

GOOD SHOW DOGS SHOULD ALSO BE GOOD FIELD DOGS

Because Life Really *Is* Too Short To Hunt With An Ugly Dog

BY M.J. NELSON

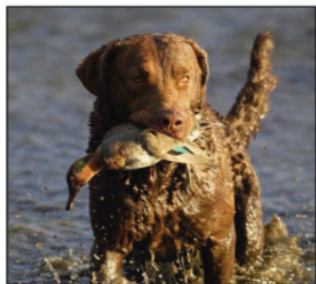
It is generally conceded that dogs able to earn a best-in-show, reserve-best-in-show or even a group win are pret-special show dogs. On the other hand, dogs that earn a field championship, an amateur field championship or a master title are generally acknowledged to be pretty special field dogs. But there are some extraordinary dogs that do both exceedingly well and they range all the way from master hunters with a group win, a significant accomplishment for many breeds that are at disadvantage in one arena or the other, to dogs that are dual champions and have a best-in-show or even multiple bests-in-show to their credit. While all the dogs included in this story are either pointing breeds or retrievers, there are a few of these rare individuals the hound, terrier and herding groups also.

What makes the owners of these dogs pursue such lofty accomplishments which, in most cases, take a considerable commitment in terms of both time and money? There seem to be a variety of reasons. For Adam Levy who owns Chesapeake Bay Retriever Hank (MBIS GChs Sandbar's Hardcore Hank MH QAA) with Diane Baker and Andrew Barbouche, it was a desire to breed as true as possible to the standard. "Andrew and I are professional field trainers and we run all our dogs in AKC hunt tests. I believe that form follows function. To me, if the dog is structurally sound but doesn't have the drive and mentality to perform in the field or excels in the field but isn't structurally sound it's not breeding true to the

Hank (MBIS GChs Sandbar's Hardcore Hank MH QAA,) owned by Adam Levy, Diane Baker and Andrew Barbouche, is the first and only (so far) master hunter Chesapeake Bay Retriever to also have a best-in-show. In addition, Hank is a qualified all-age dog meaning he had to finish first or second in the qualifying stake at a retriever field trial or finish in either the open or amateur stakes at a field trial. In Hank's case, it was a Judges Award of Merit in the amateur stake that made him a QAA dog.



Hank is also a fine hunting dog that loves to retrieve waterfowl, in this case, a green-wing teal.



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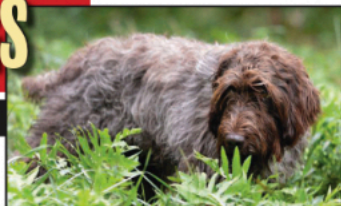
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standard. Hank has proven to be a worthy specimen in both the field with a master hunter title as well as being a qualified all-age dog in field trials and in the show ring. In fact, him being a master hunter with a best-in-show is a first for the breed. I guess it is even more satisfying to Andrew and I that we trained Hank and handled him to his MH. Fortunately, we had enough sense to hand him off to Devon Kipp for his show career and long-time Chesapeake owner and field trialer Edgar Johnson handled him to a JAM (Judges Award of Merit) in the amateur stake at a licensed field trial to make him a qualified all-age dog. But, both his MH and his BIS were extremely hard to achieve and took a ton of work."

For Mel Reveles, Judy and Ed Hetkowski, Aaron Davis and their Vizsla Trip (BIS RBIS DC GCh Boulder's N Fusion's Power Trip CGC MH-A ROM,) having a dog excel in both the field and the show ring was a conscious goal. "We know from the very beginning that Trip was something special," said Reveles. "She never really 'fell apart' structurally as most young dogs do before they come back together. She finished her championship easily and when we decided to special her on occasion locally, she won regularly beating professionally handled and top-ranked specials. She has always been so level-headed in everything we did with her and she took to training for both the show ring and the field naturally. Vizslas are hunting dogs, working dogs

and as breeders it is important that we honor the breed's original purpose. It's troubling to see breeds become divided with very strong 'field' or 'show' lines that don't cross over into the other discipline. We also strongly believe in breeding for structural soundness and the breeding that produced Trip was intentional as it satisfied our desire to have a dog capable of great success in both the field and the show ring. However, the most satisfying aspect of Trip's accomplishments to us was having this big



Kitt did all her serious field work before her owners got serious about showing her and earned her field titles in about six months.



Hasbro (GCh Kistryl shoots and Ladders MH WCX CD CGC,) Mary Ann Abbott and Cheryl Kistner's Flat-Coated Retriever was handled by Abbott and a pro in both the field and the show ring.

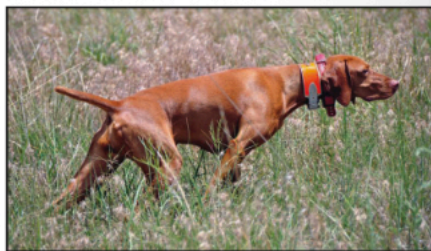


Hasbro was precocious enough to have finished his master hunter title at the age of three leaving plenty of time for his show career.



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"Vizslas are hunting dogs, working dogs and as breeders it is important that we honor the breed's original purpose. Trip took to both the field and the show ring naturally," said Mel Reveles.



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dream become real and doing it as amateurs. She won her RBIS from the veterans' class and defeated 1,861 other dogs to get it."

Great success in the show ring and in the field was something that "just happened" for Larry Delaney and his Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Kitt (BIS RBIS BISS GChg Whiskeytown Genesee on Tap MH). "Initially I was only planning to get some field titles and her conformation championship but as she started excelling in both, I just kept going and she got better and better. I probably wouldn't have bothered specializing her but her handler liked Kitt and wanted to go on with her after she finished her championship. Since she is a good handler, we decided to give it a try and Kitt started collecting group wins. So, we kept her out with the handler for a year and she became the number one Griffon in the country. Kitt did all her significant field work before we got serious about showing her and earned all her advanced hunting titles in about six months. But, Wirehaired Pointing Griffons are not one of the more common show dogs so very few have group wins to say nothing of a BIS. To win the sporting group and then get an RBIS is quite an accomplishment with a WPG. She also took fourth in the sporting group at Westminster. I handled Kitt for her novice work in the field but field work requires a major time commitment so for her SH and MH, I handed her off to a trainer. Virtually all her show handling was done by professional handlers. However, first and foremost, Kitt is a family member and we are very attached to her, regardless of her titles. But, we are also great fans of hers and take a lot of pride in what she has accomplished."

Betty Meadows had no plan whatsoever when she and her husband started with their Vizsla Cody



Jake (MBIS BISS DC AFC Can Ch Rusty Ridge Jake MH.) Jan and Claude Kilpatrick's Brittany, is the first and only (so far) dual champion to have multiple bests-in-show.



Jake loved both the show ring and the field.

(MBIS MBISS GCh Russet Leather Wild Bill Cody MHA RA). "When we started this amazing journey, we had no plan, no goals. We weren't looking for a show dog, we just wanted a well-bred dog to be part of our family to go on hikes and camping trips with us. But his breeder wanted Cody to get his conformation championship so we agreed to do that and so we'd arrive at dog shows and ask if a junior handler was available or if anyone else would handle him in the show ring because we were total novices at dog showing. My husband took him in the ring a few times when we couldn't find a handler and I was dealing with a broken leg from a skiing accident only to be told by one judge that the dog was too good for him to handle. Fortunately, Cody

loved being a show dog and he did well no matter who was on the end of his lead. Finally, we found Andy Linton and he handled Cody in the show ring after that. Once he earned his championship and started getting placed in the group as well as getting his first BIS before he was two, his breeder encouraged us to get a junior hunter title on him which we did but since I really didn't know anything about field events, we eventually handed him over to a pro trainer to do his senior and master hunter titles although I handled him along with the pro when he got his master hunter advanced title and I handled him in the amateur stakes in field trials. He was a bonafide bird dog and I got hooked on field work even though getting a dog ready to run master takes a lot of time and work especially when it is your first hunting dog and I made a lot of mistakes plus I was handicapped in that I had never hunted, didn't know how to shoot, had never seen quail, chukar or pheasants and was afraid of pigeons, didn't own a horse, lived in the city, worked full time and had a family to care for. But I also discovered field work was way more fun than dog shows! Cody only needed a major for his AFC but unfortunately he was diagnosed with Valley Fever, a nasty fungal infection caused by organisms that live in the soil, and he retired from the field to recover or I'm sure he would have been a Ch/AFC/MHA."

Mary Ann Abbott's Flat-coated Retrievers were strictly pets and hunting partners. She had FCRs for about 15 years before she put one in the show ring. "I went to the a national specialty with friends and they were competing in hunt tests. I volunteered at that test and was immediately committed to learn-

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ing how to train my dogs to compete in the field. Fortunately, Hasbro (GCh Kistryl Shoots and Ladders MH WCX CD CGC, co-owned by Cheryl Kistner) was quite precocious and he finished his MH by the time he was three which left plenty of time for continuing his show career. Hasbro's training for his master hunter title was intensive but it actually took longer, in terms of years, for him to get his group win. Flat-Coats, like Chesapeakes, Curly-Coats or Irish Water Spaniels, are not the first breed judges think of when they're deciding which dog gets the blue ribbon in the group ring. Hasbro was handled by a professional trainer and by me in the field and a professional handler and me in the show ring. I like to handle my own dogs in both sports but I have to admit it took a pro handling him to get his group win. I love having a dog that works well in the field and looks beautiful doing it. My training partners often tease me that I groom my dogs before I bring them to a field event. There's actually some truth to that. For me as well as for the Flat-Coated Retriever Society of America it is of paramount importance that we continue to breed our dogs for the field as well as the show ring. I am sad to see the split between 'show' and 'field' that has occurred with Golden and Labrador Retrievers and like virtually all other Flat-Coat people, do not want to see that happen with our breed. Form really does follow function. Dogs need to be bred well to work well in the field."

For Jan and Claude Kilpatrick and their Brittany Jake (MBIS BISS DC AFC Can Ch Rusty Ridge Jake MH), the trip to a dual championship and a BIS was a natural progression. "We liked to hunt and so did Jake. We liked being around dog people so we got involved in dog events. While running hunt tests and at fun training days, Jake caught the



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eye of some of the sporting dog people who also showed their dogs and they suggested we get him into the show ring. At his very first dog show, one of the judges, who was also a well-known Brittany breeder, told us that Jake had the stuff to be a SPECIAL special. In the field, Claude handled Jake to his master title and his field championship was a combination of Claude and a good amateur friend of our from California as we had to travel extensively from our home in Alaska to get him to shows outside Alaska and to field trials that weren't available in Alaska. He was shown exclusively by Colleen McDowell. Jake had a good time in both the field and the show ring so he made it easy for us. He loved competition and it was exciting helping him achieve all he could. His accomplishments are an exemplary example of the philosophy put forth in the American Brittany Club's mission statement as the club as a whole is committed to keeping the Brittany a dual dog. We had to retire him from the field after a serious tendon injury but he is still the only multiple best-in-show winning dual champion Brittany. It's so very important to the future of not just our breed or the other sporting breeds but to all dog breeds to keep their dogs working at what the breed was originally intended to do," said Jan Kilpatrick.