOTH DACHSHUND BITCHES



A Smooth Dachshund called “Jana” captured her sixth Best in Show in April, making the 2-year-old the top Best in Show winning Smooth bitch in breed history. Despite limited showing, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Passport’s What Did You Say SS finished her championship title at 11 months old, and then went on to win her first Best in Show two months later. With a glossy red coat and black overlay, Jana is reminiscent of her dam, GCH Passport’s Prelude to a Kiss SS ROMO, says breeder-owner-handler Arvind De Braganca of Bell, Florida. “Jana has beautiful curves, a fluid gait and an easygoing personality,” he says. Co-bred by De Braganca and his wife, Joyce, Jana is co-owned by the couple and Gavin Reep of Asheville, North Carolina. The No. 1 Smooth Dachshund is fueled by [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula](#).

The No. 1 Smooth Dachshund in the country, “Jana” has beautiful curves and an easy, smooth gait.

POINTER NAMED 'PATCH' IS THE 2016 NATIONAL CHAMPION

A pleasing, determined and seemingly tireless 3-year-old Pointer called “Patch” commanded the field with eight finds to win the National Championship for Field Trialing Bird Dogs in February in Grand Junction, Tennessee. Whippoorwill Justified consistently stayed to the front of handler Larry Huffman of Michigan City, Mississippi. “Patch finished the three-hour horseback stake as strongly as he started. He caught the judge’s eye with his smooth, flowing gait and his precise pointing ability,” says Huffman, a three-time winner of the esteemed event. His previous winners were Whippoorwill Wild Card in 1999 and Whippoorwill Wild Agin, Patch’s sire, in 2008. Bred by Bob Walthall of Thomasville, Georgia, and owned by Ronnie Spears of Jacksonville, Arkansas, the white-and-liver male male is powered by [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Formula](#).

“Patch” flawlessly came up with eight bird finds to win the National Championship.

PHOTO: JAMIE EVANS, AMES PLANTATION





MID-AMERICA BRITTANY CHAMPION IS STYLISH, STEADY 'KATE'

Balancing high energy with excellent steadiness to wing and shot, a far-ranging white-and-orange Brittany named “Kate” won the Mid-America Brittany Championship with pizzazz this past April in Raymond, Nebraska. FC Sniksoh Little Diamond worked smoothly with pro handler Jimmy Johnson of Ravenna, Ohio, completing the hourlong stake with three finds to top the competitive 43-dog field. “Kate is snappy and stylish. She grabs the gallery’s attention as well as the judges,” says Tom Wonderling, who owns the 4-year-old female with his wife, Jane, of Pulaski, Wisconsin. Bred by Bill and Julie Cockrum of Glenwood, Iowa, Kate was trained by Bob Burchett of Grovespring, Missouri. She is fueled by [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula](#).

“Kate” excelled with her natural ability to win the Mid-America Brittany Championship.

'PEPÉ' EXCELS AS MOST VERSATILE SALUKI OF ALL TIME

The most versatile Saluki of all time, “Pepé,” a 7-year-old gold male, has proved to be extraordinary. Handled by owner Caroline Coile of Live Oak, Florida, NSBIS/BIS/Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Baha Persian Of Interest CD FCh RN SC OA MXJ NF VSX is the first Saluki to excel in all four triathlon sports — conformation, lure coursing, obedience, and agility. Among his Saluki Club of America National Specialty wins, Pepé took Best of Breed in 2013, Best in Triathlon and High in Trial Obedience in 2012, and Best in Futurity and High in Trial Agility only hours apart in 2010. The highly motivated sighthound also has earned three Bests in Field in lure coursing. “Pepé has surpassed my wildest dreams,” says Coile, a Saluki owner and breeder for 41 years. Bred by Margaret Ferrando of Lauderhill, Florida, and Patsy Hoy of Creamery, Pennsylvania, Pepé is fed [Purina Pro Plan BRIGHT MIND Adult 7+ Chicken & Rice Formula](#).

A multitalented Saluki, “Pepé” has mastered the sports of conformation, lure coursing, obedience, and agility.



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 Pro Plan*.

PURINA AWARDS OUTSTANDING LABRADOR RETRIEVERS

BY KAYLA MILLER

The top field trial retrievers were steady on the line and consistently on the mark as they powered through field trials across the country this past year. Exuding confidence, grace and style, three Labrador Retrievers were rightfully named the 2015 Purina Outstanding Retriever Award winners.

“Bullet” snagged his second consecutive Purina Outstanding Open Retriever Award, having earned 52 points and won eight Open stakes. NFC-AFC Robbers’ Stray Bullet’s achievement gave handler Alan Pleasant of Black River Retrievers in Angier, North Carolina, his third Purina Award, having also won in 2014 with Bullet and in 2013 with “Cane” (FC-AFC Ragin Eye Of The Storm). “Bullet is a consistent, exceptional marker and a total team player,” Pleasant says of the 8-year-old male, bred by Dan Hurst of Bullard, Texas, and owned by Hank McNeil of Philadelphia.

“Tubb,” an impressive, eager-to-please 7-year-old male, bagged 36 points to clinch the Purina Outstanding Amateur Retriever Award. Bred by Ken and Brenda Neil of Jupiter, Florida, NAFC-FC Texas Troubador is owned by John and Martha Russell of Gainesville, Texas. “Over the

Left: NAFC-FC Texas Troubador, the Purina Outstanding Amateur Retriever

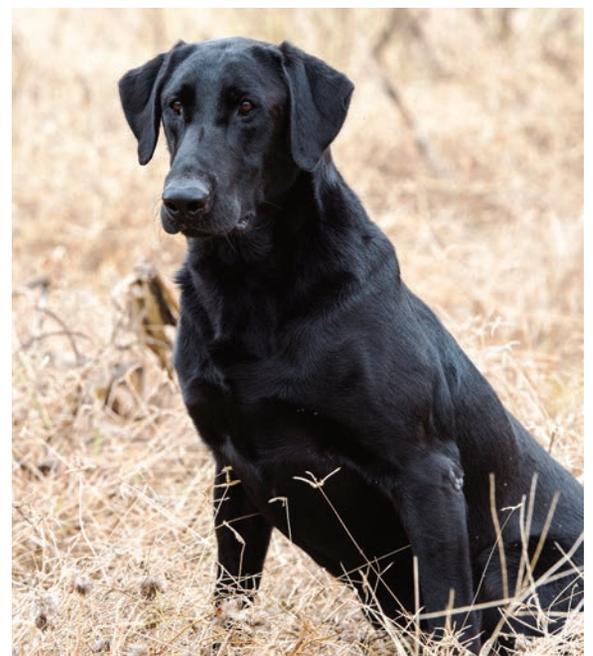
Right: Seaside’s Gorgeous George, the Purina Outstanding Derby Retriever



NFC-AFC Robbers’ Stray Bullet, the Purina Outstanding Open Retriever

years, I’ve admired the top dogs hoping someday we could accomplish such a feat of winning the Purina Award,” says Martha Russell, Tubb’s handler. “With work, determination and support, we’ve done it.”

“Clooney” charged through 30 Derby stakes to earn 62 points and capture the Purina Outstanding Derby Retriever Award. Seaside’s Gorgeous George, owned by breeders Frank and Rita Jones of Vernon, Florida, and trained in part by Jason Baker of Baker Retrievers in Lincolnton, Georgia, rounded out his Derby career with 75 points and 10 wins. Rita Jones, who handles the 2 ½-year-old male, says, “Clooney is an excellent marker and a powerhouse in the water. He’s a focused, ferocious competitor in the field and a true gentleman at home.” ■



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Westminster Best in Show

Shorthair Named 'CJ' Wins Westminster with Purpose-Bred Performance

Taking smooth, balanced strides around the spacious green-carpeted ring at Madison Square Garden in New York, "CJ," a sleek, well-muscled German Shorthaired Pointer, beautifully depicted the powerful athleticism of the versatile hunting breed. The judge, Dr. Richard Meen, admired the striking per-

formance, seeing a Shorthair bred true to purpose, and gave him [Best in Show at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show](#).

Having just begun his Specials career after limited showing in 2015, CJ (GCH Vjk-Myst Garbonita's California Journey) became the third German Shorthaired Pointer to win the prestigious show. The 3-year-old liver-and-white ticked male is related to both previous winners. His granddam, "Carlee" (CH Kan-Point's VJK Autumn Roses), won in 2005, and a distant relative, "Traveler" (CH Gretchenhof Columbia River), won in 1974.

Breeder-owner-handler Valerie Nunes-Atkinson, of Temecula, California, embraced the joy of winning. "I've dreamt of this since I was a girl," said the 1981 Westminster Best Junior Handler. "I knew when CJ was 6 weeks old that he was special. He is an old soul who takes his job seriously."

Capturing his career 18th Best in Show at the Garden, CJ counts among his spotlight wins back-to-back Bests in Show at the 2015 Santa Barbara Kennel Club Dog Show. A preview of greatness to come, he won Best in Futurity at the 2014 German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America National Specialty.

Co-bred by Anita Weiss of Mohave Valley, Arizona, and Alice Manning of Long Beach, California, CJ is co-owned by Manning, Mark and Laurie Ulrich of Sawyer, Michigan, and Yvonne Hessler-Detering of Phelan, California. Fueled by [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula](#), CJ is the 10th straight Westminster Best in Show winner fueled by [Purina Pro Plan](#). The Reserve Best in Show winner, the Borzoi "Lucy" (CH Belisarius Jp My Sassy Girl), as well as the other Group First winners also are fed [Purina Pro Plan](#). ■



Breeder-owner-handler Valerie Nunes-Atkinson takes GCH Vjk-Myst Gardonita's California Journey around the ring during Best in Show judging at the Garden.