

# TODAY'S BREEDER

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

Issue 96



BREEDING WITH PASSION

**VJK-MYST German Shorthairs**

- BIRD DOG BOOT CAMP
- NATIONAL PARENT CLUB CONFERENCE
- BUILDING CANINE STAMINA

# BORDER COLLIES HEED COMMANDS AT BCSA NATIONAL TRIAL

BY MARGARETT WOLF

With fixed, steely stares, Border Collies athletically maneuvered ducks and sheep to earn points toward titles at the Border Collie Society of America (BCSA) National Specialty Herding Trial held at Purina Farms in Gray Summit, Missouri. The early September sun crept over the horizon as the cool morning gave way to a hot, humid afternoon, which didn't seem to hinder the energetic and disciplined breed that controlled the livestock with endless moxie.

Over three days, 438 Border Collies from 23 states, nearly 200 more entries than last year, some as young as 9 months old, were judged on how well they worked stock under a handler's commands. "Herding trials are an intensely competitive sport in which the handler and dog must be in sync," says herding trial judge Jan Wesen of Bow, Washington. "This team sport judges how a dog obeys the handler's commands to control the livestock through the course. Of the 41 breeds eligible to compete in herding trials, Border Collies make it look the easiest."

The BCSA herding trial challenged the dog-handler teams as they moved ducks and sheep in started, intermediate and advanced classes on the fenced A course and the open B course. With only 10 minutes allowed, handlers shouted commands or used hand signals, depending on the class, to initiate the dogs' work gathering the stock into a group and the lift, or movement, toward the fetch, or handler. Along the way, each course had obstacles — gates, chutes and pens — that had to be performed in a specific order and manner.

Above: "Mickey" (HC Sun Mtn's PSR Red Dawn-A-Rising) controls sheep in the A course under handler Dawna Sim's commands. The 7-year-old red tricolor male, owned by Tom and Nancy Tierney of Phoenix, placed fifth in the advanced class on the first day of the trial.

Right: "Dirk" (HC XPS Dirk CD) begins a shed maneuver in the B course of the herding trial. Owner-handler J. Wade Campbell of Richardson, Texas, led the 4-year-old male to first place in the advanced class.

"Herding taps into the primal drive of a Border Collie. They are born to work, but knowing how to properly harness their drive and off switch requires a dedicated handler and total cooperation from both sides," says BCSA herding trial secretary Lisa Pruka of Rockton, Illinois. On day two of the trial, Pruka handled her 8-year-old black tricolor male, Czechmate Charismatic CD RN HSAd HSBd HIAd NAJ, to finish the HIAd (Herding Intermediate Course A Ducks) title.

"There is no perfect run," says Purina Farms site coordinator Diane Bettis, a 10-year veteran of herding trials. "There are many components involved in doing well in this sport. Competing is a humbling experience that truly tests you and your dog's ability and relationship. But, that's the fun part and why we do it." ■



Located about one hour from St. Louis in Gray Summit, Missouri, Purina Farms is home to the Purina Event Center and outdoor fields used for herding, lure coursing, earthdog trials, and outdoor dog shows. For information, please contact Kaitie Flamm, Purina Farms Senior Manager of Programming, at 888-688-PETS (888-688-7387) or by email at [kaitie.flamm@purina.nestle.com](mailto:kaitie.flamm@purina.nestle.com).

## 4 STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING CANINE STAMINA

An exercise challenge study conducted at the Penn Vet Working Dog Center in partnership with Purina scientists provides insights into better understanding the effect of the environment on a working dog's stamina.

## 6 VJK-MYST'S SUPERSTAR GERMAN SHORTHAIRES

Valerie Nunes-Atkinson of Temecula, California, fell in love with German Shorthaired Pointers as a girl and dreamed of breeding a Westminster Best in Show winner. It was a fast track for "CJ," her German Shorthair who won the prestigious show in 2016 as a 3-year-old.

## 12 SHARING DISCOVERIES

The 2017 AKC (American Kennel Club) Canine Health Foundation National Parent Club Canine Health Conference sponsored by Purina featured top canine health and genetic researchers presenting their latest findings.

## 14 BIRD DOG BOOT CAMP ON THE NORTHERN PRAIRIE

Every summer, pro bird dog trainer Randy Anderson of Cross Country Kennels in Vinita, Oklahoma, and his team travel north almost to the Canadian border with their Tennessee Walking horses and pointing dogs. This is where their dreams of field trial success start to become a reality.

## DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Purina Farms
- 20 Circle of Champions
- 22 Sporting Spotlight
- 24 Breed Snapshot

## ON THE COVER

Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH VJK-MYST Garbonita's California Journey CGC ("CJ"), a 4 ½-year-old German Shorthaired Pointer was handled to his 2016 Westminster Best in Show by breeder-owner Valerie Nunes-Atkinson of Temecula, California. Cover photo by Diane Lewis. See story on page 6.

## THIS PAGE

RU CH Pawnbrokers Royal Flush is a male Pointer in summer training on the northern prairies with trainers Randy Anderson of Cross Country Kennels in Vinita, Oklahoma, and Jeremy Gulick of White Oak Kennels in Miller, Missouri. See story on page 14.



### Today's Breeder Advisory Board

**Gianna DeiSanti**, Brand Director, Breeder-Enthusiast Marketing

**Sherry Bresnahan**, Senior Marketing Manager, Breeder-Enthusiast Marketing

**Christina Schneider**, Marketing Manager, Breeder-Enthusiast Marketing

**Scott Smith**, Managing Director of Field Operations

**Ann Viklund**, Director of Conformation

**Connie Wagner**, Senior Area Manager (Southeast), Conformation

**Carol Grossman**, Western Area Manager, Conformation

**Annie Balotti**, Area Manager, Purina Event Center

**Marci Sale**, Plains Area Manager, Conformation

**Corey Benedict**, Northeast Area Manager, Conformation

**Diana Allen**, Field Representative, Conformation

**Heidi Kellerman**, Field Representative, Conformation

**Karl Gunzer**, Senior Manager, Sporting Group

**Rod L. Carter**, Area Manager, Sporting

**Dean Reinke**, Area Manager, Sporting

**Greg L. Blair**, Area Manager, Sporting

**Mark Cascio**, Area Manager, Sporting

**Kaite Flamm**, Senior Manager of Programming, Purina Farms

*Today's Breeder* is produced and published by Nestlé Purina Public Relations.

**Keith Schopp**, Vice President

**Barbara Fawver**, Editor, *Today's Breeder*

**Kayla Miller**, Senior Writer, *Today's Breeder*

**Margarett Wolf**, Senior Writer, *Today's Breeder*

*Today's Breeder* is sent as a courtesy to members of *Purina Pro Club*. Articles may be reprinted if the following credit is included: Used with permission from *Today's Breeder*, Nestlé Purina PetCare Company.

Trademarks owned by Société des Produits Nestlé S.A., Vevey, Switzerland.

© 2017 Nestlé Purina PetCare Company

Please note that the handlers or owners of dogs featured in *Today's Breeder* may have received *Purina Pro Plan* dog food as a Purina ambassador.



**PRO PLAN**

Visit *Today's Breeder* on the Purina Pro Club website ([purinaproclub.com](http://purinaproclub.com))



# STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING CANINE STAMINA

Building stamina in a performance dog is often relative to success. Dogs with higher stamina go faster, last longer. To better understand the impact of the environment on a working dog's stamina, researchers at the Penn Vet Working Dog Center at the University of Pennsylvania

partnered with Purina scientists to conduct an exercise challenge. The center develops dogs for K-9 service roles, such as drug detection, police work, explosives detection, and cancer detection.

Twelve detection dogs, including six Labrador Retrievers, three German Shepherd Dogs, a German Wirehaired Pointer, a Dutch Shepherd, and an English Springer Spaniel, participated in the study. The exercise challenge involved tracking human scent through rubble piles, maneuvering an agility course and vigorously retrieving balls. Conditioned for at least one month before the challenge to exercises of similar type and duration, the dogs, who live with foster families and train daily at the center, were used to working hard in warm temperatures.

"Although we know that exercise, conditioning and physical fitness are important, we don't fully understand the factors limiting canine stamina," says Cynthia Otto, DVM, PhD, DACVECC, DACVSMR, Director of the Penn Vet Working Dog Center. "Our hypothesis was that canine stamina is



## 30-MINUTE EXERCISE CHALLENGE

Twelve healthy, fit detection dogs used to working regularly took a 30-minute exercise challenge designed to evaluate the effect of warm temperatures on their stamina and performance.

The outdoor testing was done in the summer when temperatures averaged 83.7 degrees Fahrenheit and the humidity averaged 49.6 percent. Note that all dogs participated in a pre-exercise warm-up of trotting followed by active stretching and a post-exercise cool-down of light trotting or quick walking. Here is what they did:

- **5 MINUTES:** Search work involving locating and alerting on one to three hidden human scent sources in a rubble pile
- **5 MINUTES:** Rest in the shade
- **5 MINUTES:** Agility including climbing elevated vertical and horizontal ladders, walking over unstable surfaces, cavalettis, directed tunnels at a controlled pace, and directional distance exercises
- **5 MINUTES:** Rest in the shade
- **10 MINUTES:** Ball retrieving

primarily limited by environmental temperature and humidity.”

Funded by Purina and published in *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* in September 2017, the study evaluated the dogs before and after exercise and measured their pulse rate; core body temperature; blood lactate acid, an indicator of insufficient blood oxygen due to anaerobic metabolism; and venous blood gases, including carbon dioxide and oxygen. The findings showed that a dog’s respiratory efficiency, or the ability to eliminate heat, was a major factor influencing stamina.

“Temperature regulation is primarily a function of respiratory exchange associated with evaporative heat loss,” explains Dr. Otto. “The combination of exercise and limited evaporative cooling through panting can lead to hyperthermia and an increased heart rate. When these changes are beyond a dog’s physical capacity or conditioning, the dog’s ability to work for prolonged duration is limited and frequent rest periods are required.”

Most surprising, the study showed that core body temperature does not influence stamina. “A few dogs briefly had temps as high as 108.3 degrees Fahrenheit after exercise,” Dr. Otto says. “A normal temperature is 100 to 102.5 degrees, and anything above 105 degrees historically has been considered to be heat stroke or heat injury. These dogs were regularly trained to work in a hot environment, thus their temps recovered rapidly without intervention and no dogs showed signs of heat stress or heat injury.”

The bottom line to the study’s findings is that outdoor temperature — not humidity — is the

## NUTRITION’S ROLE IN BODY THERMOREGULATION

The connection between a dog’s diet and the ability to exercise or work in warm, humid weather is more than coincidental. Canine diets that are high in fat and low in carbohydrate effectively help to increase stamina by contributing water for energy via fat metabolism.

Purina Senior Research Nutritionist Brian Zanghi, PhD, explains, “Dogs get a majority of their energy from fat oxidation during exercise. A byproduct of fat metabolism is water, which helps to reduce heat storage and support thermoregulation. Comparatively, protein and carbohydrate each produce about 55 grams of water per 100 grams burned, yet fat produces 107 grams of water every 100 grams of fat burned.”

The working canines in the exercise challenge were fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Formula* (30-percent protein/20-percent fat) or *Purina Pro Plan FOCUS Sensitive Skin & Stomach Salmon & Rice Formula* (26-percent protein/16-percent fat). Ranging in age from 7 months to 3 ½ years old, the dogs were fed two or three times a day.

Dr. Zanghi, who determined the amount of food each dog should be fed based on its age and body condition, says, “The idea is to train a dog’s metabolism to use fat as an energy source as this may actually benefit the dog’s hydration status and thus benefit its thermoregulation capability when working in warm ambient temperatures.”



key variable inversely related to predicting stamina in dogs. “Humidity did not have an impact on stamina, at least when the average outdoor temperature was below 85 degrees Fahrenheit,” says Dr. Otto. “As we develop strategies to enhance stamina, we need to consider how metabolic changes associated with intense exercise in high temperatures limit stamina.” ■

## HOW EXERCISE WARM-UPS AND COOL-DOWNS AFFECT STAMINA

Results from the exercise challenge showed that dogs with higher pre- and post-exercise activity had higher stamina during the challenge exercises. Those that trotted longer and more intensely fared better than those with shorter, less-intense bouts.

As noted in the published study, a fundamental, yet often overlooked, part of exercise training of working dogs is a pre-exercise warm-up and post-exercise cool-down. The warm-up mildly increases the ambient temperature of muscles and joints and lubricates the fascia, the fibrous tissue around muscle, to reduce the risk of injury and susceptibility to trauma and to allow for greater stretching.

Similarly, post-exercise activity of low intensity helps to ensure the blood continues to circulate from the muscles to wash out the waste products of metabolism. “More research is needed to clarify the impact of warm-up and cool-down on stamina,” Dr. Otto says. “It is highly likely that they may lead to fewer injuries and less medical interventions for dogs during strenuous exercise.”



VJK-MYST's

# SUPERSTAR GERMAN SHORTHAIRES

BY BARBARA FAWVER



Swept away in the thrill of winning Best in Show at the 2016 Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show with “CJ” (Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH VJK-MYST Garbonita’s California Journey CGC), her 3-year-old liver-and-white ticked male German Shorthaired Pointer, Valerie Nunes-Atkinson fell to her knees, bowed her head and leaned into the dog.

A dream since she was 10 years old came true that night at Madison Square Garden.

"It was surreal," says the Temecula, California, professional handler and breeder-owner-handler of VJK-MYST German Shorthaired Pointers. As she tells the story a year and a half later sitting on her living room sofa, CJ and his Whippet pal, "Apollo" (VJK-MYST The Sun Master of Winway), are in the backyard soaking in the warm September sunshine after their daily chase game. The dog she likens to an "old soul," who did everything right from the start, is in fitting form, as sleek and well-muscled as the night he won in New York.

Getting goose bumps as Valerie's words spin a tale of fate and serendipity, one can't help but feel that sometimes things are simply meant to be. As most in the dog fancy know, it is virtually impossible to predict who will win arguably the most prestigious dog show in the country, which adds to the dramatic suspense of Westminster. So it was in 2016.

The first dog in the lineup was the German Shepherd Dog, "Rumor," the No. 1 all-breed dog in the country in 2015. Next were Valerie and CJ, a Specials newcomer who had earned 17 Bests in Show with limited showing.

Announcing his pick, judge Dr. Richard Meen said, "The Best in Show winner tonight in 2016 is the German Sh--."

The rest is history.

## A LINK TO TOP WINNERS

The third German Shorthaired Pointer to win a Westminster Best in Show, CJ's ties to the previous winners were genetic. Valerie's ties were life-changing.

When "Traveler" (CH Gretchenhof Columbia River), a distant relative of CJ, won Westminster in 1974, Valerie was a 10-year-old tomboy who loved to tag along with her father when he trained his Von Jango GSP field trial dogs. She had just begun junior showmanship and was captivated by a *Sports Illustrated* feature on Traveler.

"Shorthairs were my favorite breed. I wanted to breed beautiful Shorthairs," she says.

Traveler, who was bred from a dual-purpose show and field line, was handled by his breeder, Jo Shellenbarger, a professional handler, of Costa Mesa, California. Valerie frequently saw Shellenbarger at shows in Southern California. Although

Traveler was retired, Shellenbarger usually brought him with the dogs she was showing.

"Traveler was a superstar to me," Valerie says. "I would walk back and forth to look at him. One day, Jo was sitting beside her van, and Traveler was in an ex-pen nearby. She saw me scratch his cheek through the ex-pen and said, 'Would you like to take him for a walk?'"

Like a sponge wanting to learn all she could, Valerie later joined the hospitality committee of the Shoreline Dog Fanciers

Association of Orange County (California) chaired by Shellenbarger to get to know her better. Both were founding members of the club.

Through the years, "I would ask Jo to help me evaluate pedigrees to determine which lines had strong producers," says Valerie.

In 2005, "Carlee" (Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS CH Kan-Point's VJK Autumn Roses), CJ's granddam, was the second GSP to win Best in Show. An owner on Carlee though she did not show her at the Garden, Valerie picked the bitch puppy from the litter bred by Lucretia Coonrod and handled the dog for eight months in 2002, taking eight Bests in Show and Best of Breed at the German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America (GSPCA) National Specialty.

Stamped in Valerie's memory is the Best in Show they took at the Waukesha (Wisconsin) Kennel Club show. "Frank Sabella was judging," she recalls. "We were doing the down and back, and someone in the lineup squeaked a toy that caught Carlee's attention. I threw

the toy in my hand over my back and out of the ring. She landed in an amazing free stack. This was one of my best-ever Bests in Show. We topped 3,500 dogs that day. It took me to a new level."

The connection to Carlee led to Valerie getting a puppy out of her, CH Star K's Mile Hi Carlos Stardust ("Carlos"), the sire of CJ's litter. The prominence of CJ's pedigree, particularly a male who runs through it 25 times, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS CH Minado's Parade Drum Major HOF ROMXX ("Toby"), is noteworthy. CJ's great-grand sire and Carlee's sire, Toby was Valerie's second Best in Show winner, having won 13 Bests in Show.

The No. 1 GSP in all systems in 1995, 1996 and 1997, Toby won the GSPCA National in 1998. The sire of 111 champions, he was



Valerie Nunes-Atkinson takes "CJ" (Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH VJK-MYST Garbonita's California Journey) around the ring during Best in Show judging at the 2016 Westminster show. Left: CJ, pictured today, is in prime condition. Valerie plans to resume showing him in 2018 after a year off, as they work to top an all-time breed record of 49 Bests in Show.



CJ and fellow house dog “Apollo” (VJK-MYST The Sun Master of Winway), a 1-year-old Whippet, enjoy their morning chase. Valerie and her VJK-MYST co-breeder Yvonne Hassler-Deterding say the outgoing breeds complement each other in temperament and athleticism.

the GSPCA Stud Dog (show) of the Year for five years and the GSPCA Hunt Test Sire of the Year in 1999. When Toby was 10 years old, Valerie showed him to a Sporting Group Third at Westminster. In preparation, she showed him at the Del Valle Dog Club (Livermore, California) cluster, where he took four Sporting Group Firsts and won both Shorthair regional specialties.

“Toby was the last pick of six males out of a large litter of 12, yet he ended up being the top-producing sire in the breed,” says Valerie. “He was the rare male who could reproduce himself with any female. He was a stallion who could move, and he had a major ‘it’ factor in the ring.”

Their magnetism was undeniable. Owner Barbara Caron signed Valerie on as a co-owner of Toby, and he lived out his life as her house dog, passing away at the age of 14 ½.

### THE ONE THAT STOOD OUT

CJ’s journey began when Valerie claimed him at the puppy party for his litter at 6 weeks of age. As a breeder, Valerie prefers to keep bitches to dogs, but she was adamant about keeping CJ. “I have to take this dog,” she recalls saying. “I couldn’t believe I did that.”

She had planned on taking “Epic” (CH VJK-MYST Garbonita’s Epic Journey SH), but switched at the last second. Instead, Epic went to co-breeder

Alice Manning of Riverside, California. A beautiful bitch, Epic won Winners Bitch at the 2014 GSPCA National.

Intuitively guided by a handler’s eye and a breeder’s passion, Valerie says, “I knew CJ was special because my eye always went to him. He is the one who stood out, a beautiful mover even at that young age.”

When training began, a willful CJ resisted Valerie’s hand stacking by roaching his back and stiffening his legs. “It was as though he was saying, ‘I can do it better my own way,’” she says. “If I let him free stack, he would do it the right way. He dictated to me how he would be shown, and I was bright enough to listen.”

Although CJ was born some 20 years after Toby, he reminds Valerie of his great-grand sire over and over again. A preview of greatness to come, at 7 months old, CJ took Best of Breed at the Del Valle Dog Club show, with judge David Flanagan putting him up over 25 Specials from the Bred-By-Exhibitor class. At 9 months, he won Best in Sweepstakes and Best of Breed from the Bred-By-Exhibitor class at the GSPCA Regional Specialty in Orlando, Florida, the day before the AKC National Championship.

At 12 months, CJ finished his championship, winning Best of Breed from the Bred-By-Exhibitor class at Westminster under judge James Covey.

At 15 months, he took a special honor, winning the Best Bred-By-Exhibitor competition at the AKC National Championship. At 16 months, CJ won Best in Futurity and Best in Sweepstakes at the GSPCA National.

Although only shown for a total of six months in 2015, CJ capped off the year as the No. 1 German Shorthaired Pointer in all systems and the No. 3 Sporting dog. Among the wins, he took back-to-back Bests in Show at the Santa Barbara Kennel Club Dog Show and Reserve Best in Show at Morris & Essex.

"A good dog will be found by the right people," Valerie says. "I truly believe in my heart if you have a great dog, he will be found by respected judges."

## SHORTHAIRES BRED FOR FIELD TRIALS

The only daughter of Chuck and Emily Nunes, Valerie fell in love with dogs as a young girl. Her father, an avid hunter, bought his first GSP, Val's Heidi Von Schmoldt, from a hobby breeder to be his personal gun dog. Through chance, he began training with people who introduced him to competition field trials.

"Heidi' was linebred from good hunting stock," Valerie says. "My father bred Heidi to a National Field Champion (FC-NFC Blick's Von Shinback HOF), who gave us our first homebred show champion, 'Schotzie' (CH Schotzie Von Jango)."

Dave and Donna Gilliam bought Schotzie from Valerie's father, and after seeing Valerie with the dogs, invited her to go with them to a dog show. "I showed their dog Schotzie in juniors at my first show ever and placed second," Valerie says.

"Heidi is behind almost everything I've shown in pedigree, and she was the GSPCA Top Dual-Producing Dam of the year in 1977," Valerie says.

Chuck Nunes began Von Jango GSPs in 1971. Although he only bred three litters, the influence of those dogs can be seen in pedigrees throughout the world.

Among the early mentors who influenced Valerie was GSP breeder Marilyn Stockland of Marilee GSPs. "I met Marilyn at a Fun Day held by the Southern California German Shorthaired Pointer Club," she says. "Marilyn started taking me to shows and taught me how to show and breed."

At age 14, Valerie bred her first Shorthair litter combining her father's hunting line with Stockland's classic Shorthair show line. With help from Stockland, Valerie took over her father's bloodline at age 16, turning the focus from field trial dogs to top-winning show dogs that also earned hunt test and natural ability titles. She consolidated Von Jango GSPs to VJK (Von Jango Kennels).

When Valerie began competing in junior showmanship, with her mother as her chauffeur, they traveled to shows in Southern California. "My mom was there my whole career," Valerie says. "I would be fast asleep, and she would be driving us to shows."

Valerie's finesse handling dogs took her to the top as the 1981 Westminster Best Junior Handler, showing the No. 1 Shorthair in the country, "Ivanhoe" (CH Donavin's Sir Ivanhoe). It was a last-minute change in dogs when her own, Valkyrie Von Drake, came up lame the day they were to show.



Valerie and her assistant, Antonio Vidmar, are shown with, from left: CJ, "Lucy" (GCH Belisarius JP My Sassy Girl), the No. 1 Hound in 2017 and all-time top-winning Borzoi; "Glitter" (GCH Windrock Long May You Run CGC), the No. 5 Greyhound; "Quinn" (GCH T-Town N' Coldwater's Liv'N It Up JH), the No. 4 GSP; and "Covergirl" (GCH Denmar's Easy-Breezy Covergirl), the No. 7 Doberman Pinscher.

Pro handlers Ric and Nancy Byrd, for whom Valerie was working, had brought her to New York. They were showing Ivanhoe for the Gilliams. “Seeing my dog lame, Dave Gilliam offered Ivanhoe to me to show in juniors. I bought co-ownership for \$1 to meet the eligibility requirement,” Valerie says.

“I had never shown Ivanhoe before that day. We made the cut for finals, and then went on to win Best Junior. It was a great win. I started in juniors with the pup the Gilliams bought from my dad’s first litter and ended my juniors’ career eight years later with a dog they bred.”

During college, Valerie worked for terrier handler Maripi Wooldridge, who won a Westminster Best in Show in 1995 with the Scottish Terrier, CH Gaelforce Post Script (“Peggy Sue”). After earning a degree in journalism from San Diego State University, Valerie realized she had reached a turning point. “I sat down with my parents and told them my degree had not gone to waste, but being a dog handler was what I wanted to do,” she says.

“My stepdad (Richard ‘Dick’ Ehrenfeld) said, ‘If you can find a passion and make it your job, you’ll never work a day in your life,’” she recalls.

Valerie snuggles a 7-week-old puppy sired by “Sherman” (CH Edelmarke Second Coming JH) out of “Epic” (CH VJK-MYST Garbonita’s Epic Journey SH). The VJK-MYST team was recognized in 2014 by the American Kennel Club as the Sporting Breeders of the Year.



## THE VJK-MYST PARTNERSHIP

True to her beginning, Valerie found a co-breeder and partner in Yvonne Hassler-Deterding of MYST Shorthairs in Phelan, California, another Shorthair loyalist who had started out with dogs from Stockland. Their friendship grew after Stockland passed away in 2001.

They share a vision of breeding Shorthairs that are beautiful to look at and have hunting instincts. “The breed was bred to hunt all day, and my dad’s dogs would do this,” Valerie says. “Our style is infused with type and conformation, which produces proper movement. We breed for companion animals first that have excellent health and temperament.”

CJ’s litter sired by Carlos was out of CH VJK-MYST Garbonita’s True Bliss SH NA II, a bitch owned by Anita Weiss of Garbonita Shorthairs in Mohave Valley, Arizona, who raised the litter at her home. Valerie, Weiss and Manning were co-breeders. Co-owners of CJ are Valerie, Manning, Mark and Laurie Ulrich of Sawyer, Michigan, and Hassler-Deterding.

A small breeding program that produces about one Shorthair litter a year, the VJK-MYST breeders strive to be objective in their breeding decisions. “We use a combination of inbreeding, linebreeding and outcrossing,” says Valerie. “Breeding is hard. I absolutely thrive on trying to figure out what will produce. Generation by generation, each one carries on, bringing us to new heights.”

The partnership works well with Hassler-Deterding overseeing the breeding, whelping and raising of litters, and Valerie handling the training and showing of dogs. In recent years, they have been breeding top-winning Whippets under the Winway prefix of Valerie’s longtime client, Dr. Suzi Fosnot of Los Angeles. GSPs and Whippets exercise and get along well together.

An important part of the successful program is Briarcliff Pet Resort, a commercial boarding kennel in Menifee, California, that Valerie bought in 2007. A section of the kennel, which sits on 20 acres, is devoted to the show dogs. Her assistant for the past six years, Antonio Vidmar, lives on the grounds and is responsible for their care.

Conditioning is customized for individual dogs. “Free running is my first choice for exercising the dogs,” says Valerie. “Some, such as ‘Lucy’ (GCH Belisarius JP My Sassy Girl), the Borzoi who took Reserve Best in Show to CJ in 2016 and was the

No. 1 all-breed dog in Japan in 2015, loves her free run, but we also condition her running alongside a bike. We use a treadmill and have a swimming pool that works really well for giant breeds and other breeds as well.”

Quality nutrition is essential. “If you want the best, you have to feed a high-quality food,” she continues. “We feed *Purina Pro Plan* because the different formulas allow us to tailor what is needed for each dog. For example, high-energy breeds, such as the Shorthairs, Rhodesian Ridgebacks and Whippets, are fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Formula. Lucy and some of the other dogs get a mixture of Performance and *Purina Pro Plan SAVOR* Shredded Blend Chicken & Rice Formula.”

VJK-MYST has stacked up impressive awards honoring their endeavors. In 2014, they were named the American Kennel Club Sporting Breeders of the Year, and in 2015, they won the Santa Barbara Kennel Club’s Breeder’s Showcase with CJ and his half-brother, “Rhett” (AM CH/ENG SH VJK-MYST Goes Like the Wind). In 2016, they received the North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association’s Breeder Award for breeding a litter that produced four dogs to earn qualifying scores in hunting, water retrieving and tracking by 16 months of age.

“Our goal is to always breed quality dogs,” Valerie says. “We want to make an impact on the breed in the U.S. and worldwide. Yvonne and I



love to share our best dogs with people all over the world.”

Their dogs have brought new blood to GSP lines in Australia, Japan and England. A prominent U.K. breeder, Sue Harris of Barleyarch, did particularly well with “Sterling” (AM CH/ENG SC VJK-MYST Sterling of Barleyarch), the second GSP from the U.S. to become an English show champion, and Rhett, the third, who has earned 19 CCs (Challenge Certificates). “This makes us very proud of our breeding program,” Valerie says.

For CJ, her top-winning Shorthair, there is some unfinished business, as they chase the all-time breed record of 49 Bests in Show set in the 1980s. Currently, he has won 43 Bests in Show, though CJ was not shown in 2017 while Valerie focused on campaigning Lucy. CJ is undoubtedly the answer to Valerie’s dreams and a dog who gave his all because she believed in him. ■

Valerie and her children, Danica and Garrett, are shown with their house dogs, from left: “Coco,” a rescued retired racing Greyhound, “Dottie,” a Whippet, Apollo, CJ, and “Charlie,” a rescued mixed-breed terrier belonging to Valerie’s mother.



Seven-week-old German Shorthaired Pointer puppies enjoy their first splash in the water in the dog swimming pool at Briarcliff Pet Resort, a boarding kennel that Valerie owns in Menifee, California. The German Shorthair is a versatile hunting breed with a water-resistant coat and webbed feet.



2017  
**AKC CANINE HEALTH FOUNDATION**  
 NATIONAL PARENT CLUB CANINE HEALTH CONFERENCE



# SHARING DISCOVERIES

Monitoring the pulse of a breed's health and well-being is one of the chief concerns of its national parent club. The monumental task involves tracking heritable diseases while simultaneously unifying breeders and owners to help fundraise and gather DNA samples to support research. The sometimes overwhelming educational effort entails spreading the word about painful, possibly fatal canine diseases and encouraging breeders to talk openly about them.

Bringing together parent club health representatives and some of the top researchers of canine health and genetic diseases, the 11th biennial AKC (American Kennel Club) Canine Health Foundation National Parent Club Canine Health Conference was held last August in St. Louis, home of Purina, the conference sponsor. Here are highlights from some of the talks presented — and links to their funded research — at this premier forum on canine health and genetics slanted to dog breeders and enthusiasts.

## B-CELL LYMPHOMA & GOLDEN RETRIEVERS

Learning more about the epigenetic DNA methylation changes that occur in Golden Retrievers with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma may provide insights that one day will help affected dogs. Epigenetic changes, due to factors such as age, environment, heritability, and lifestyle, affect

gene expression without actually changing the DNA sequence. The unique DNA methylation signature of B-cell lymphoma potentially will allow for the devel-

**One in eight Golden Retrievers develops lymphoma cancer, of which one-third of cases are diffuse large B-cell lymphoma.**

opment of biomarkers to help detect Goldens at risk for lymphoma.

Jeffrey Bryan, DVM, PhD, DACVIM, associate professor of veterinary oncology and director of the Comparative Oncology and Epigenetics Laboratory at the University of Missouri, says these methylation changes occur early in the cancer formation process. The possibility of developing effective medicine or dietary therapeutics could become a reality with improved diagnostic and prognostic capabilities.

**Go to the study online: <http://bit.ly/2yFFNJZ>**



## AGING EFFECTS OF STUD DOG SEMEN

Aided by artificial insemination and the use of chilled and frozen semen, dog breeding today is far more convenient than years ago when bitches had to travel across the country to be bred to prominent stud dogs. An unknown factor is the effect of aging on the viability of semen. In the first comprehensive study to evaluate canine semen, Stuart Meyers, DVM, PhD, DACT, professor of anatomy, physiology and cell biology at the University of California-Davis, is taking an epidemiological approach as he develops a database tracking the relationship of sperm characteristics and male age to pregnancy.

The database is being built based on a study that followed a large group of breeding male Labrador Retrievers at Guide Dogs for the Blind in San Rafael, California. Early studies have shown a decline in sperm morphology, including velocity, or the speed at which sperm travels, when males are around 9 to 10 years of age, yet litter size does not vary providing the semen is good quality. This study is expected to provide valuable insights to help estimate a stud dog's breeding soundness.

**Go to the study online: <http://bit.ly/2zEfbJx>**

**“Sperm quality and infertility are two different things, and as stud dogs age, both decline due to cellular senescence in which cell division within the testicle slows down and eventually stops.”**

— Stuart Meyers, DVM, PhD, DACT, professor of anatomy, physiology and cell biology at the University of California-Davis

## THE GUT MICROBIOTA & EPILEPSY

The complex communication signaling that occurs between the GI (gastrointestinal) tract and nervous system may help explain the breakdown that causes some epileptic dogs to be resistant to anticonvulsant medications. Karen Muñana, DVM, MS, DACVIM, professor of neurology at NC State College of Veterinary Medicine, aims to better understand the mechanisms behind this drug-resistance process.

Dr. Muñana is focusing on how a reduction of the intestinal bacteria *Lactobacillus*, which produces an important brain-signaling chemical known as GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid), might impact drug-resistant epilepsy. Her study involves evaluating stool samples from 15 pairs of housemate dogs in which one is epileptic, though not receiving anti-seizure medications, and the other is not epileptic to learn more about the intricacies of the microbiota-gut-brain axis. Potentially, giving an epileptic dog *Lactobacillus* microbes orally may one day have a beneficial therapeutic effect.

Go to the study online: <http://bit.ly/2hPCZzy>

Epilepsy is the most common nervous system disorder in dogs, and about one-third of epileptic dogs are resistant to seizure medications.



Donations to this initiative in 2017 will be matched up to \$250,000 by the AKC.  
To donate, visit: <http://bit.ly/2ydJ3bl>



## A FOCUS ON LYME DISEASE

The clock is ticking for dogs, and people, too, when bitten by a blacklegged tick (*Ixodes scapularis* or *Ixodes pacificus*) infected with the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi* that causes Lyme disease, the most common vector-borne disease in the U.S. In only 24 to 48 hours, a tick can transmit Lyme. One of the most challenging tick-borne diseases, Lyme is hard to detect because dogs rarely show signs and the poppy-seed size of the nymph form of the tick is virtually impossible to recognize and thus remove before an infection occurs.

As the Lyme-endemic areas of the U.S., and now Canada, spread, the gaps in knowledge about the disease warrant a closer look. Jason Stull, VMD, PhD, DACVPM, assistant professor at The Ohio State University, is looking at healthy dogs to learn what percent test positive for Lyme, and of those, what percent later develop the disease. Determining best practices for preventing and controlling Lyme disease is the anticipated outcome. ■

Labrador and Golden retrievers are potentially at greatest risk for the rare Lyme nephritis, a severe form of protein-losing nephropathy that often causes fatal kidney disease.

Go to the study online: <http://bit.ly/2ywExF8>

“We move people, dogs, wild animals, and vectors, including ticks, around the world at an unprecedented rate in human history. Thus, we continue to change the ecology and dynamics of tick-borne diseases.”

— Edward Breitschwerdt, DVM, DACVIM, professor of medicine and infectious diseases at NC State College of Veterinary Medicine, adjunct professor of medicine at Duke University and the recipient of the 2017 Dr. Asa Mays Award for Excellence in Canine Health Research

For the second year, donations to this initiative will be matched up to \$250,000 by the AKC.  
To donate, visit: <http://bit.ly/2h8UWZg>

# BIRD DOG BOOT CAMP

## ON THE NORTHERN PRAIRIE

STORY BY KAYLA MILLER | PHOTOS BY MELISSA MILLER

Opposite Page: For 10 consecutive summers, pro bird dog trainer Randy Anderson of Cross Country Kennels in Vinita, Oklahoma, and his team have made the journey to the northern prairies and set up camp near Westhope, North Dakota, to work bird dogs, including RUCH Phillips Field Line, pictured.

Below: Randy and his team work dogs during an early morning training session.

Excitement and anticipation loom in the air every year when midsummer rolls around. For some, the season marks a time of freedom. For pro bird dog trainer Randy Anderson and scout Tiffany Genre of Cross Country Kennels in Vinita, Oklahoma, summer has a completely different meaning. There's work to be done, and it's only just beginning.

Come June, Randy and his team, along with their 12 horses, all Tennessee Walkers, and lineup of pointing dogs, will begin the northern journey

toward the hopes and dreams of field trial success that only the prairie can make a reality.

"Nothing beats northern exposure," Randy says. "It's the linchpin of what we do."

Westhope, North Dakota, just 7 miles south of the Canadian border, is where the Cross Country team is granted access to thousands of acres of fenceless prairie. It is where they seek relief from the humid Oklahoma heat. It is where the land is abundant in native Hungarian partridge and sharp-tailed grouse, or chickens as







After being introduced to the sport by the late Ronnie Smith Sr. in 1981, Randy developed field trial dogs and ran amateur stakes as a hobby while still working full time as a firefighter. In 2001, he retired from the fire department and began his second career as a pro bird dog trainer.

they're commonly called in those parts. Most importantly, it is where many lessons will be learned and great bird dogs will be made.

"Northern exposure ensures a dog's ability to stay trained on wild birds," Randy says. "We take advantage of the cooler weather, open country and plentiful game."

The breeds of pointing dogs attending Cross Country's summer camp run the gamut, but are mainly Pointers and English Setters, the majority belonging to clients. Some are classy all-age field trial dogs that have earned coveted spots on Randy's string for the upcoming season. Others are enrolled in the gun dog program led by assistant trainer Jeremy Gulick of White Oak Kennels in Miller, Missouri, to become finished hunting companions or compete in National Bird Hunters Association walking field trials. The rest are puppies in Cross Country's "Right Start" program that eventually will be developed into talented field trial contenders or hunting companions. For them, the northern exposure is especially crucial.

"Puppies build a foundation of training and conditioning, but more importantly, become accustomed to the prairie, being staked out with other dogs, and walking in front of a horse," Randy says. "By the end of the summer, I like to see the youngsters pointing wild game."

A decade of consecutive summers spent in North Dakota has given Randy the experience necessary for success, undoubtedly apparent in the 1,000-plus field trial placements he's tallied since becoming involved in the sport in 1981.

"This is where we build our foundation," he says. "By the time we leave camp, our dogs should just peak out so they'll be on their 'A' game at the season's height."

#### 4:30 A.M.

Days on the prairie are long by design to take advantage of the northern latitude's extended daylight hours. Their lesson plan written out the night before, Randy and Jeremy already know which dogs to ready for roll call. Today, two young Pointers who have recently aged out of Derby stakes, Hush Money and Aberdeen's Paid in Full, will work alongside veterans Phillips Field Line and Touch's Blackout in preparation to compete in Open stakes. Randy and Jeremy saddle the horses and load the dogs before setting out for

the field, where Tiffany will join them to scout. The truck's headlights are all that cut through the total darkness.

## 6 A.M.

Early morning matters, with the temperature soaring as high as 90 degrees in the afternoon. They arrive at their classroom for the day just as the persimmon-hued sun begins to rise over the tall prairie grass rippling in the breeze. The fresh scent of wild birds wafting through the crisp morning air excites the dogs, their eager yips reverberating across the seemingly endless acreage. Randy, Tiffany and Jeremy turn the dogs loose and mount their horses. Class is in session.

While the dogs put on a show with their statuesque points and staunch backs, the handlers and scout follow on saddleback, admiring the views. The distant haze of the Turtle Mountains



A thorough check of each dog's eyes, ears, coat, and footpads after a morning in the field helps to catch potential injuries before they could cause a serious problem.

with the Mouse River draping over the hillsides creates a stunning backslash for these elite dogs, prized for their style, sheer talent and birdiness.

Randy sings to signal his location, ensuring the dogs stay to the front. He canters on his horse to increase the dogs' drive or trots to slow the pace.

"I'm looking for the next superstar that has a pretty way of moving and a super nose," he says.

Steeped with history, the prairies of North Dakota and Canada have long been the hotbeds for summer camp and early season field trials, with trainers and handlers rooted in this tradition as early as the 1920s. Both the American and Canadian flags fly in border towns such as Antler, North Dakota, just northwest of Westhope, where abandoned railroad tracks are reminiscent of the past.

Back then, trainers would travel by car or truck with their belongings and the dogs by train. When they reached Antler, some would pick up their dogs and continue the journey into the Canadian provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Others would make camp near towns such as Maxbass, North Dakota, just southeast of Antler, where remnants of a former bird dog camp can still be seen.



Assistant trainer Jeremy Gulick of White Oak Kennels in Miller, Missouri, works with Angel on the bench to reinforce the "whoa" command and polish the dog's pointing style.



Jeremy, left, and Randy portion out *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Formula*, which is fed to all of their dogs and puppies.

CH White Dollar jumps into a kennel in Randy's horse trailer that has been customized to fit eight horses and up to 30 dogs.



"Every time we work across those vacated tracks or pass through the old camp and see the deserted barrels and stake-outs, I think about those dogs of the past being trained for field trial greatness," says Randy. "It motivates us to get ready for the season."

## NOON

After giving the brace of dogs plenty of time to work, the high noon sun now beating down, the team packs up and drives back to camp. While Tiffany prepares lunch, Randy and Jeremy unload the customized horse trailer, with space to haul eight horses and up to 30 dogs. The 5-by-5-foot-wide fold-out ramp door eases loading dogs. Other practical features are the auxiliary battery system that powers the trailer's interior and exterior lights when needed, as well as the hydraulic lifting and leveling system to easily connect or disconnect the trailer to and from the truck.

The men thoroughly groom the horses and methodically check the dogs' eyes, ears, footpads,

and coats for any debris, grass awns, or other foreign objects they may have caught afield.

"We look for any signs of lameness or other injuries. We also check for mean seeds near the eyes and tongue before they could be ingested and cause a serious problem," Randy says.

## 2 P.M.

While mornings are spent running dogs in the field, afternoons are reserved for training and conditioning, the mental and physical foundation for the trial season ahead.

Although the pace and ground covered in horseback stakes are nearly twice that of walking stakes, the gun dogs are trained and conditioned almost identically as the fast-paced, far-ranging all-age dogs. Similar to the trial dogs, this helps to prepare them mentally and physically.

Repetition and positive reinforcement are at the center of Cross Country's training program. During yard work, Randy and Jeremy work with the dogs on basic obedience and bird handling skills.

"An animal is a creature of habit. Teaching, teaching, teaching by means of repetition will create a habit," he explains. "Once the dog has picked up a particular habit that you've taught, name the command and positively reinforce it."

A dog's style — ideally a staunch point with a 12 o'clock tail, flat back and head held high — is carefully crafted on the bench. Randy and Jeremy reinforce the "whoa" command and meticulously fine tune their pupils' pointing style by raising the chin, stroking the side, and propping the tail.

"A dog's composure on the bench is a good indicator of what he or she will do in the field," Randy explains.

A solid conditioning program is critical to build the stamina needed to cover a lot of ground and run hourlong stakes. Rounding sessions last 30 minutes, gradually building up to 90 minutes by summer's end. Pulling increases muscle tone; free running builds cardiovascular endurance. Dogs



run 15 minutes of each before switching sides to even out the conditioning.

Dogs spend equal time in the field, on the bench, in the yard, and on the road. Randy keeps track of the rotation so that a dog will practice each two to three times a week.

“Balance is key,” says Randy. “Too much of one discipline will throw a dog off. We keep everything short and sweet.”

### 5 P.M.

Back at camp, Tiffany’s son, Blake, jumps in to help with feeding. Dozens of bowls of food are divvied out to the hardworking bird dogs in their kennels.

“Field trials are won at the dog food pan,” Randy says. “Our dogs need the most complete and balanced nutrition they can get, so we feed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Formula*. They have high energy and lean muscle tone.”

### 9:30 P.M.

With the trailer reloaded and tomorrow’s lesson plan set, the hardworking crew can finally catch their breath and get some rest. Tomorrow, they’ll do it all over again. Dog by dog, hour by hour, day by day.

Toward the end of August, with their focus and passion as intense as that of their dogs, Randy and Tiffany will cross into Canada to handle and scout at the Dominion and Saskatchewan open chicken championships, leaving Jeremy in charge of the dogs back at camp. The entire team will head home in early October, when Randy and Tiffany will begin traveling the country with their field trial string on the major all-age circuit.

“If we’ve had a productive summer here, the skills and lessons learned will take us all the way to the season’s end in April,” Randy says.

Just like that, another field trial season begins. Class, dismissed. ■

Holding a magnificent, statuesque point, CH Lester’s Jazz Man is one of the dogs on Randy’s all-age field trial string.

# Circle of Champions

## 2017 AUTUMN OAKS

### BLUETICK COONHOUND 'ROCKY' NAMED NATIONAL GRAND SHOW CHAMPION



NGRCH CCH GR CH 'PR' Spanky's Rockin Blue Popacap outshone 114 coonhounds to become the National Grand Show Champion at Autumn Oaks on Labor Day weekend in Richmond, Indiana. "Rocky," a statuesque 5-year-old male Bluetick Coonhound, is familiar with the intense competition at Autumn Oaks, having won the breed there as a 7-month-old in 2012. Other big wins for the solid 80-pound dog include being named the 2017 Coonhunters Kennel Club World Show Champion and the 2015 Purina National Overall Bench Show Champion. "Rocky has a commanding presence. As soon as his show lead goes on, so does his game face," says owner-handler Lory Galbreath of Cabot, Arkansas, who has been showing coonhounds for more than 20 years. Each competition is emotional for Galbreath, reminding her of her close friend and Rocky's late co-owner, Kris Tracy of Fincastle, Virginia. Co-owned by Autumn Huffman of Newcastle, Virginia, Rocky is fueled by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Formula*.

"Rocky," a top-performing coonhound show champion, stays in peak physical condition with 2-mile runs every other day.

### 'EZ,' A TREEING WALKER COONHOUND, WINS NATIONAL GRAND NITE CHAMPIONSHIP

Striking first and finishing strong, a Treeing Walker Coonhound called "EZ" won the Autumn Oaks National Grand Nite Championship on Labor Day weekend in Richmond, Indiana. Outperforming a record number of more than 755 hounds from 33 states to compete at the event, the 3-year-old male, NGRNCH GR NITE CH 'PR' Handsome Big EZ, clinched the championship after two consecutive nights of hunting by coming out ahead in the final three-dog cast. "EZ started off and kept going strong in this action-packed hunt. He is a real powerhouse and makes the work look easy," says handler Timothy Waters of Unity, Ohio. Waters likens EZ's powerful drive to that of his sire, GR NITE CH 'PR' Big Money, and dam, NITE CH 'PR' Cables Sweet Talking Lady. Co-owned by Michael Thomas and Bryan Whitted, both of Huntington, Indiana, EZ is fueled by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula*.

"EZ," a powerful hunting coonhound, maintained an early lead in the final cast to win Autumn Oaks.





## 'TY,' A GIANT SCHNAUZER, IS THE NO. 1 DOG IN THE COUNTRY

A powerful 4-year-old black male Giant Schnauzer called "Ty" is the No. 1 dog in the country, having earned 56 Bests in Show. Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Ingebar's Tynan Dances With Wildflowers embodies the legacy of his breeder, the late Maryann Bisceglia of Pittsburgh. Handled by Katie Bernardin of Chaplin, Connecticut, Ty won Bests of Breed at the 2016 and 2017 Giant Schnauzer Club of America National Specialty shows. "Ty's solid form and gentle nature are a testament to Maryann's passion for the breed. Every win is an emotional, tear-filled one because Ty was from the last litter Maryann bred," says Bernardin, whose husband, Adam, initially handled Ty but urged her to take the lead after seeing how well the dog worked with her. "As much as Ty loves competing, he also enjoys downtime," Bernardin says, noting that his visits to owner Carol Mann's 150-acre farm in West Greenwich, Rhode Island, allows ample time to play with Mann's pack of seven Affenpinschers. Sandra Nordstrom of Ocean City, New Jersey, also co-owns Ty, who is fed *Purina Pro Plan* NATURAL Turkey & Barley Formula.

"Ty" has proved his tenacity with his tough-as-nails competitive drive.

## PARSON RUSSELL TERRIER 'TOODLES' SETS BREED RECORD

"Toodles," a spirited 3-year-old white-and-tan Parson Russell Terrier, has become the winningest dog in breed history. With nine Bests in Show and 46 Terrier Group Firsts, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Brywood Heluva Ride set a record when he won his fifth Best in Show in 2016. The previous record holder was his dam, "Heidi" (Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Foxbend Colour Me More). Toodles, the 2016 and 2017 Parson Russell Terrier National Specialty winner, also captured Bests of Breed at the 2016 and 2017 Westminster Kennel Club dog shows with breeder-owner-handler Dana Bryson-Benn of St. Augustine, Florida. "Toodles has definitely lived up to his ancestors' legacy. His granddam, 'Fuzz' (Multi-BIS/BISS CH Fox Valley Frolic), was the Best of Breed winner at Westminster in 2001 and also was a past National Specialty winner," says Bryson-Benn. Co-owned by Bryson-Benn's husband, Chris, and John and Kathy Garahan of Annandale, New Jersey, Toodles is fed *Purina Pro Plan* SPORT Performance 30/20 Grain Free Formula.

Whelped from his breeder's first Parson Russell Terrier litter, "Toodles" has become a standout with many prestigious wins.



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

# ‘MULLY’ IS THE 2017 NATIONAL AMATEUR RETRIEVER CHAMPION

BY KEITH SCHOPP

A handsome 6 ½-year-old male Labrador Retriever named “Mully” didn’t need any mulligans to win the 2017 National Amateur Retriever Championship Stake in Mondovi, Wisconsin. Instead, NAFC-FC Mulligan Off The Rainy “T” relied on sheer talent and smarts to perform flawlessly through 10 challenging land and water tests and top 138 of the finest retrievers in the nation.

“Mully is a very strong National dog, and his marks kept getting better and better throughout the trial,” says Randy Spangler, who owns the stylish retriever with his wife, Mary, and who handled Mully to the National win in his hometown.

“He was pretty high at the start and a little crazy on the line, but he continued to build and perform. What a thrill to do it here.”

In addition to Mully’s win, the Spanglers’ 5-year-old, FC Hyflyer’s Life In The Fast Lane (“Crash”), was one of 14 Finalists and gave Mully some stiff competition. “I am very proud of both dogs,” Spangler says. “It was hard for me to say which one did better in each series, but Mully is far more experienced and it was his time.”

At age 3, Mully won the second amateur stake he competed in and later qualified for the 2014 National Amateur. He went nine series in that National Amateur, and nine series in the

2014 National Open for professional trainer Wayne Curtis of Fox Hollow Retrievers in Mondovi. Mully was a Finalist in the 2015 and 2016 National Amateurs and went eight series in the 2016 National Open.

Spangler credits Curtis and the team at Fox Hollow Retrievers for being an excellent coach and mentor. “Wayne has gotten my dogs and me to where we’re at today,” he says. “There are a lot of good dog trainers, and to be a great trainer, you need to be a great people trainer. If you listen to Wayne and take your licks and learn, he’ll teach you how to be a better handler and competitor.”

As for Mully, Curtis says the talented retriever is an excellent flyer marker and loves to play the game. “When Mully cocks his head, that’s where he’s going. You can rely on it. He’s animated but very solid on water. We’re thrilled for Randy, Mary and Mully,” Curtis says.

Of the 14 Finalists, 13 are Purina-fed dogs, including Mully, who is fed Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Formula. ■

The 2017 National Amateur Retriever Champion is a 6 ½-year-old male Labrador Retriever named “Mully,” owned and handled by Randy Spangler, left, and trained by Wayne Curtis, right, of Fox Hollow Retrievers.



# #1 PROBIOTIC BRAND PRESCRIBED BY VETERINARIANS\*



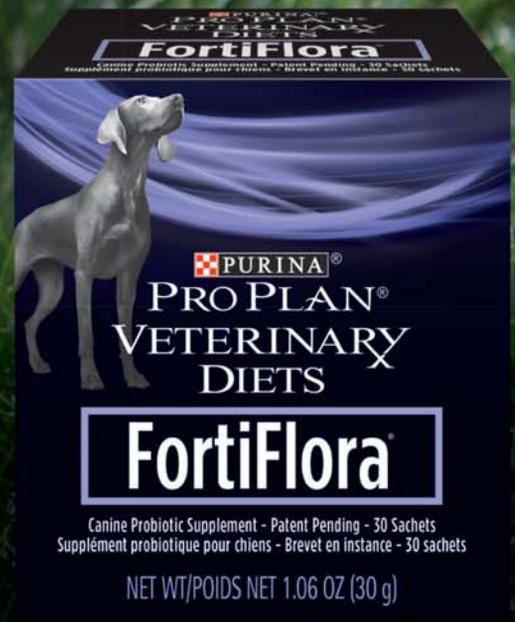
DIETARY MANAGEMENT  
OF PUPPIES  
WITH DIARRHEA

HELPS DEVELOP  
A STRONG  
IMMUNE SYSTEM

EASY-TO-FEED &  
GREAT TASTING

Get a \$5 Coupon Today  
at [proplanveterinarydiets.com/coupons](http://proplanveterinarydiets.com/coupons)

ASK YOUR VETERINARIAN ABOUT PURINA® PRO PLAN®  
VETERINARY DIETS **FortiFlora**



\* Kantar Millward Brown Veterinary Tracker, 2016.

Purina trademarks are owned by Société des Produits Nestlé S.A. Printed in USA.



Tell us how Purina®  
Pro Plan® has **helped**  
**you and your dog** on your  
journey to success at

[proplan.com/reviews](http://proplan.com/reviews)

Today's Breeder  
Nestlé Purina PetCare  
Checkerboard Square  
St. Louis, MO 63164

Prsrt Std  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
St. Louis, MO  
Permit No. 475

## Breed Snapshot

### CAVALIER KING CHARLES SPANIEL: A BELOVED TOY BREED

An elegant toy spaniel beloved for his gentle, affectionate nature, the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel has a rich history dating to 15th- and 16th-century Britain. English royalty adored the charming lap dogs, particularly King Charles I for whom the breed is named. One of the most popular toy breeds today, the Cavalier is an ideal companion that is fearless, sporty and biddable.

An aristocratic breed owned exclusively by British royalty for centuries, the Cavalier was not a working dog, thus was not affordable to commoners. By 1920, the original Cavalier, depicted in paintings and tapestries, had virtually disappeared. In 1926, an American, Roswell Eldridge, offered 25 pounds each for the best dog and best bitch of the old-type spaniel entered at the Crufts dog show for the next five years. The large sum of prize money revived the breed and its popularity.

The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel is 12 to 13 inches tall at the withers and weighs 13 to 18 pounds. His large, round eyes have a sweet, melting expression, and the coat, with its glamorous feathering, may be Blenheim (rich chestnut and white), ruby, black and tan, or tricolor. This active toy dog excels in dog shows, obedience and agility, and as a therapy dog and loyal family pet. Cavalier enthusiasts are drawn to the breed's happy, friendly, outgoing disposition and believe "you can never have just one."

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