



TODAY'S BREEDER

A Purina Pro Plan Publication Dedicated to the Needs of Canine Enthusiasts Issue 107



MARK OF EXCELLENCE

Watermark Retrievers

- OPPOSITES ATTRACT
- WESTMINSTER'S 'TRUMPET'
- SERVICE DOG PARTNERS



Your Pet, Our Passion.

LONGTIME TODAY'S BREEDER EDITOR BARB FAWVER RETIRES

Pay special attention to *Today's Breeder*, Issue 107. From “King,” the handsome retriever who graces the cover, to “Trumpet,” the now famous Westminster-winning Bloodhound, to the closing Breed Snapshot of a Hungarian herding breed you probably never heard of — this is the LAST issue of *Today's Breeder* orchestrated and assembled by editor Barbara Fawver. Read every word. Enjoy every stunning photo. Learn something that might make you, your dog, or your breed even better. Barb Fawver would like that. After 25 years at Purina, she's retiring like a Best in Show winner.

Barb's Purina career began in 1997, however, she first started working on Breeder/Enthusiast communications a couple of years later with *Today's Breeder*, Issue 26. By Issue 27, she was named assistant editor, and by Issue 29, she was the editor. Under Barb's watch, *Today's Breeder* became better with each issue. Armed with an Associated Press Style Book, a passion for dogs and their breeders, owners and handlers, and a relentless work ethic, Barb took *Today's Breeder* and Breeder/Enthusiast Communications at Purina to the next level.

Designer Jean Lopez has been a constant team member working with Barb. “Jean and I share a love for our work that hopefully translated into stories that were a good read and visually interesting,” Barb says. Barb wrote most of the content and amassed a stable of talented freelance writers and photographers to support her work. “I learned something new every day,” Barb says. Some 80 issues later, she's still striving for perfection with issue No. 107.

Along the way, Barb met and became friends with iconic dog owners and handlers, veterinarians, and elite canine and feline researchers and scientists around the world. Her sources produced topics and important breakthroughs in nutrition, genomics, reproduction, disease, and health. Barb's connections to the AKC Canine Health Foundation and global research took her to international conferences in Sweden, France, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, and Canada. She also became the go-to communications person at Purina when it came to curating and creating Breeder/Enthusiast content,



Barb Fawver holds Rottweiler puppy “Tucker” in 2019.

publishing as many as 24 breed-specific *Update* newsletters that were coveted by parent clubs.

And then there were the dogs. Barb became a fixture at Westminster since attending her first show at the Garden in 2004. She's also covered and attended every National Dog Show since its inception. “I fell in love with every winner and every breed we featured in *Today's Breeder Magazine*,” Barb says.

Especially “Uno” — the Beagle who bayed his way to Westminster Best in Show in 2008.

“Uno was such a gregarious dog, and it was really exciting for everyone there. That Beagle did a lot for the sport — David Frei took him everywhere. Uno rang the bell at the New York Stock Exchange, and he was on all the networks and starred in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Of course, Uno also visited Purina's World Headquarters in St. Louis. I'd have to say Uno is my favorite.”

Barb's Beagle bias can perhaps be traced to her coverage of a Purina Outstanding Brace Beagle Award ceremony back in 2003. There, she met and interviewed a winning handler named Del Fawver. “I told him to look me up if he ever came to St. Louis. He did. We were married by the next August in 2004.”

Barb Fawver soon began handling some of their Black Blanket Brace Beagles along with her husband. Then Rottweilers became her fancy. She made one a Grand Champion and also earned a couple of Obedience titles. Her current project is a 121-pound Rottie named “Tucker.”

“I look back on 25 years and I'm proud to be part of a successful team here at Purina,” Barb says. “I've been fortunate to cover many icons in their respective sports, to tout their success and weave in the important role *Purina Pro Plan* has in providing the energy and momentum these canine athletes need to win. Yes, I put in a lot of hours, but I've loved this job so much I don't think I've worked a single day in 25 years. I'm just so touched by the passion these people have for their dogs. As a writer and editor, I've been able to share in their joy. And that's pretty special.” ■

– Keith Schopp

4 WILLORUNN'S THIRD GENERATION

Professional handler Ania Romano Kelly learned the ropes about showing dogs from her grandmother and mother.

6 SERVICE DOGS PARTNERING FOR LIFE

Dogs trained as autism service dogs and assistance dogs provide life-changing support to those they serve via the positive effects of the human-animal bond.

10 WESTMINSTER WINNER 'TRUMPET'

A Bloodhound named "Trumpet" sounded off to win Best in Show at the 146th Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show.

12 WATERMARK RETRIEVERS MAKE A MARK

Dr. Mary Tatum got hooked on field trials and hunting tests and never looked back. Watermark has bred two National Champions, plus countless Field Champions.

20 OPPOSITES ATTRACT

The joy of breeding contrasting dog breeds is appealing to some breeders. Here is a look at some successful breed pairings.

REGULAR FEATURES

- 18 Nutrition Matters
- 26 Circle of Champions
- 31 Purina Farms
- 33 Breed Snapshot

ON THE COVER

Watermarks King, a 1 ½-year-old male Labrador Retriever, was bred by Dr. Mary Tatum. Sired by Watermarks Shadow, the 2020 Purina High-Point Derby Dog, "King" is owned by pro trainer Bill Hillmann and Richard Tooke. See story on page 12. Cover photo by Mark Atwater.

THIS PAGE

MBISS GCH Dickendall Buckstone Hou's He, a 7-year-old male Labrador Retriever, and GCH Fred CD BN RE TKA SE, a 10 ½-year-old male Border Terrier, were bred by Kendall Herr. See story on page 20. Photo by Elizabeth Arellano.



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WILLORUNN'S THIRD GENERATION

A loyalist at heart, Ania Romano Kelly is true to the Vizsla breed of her mother and grandmother and to the English Cocker Spaniel breed she showed to win Best Junior Handler in 2012 at the Westminster Kennel Club.

These days, Ania, of Dunkirk, Maryland, is a professional all-breed dog handler. Her [Willorunn pro handling business](#) is named after the Willorunn Vizsla breeding program begun in the 1980s by her grandmother, the late Dorothea "Dot" Romano, and continued by Ania and her mother, Rachel Romano Kelly. "Willorunn is in the background of many top Vizslas," Ania says.

Gifted with her grandmother's and mother's love for showing beautiful dogs, Ania at 8 years old won the field trial class at the Winter Garden Specialties with a Vizsla bitch owned by her grandmother, topping a well-known handler. "It was my first dog show in the ring," she says. "I knew then showing dogs would be a major part of my life and that I wanted to turn my passion for the sport and love of dogs into my profession."

The stamp of her grandmother's accomplishments with Vizslas, her mother's guidance during her early years in junior handling, and 12 years of apprenticeships with professional handlers has shaped Ania. Since turning pro in 2019, Ania has shown top-ranked dogs to multiple Bests in Show and Bests in Specialty Show, won National Specialties, and taken Group placements at Westminster and the AKC National Championship.

Her grandmother, Dot, fell in love with Vizslas after rescuing a young male named "Flashman" in the 1970s. Dot appreciated the quality of her second Vizsla that she bought from reputable breeders Leslie Romaine and Sandy Kempton. The Vizsla bitch, named "Dory" (CH Kinghill's Just Hunky Dory), sparked Dot's beginning as a dog fancier as she handled Dory to Best of Winners at the Vizsla Club of Greater New York Specialty in 1981 at the Westchester Kennel Club.

On Dot's 100-acre Willorunn Farm in Glasgow, Virginia, she cultivated an enjoyment for developing her Hungarian



Ania Romano Kelly, right, and her mother, Rachel Romano Kelly, are shown with three generations of their Willorunn Vizslas. The Vizslas are, from left: "Reva" (CH Willorunn's Revvin' Her Engine); "Pyxie" (GCHB Willorunn's Rock'A-By Daisy JH); "Beamer" (CH Willorunn's Revvin' the Beamer Full Throttle); and "Rosie" (Willorunn's Full Speed to Boomtown). Pyxie is the dam of Reva, who is the dam of Beamer and Rosie.

bird dogs into field trial competitors. "My grandmother was the consummate Vizsla owner," Ania says. "She won Best of Breed at Westminster in 1988 as the breeder-owner-handler of a Vizsla female (CH Willo Runn's Bearly A Whisper) from the second generation she bred. She delved into field trials and even became a field trial judge while also doing obedience and agility with her dogs."

Ania's mother, Rachel, of Dunkirk, Maryland, a successful breeder-owner-handler and Juniors judge, gave her daughter a solid foundation in the sport. "My mom was a very good teacher. She was a big believer in giving me challenging dogs to show," Ania says.

When Ania began in junior handling as a 9-year-old, it was her grandmother's Vizsla named "Daisy" (CH Anderson's Smartie Pants JH RN HR) who initiated her. "Daisy was not an easy dog to show, yet she became my constant shadow," she says.

A couple of years later, Ania wanted a competitive dog to show in Juniors. She spent a year looking for a suitable smaller-sized, longer-coated dog. "Wizard" (CAN CH/GCH Winfree's Do You Believe In Magic), an orange-and-white male English Cocker Spaniel, was bred by Lisa Ross, the mother of her junior handler friend, Taylor Ross. "I got Wizard at 6 months old," says Ania. "He is my 'heart dog,' and the reason I love English Cockers."

The pair finished 2008 with Wizard ranked as the No. 1 English Cocker Spaniel in Junior standings. In 2012, Ania took Best Junior Handler at the Garden with Wizard, affirming that hard work pays off. "I had been to Westminster every year since 2008 as a Junior handler," she says.

Highly motivated to learn, she says, "I set out to study the techniques used by pros to show individual breeds. My father was in the Navy and we moved around a lot, which helped me get apprenticeships with some of the best handlers from across the country."

When her family lived in the Pacific Northwest, Ania trained two years with Andy Linton. A move East allowed her to spend five years working with Michael and Michelle Scott, followed by a year with Greg Strong while attending college in Maryland. Ania spent three years training with Brian Livingston in Texas, during which she transferred to the University of Texas in Denton. An interest in terriers led to six months working with Tracy Szaras in South Carolina and six months with Jenny Wornall in California.

"These apprenticeships have helped me show dogs to their potential," she says. "Their happiness and well-being are my priorities."



Ania is pictured with "Wizard," now 16 years old, the English Cocker Spaniel with whom she won Best Junior Handler at Westminster in 2012.

With a full-time assistant, Ally Barwis, her best friend since second grade, Ania travels the circuit with around 10 dogs. One of her current Specials is "Vispa" (MBIS/MBISS GCHG Peabar P.S. I Love You), the No. 1 all-systems Scottish Terrier and No. 5 Terrier, who won Best of Breed at the 2022 Scottish Terrier Club of American National Rotating Specialty.

In 2019 and 2020, Ania handled the No. 1 Vizsla all-systems and a Top 10 Sporting dog, "Boomer" (MBIS/MBISS GCHP Tradewinds Ida BOMB JH CA CTC TKI). Bred by Britt Jung, Ida Kavafian and Lori Salb, Boomer took Best of Breed in 2019 at the Vizsla Club of America National Specialty and in 2020 at the Regional Specialty held in conjunction with the National Specialty. In 2020, Boomer placed Sporting Group Fourth at Westminster — 32 years after Ania's grandmother, Dot, won Best of Breed with her homebred Vizsla, "Willow" — and Sporting Group Second at the AKC National Championship.

Reflecting on her work, Ania says, "I love being a dog handler. It is so rewarding. I am thankful for the opportunities I've had to learn and to grow. Importantly, I am thankful to my grandmother and mom for helping me achieve my dreams." ■



"Vispa," the No. 1 all-systems Scottish Terrier, is among the Specials that Ania currently campaigns.

SERVICE DOGS PARTNERING FOR LIFE

Aspirited, bright and affectionate 11-year-old boy named James is mostly happy-go-lucky. Havoc stirs when unexpected changes trigger anxiety and stress, causing a meltdown. Diagnosed with autism, James has benefitted greatly from getting his autism service dog, “Prince,” now 4 years old, from [Retrieving Freedom Inc.](#) (RFI).

James’ parents, Scott and Lisa,* are overjoyed that the 75-pound black male Labrador Retriever joined their family two years ago. “Some family outings are more difficult than others,” says Lisa. “Prince is trained to help James in especially tough situations by applying pressure against his body, which calms and relaxes him. When we go on shopping trips, vacations and outdoor activities, the entire family feels reassured by having Prince along.”

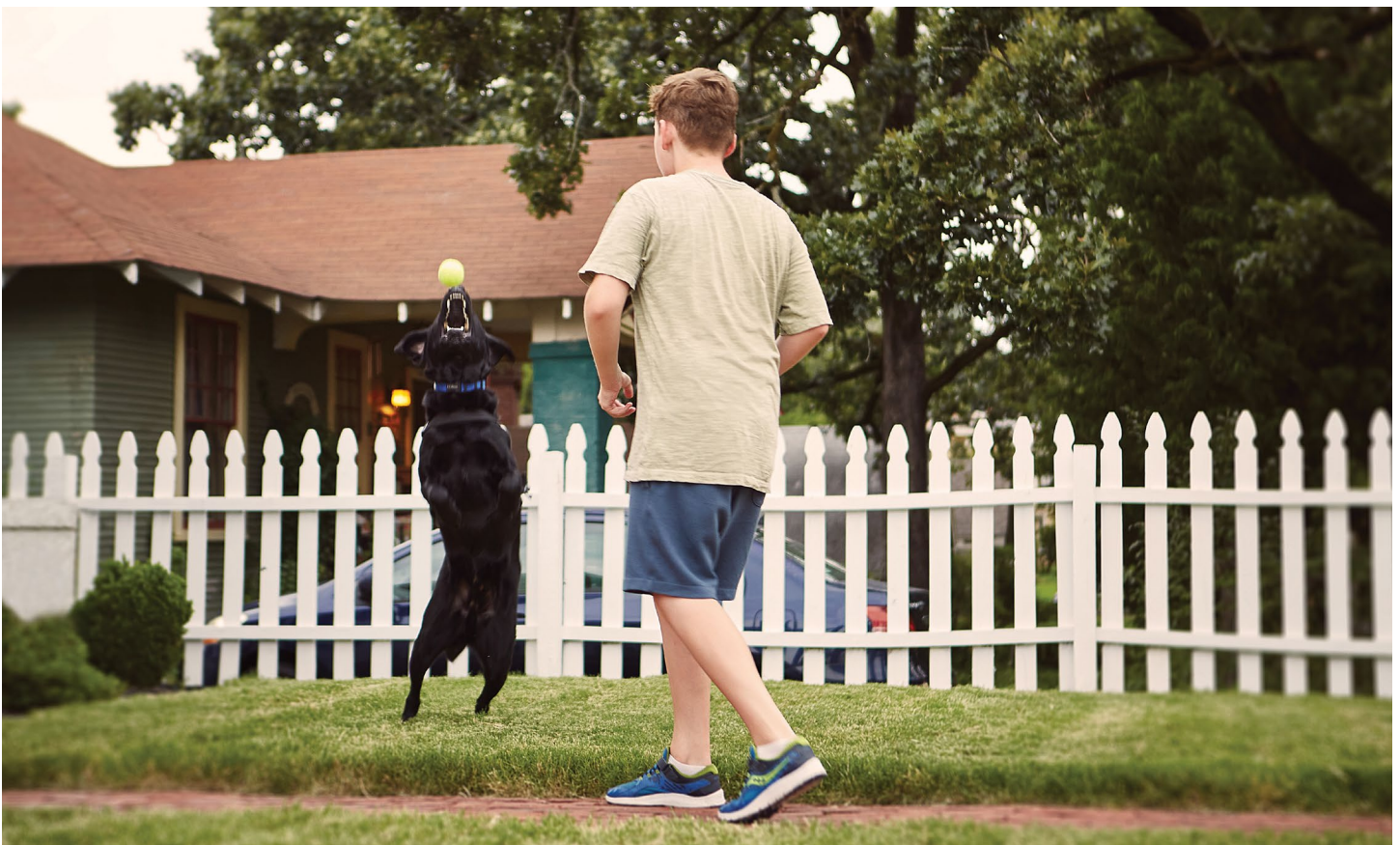


Prince’s journey to becoming a service dog started as a puppy.

“James is always excited to be out in public, especially when people show an interest in Prince,” adds Scott. “James holds the leash, and this gives him confidence.”

Prince’s journey to becoming a service dog protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) started in puppyhood with a puppy foster parent who introduced socialization and obedience and culminated at 2 years of age after three stages of successful training at RFI. The real test, the Assistance Dogs International (ADI) public access test proving teamwork ability in public, came after 100 one-on-one hours working with James and his family. They passed.

The [National Institute of Mental Health](#) describes autism spectrum disorder as a neurological and devel-



James plays ball with his autism service dog, “Prince,” at home.

opmental disorder that affects how people interact with others and how they communicate, learn and behave. It is considered a “spectrum disorder” because of the wide variation in type and severity of symptoms.

Children with autism may exhibit irritability, lethargy, hyperactivity, and noncompliance. These behaviors may impact families causing high levels of stress, poor emotional coping, marital distress, and high rates of depression. Autism can impact siblings as well as the family as a whole, resulting in lower levels of family adaptability and cohesion.

Since the early 2000s, autism service dogs have helped children with autism and their families. These specially trained dogs use calming behaviors, such as applying pressure by leaning against a child or gently lying across a lap, to decompress anxiety. Their ability to interrupt meltdowns and provide confidence in tense situations has eased stress at home and outside the home on medical visits, shopping, school activities, and trips.

The critical part of training an autism service dog is matching the dog to the right recipient, says Kyle Cory-Yaeggi, RFI Director of Operations. “Each child with autism is very different,” he explains. “Not only do our service dogs perform tasks to disrupt high anxiety, they also offer companionship and unconditional love. Additionally, more than half of children with autism display eloping behaviors. Our service dogs are trained to passively anchor a child, which protects them from running into traffic or getting lost in a store.”

Prince’s puppy foster parent noticed his calm demeanor, and potential to be an autism service dog, at 5 months old as he laid resiliently while her cats pawed at him to play. After months of training and attending classes with college and middle-school students, Prince was confirmed best-suited for a child with autism rather than a veteran with a disability, RFI’s other client focus.

Lisa recalls when James was introduced to Prince along with three other autism service dog candidates. “Prince had a soft mouth when James gave him a treat unlike the other more excited, more aggressive snack-taking dogs,” she says. “Prince also gave James space without crowding him. They bonded pretty quickly.”

TRAITS OF A SUCCESSFUL SERVICE/ASSISTANCE DOG

- Two to three generations of both sides of the dog’s pedigree have passed health clearances for breed genetic and medical conditions
- Passes breed health clearances including tests for hips, elbows, eyes, and heart, as well as genetic tests
- Physically sound, having proper structure, form and function
- Mentally sound, exhibiting a desire to work and an ability to settle in highly distracting environments, such as a grocery store or school
- Intuitive nature, showing responsiveness to its partner



RFI assistant dog trainer Bailey Inman works on core strength and body awareness with this Labrador Retriever service dog in training.

Founded by former professional retriever trainer Scott Dewey and his friend and retriever enthusiast Charles Dwyer in 2000, RFI has locations in Waverly, Iowa, and Sedalia, Missouri. Dewey trained and handled the 2004 National Field Champion, NFC-FC-AFC Dewey’s Drank Of Moon River, and the 2009 Purina Hi-Point Amateur retriever, FC-AFC Castlebay’s Night Robber. Although Dewey and Dwyer are retired from RFI, their mission is going strong.

A prominent assistance dog training facility in St. Louis that began in 1981 to provide assistance dogs to individuals with physical challenges and facility dogs to those in need of emotional assurance is Duo Dogs. Director of Programs Tracy Gellman Liebe says, “Our dogs provide stability and independence, courage and comfort. They generate feelings of love and affection and provide heart and soul.”

Duo Dogs trains mobility assistance dogs, hearing assistance dogs, assistance dogs with skills to provide social-emotional support for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, and facility dogs. Its Touch Therapy Dog program certifies volunteers and their personal dogs to provide pet-assisted therapy at hospitals, nursing homes, hospices, treatment centers, residential facilities, and schools.

Purina is partnering with Duo Dogs in its new Purina Paws for Hope program at

St. Louis Children's Hospital. The program is adding full-time facility dogs and increasing the volunteer Touch Therapy teams to connect pets with youth and promote mental and physical health. Purina's support builds on the one-of-a-kind Purina Family Pet Center that opened six years ago at the leading pediatric hospital allowing family pets to visit patients and thus combining the healing power of the human-animal bond with the family-centered care.

A facility dog through Purina Paws for Hope is "Duo Dog Opal," a 4-year-old yellow female Labrador Retriever, who serves the hospital's Child Protection Program (CPP).

Children being treated through the CPP who have opted to include Opal as part of their clinic visit have recorded a higher appointment attendance of 77 percent compared to a previous average of 60 percent.

Handler Kathleen Houston says, "Opal has a powerful impact on the staff, families and patients who are in a vulnerable state in the child abuse clinic and who have a hard time trusting people after the abuse they've endured. One child said, 'Opal cures depression.'"

Like all of Duo Dogs' assistance dogs, Opal began her training with a volunteer puppy raiser foster family who

PURINA SPONSORS HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND STUDIES RELATED TO AUTISM & MENTAL ILLNESS

Advancing understanding of the human-animal bond in lowering the stress of children with autism and their families and in engaging patients in a mental health crisis was the goal of studies supported by Purina through its human-animal bond program.

François Martin, PhD, head of animal behavior and welfare for Purina, says, "Animal-assisted therapy has been shown to aid those struggling with physical, emotional and mental challenges. This research has provided enormous insights about the bond between people and pets and how this bond can positively impact these patients at home and in therapeutic settings."

Research scientist Gretchen Carlisle, PhD, of the Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction (ReCHAI) at the University of Missouri, wanted to know if having a pet helped to decrease anxiety and increase social interactions of children with autism and their families. The study was based on an online survey that included 764 parents of autistic children, of which 626 were dog or cat owners, 70 were non-pet owners, and 68 whose pet ownership status was unknown.

"Given the high stress experienced in families of children with autism, we wanted to understand the potential for companion animals to help parents who may feel isolated, overwhelmed and stigmatized," Dr. Carlisle says. "Managing stress is important for the health of these families."

Published in March 2020 in the *Journal of Autism and Development*, the study reported these findings based on parents' responses about the benefits of pet ownership:

- Strong pet bonds in which 71 percent of children with autism and 90 percent of parents are attached to their pets
- Lower stress levels in which 59 percent of children and 62 percent of parents experience increased relaxation from a pet
- Companionship in which 56 percent of parents say a pet increases their companionship and affection for their child and 68 percent say a pet adds companionship and affection to their lives



- Increased social interactions for 48 percent of children and 42 percent of parents from pet ownership

Meanwhile, at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, researcher Sophia Soklaridis, PhD, wanted to evaluate how certified therapy dogs aid qualitative research with patients in a mental health crisis. Published in August 2020 in *PLOS ONE*, the study is the first to show the value of using certified therapy dogs as a participatory research tool in a health setting.

"We recorded social interactions between patients and researchers during focus group discussions that included a certified therapy dog to gauge patient engagement on pet therapy activities," says Dr. Soklaridis, associate professor in the Departments

of Psychiatry, Family and Community Medicine at the University of Toronto.

"We found that therapy dogs motivated patients with mental illness to participate in treatment rather than to self-isolate, connected patients with one another and researchers by providing a safe, open environment, and created connections by comforting patients so they were able to relate their own experiences."

Ultimately, participating researchers, recreational therapists, volunteer handlers, and patients agreed that having a therapy dog at their discussions was integral to their success. "Certified therapy dogs can be used effectively to engage hard-to-reach patients in research about their treatment and care. Therapy dogs increased patients' motivation, helped them build rapport and create connections," Dr. Soklaridis says.

"The power of the human-animal bond as reflected in these studies warrants continued studies and understanding," says Dr. Martin of Purina. "These studies are very encouraging by showing that pets may provide relief from stress for families of children with autism and that therapy dogs may encourage mental illness patients to open up for more effective treatment."

took her on outings and to group obedience classes. Around 16 months of age, Opal began advanced training at the Duo Dog facility, working on tasks and skills that matched her natural abilities, interests and temperament. After six months, she began working and bonding with Houston in preparation for facility dog assistance work.

RFI and Duo Dogs seek similar characteristics in service and assistance dogs. Both nonprofit organizations are accredited by Assistance Dogs International, a world-wide-recognized industry authority. About \$50,000 is invested training individual dogs for their roles.

Breeding programs at RFI and Duo Dogs have been developed over the years. About half of RFI's service dogs are from its in-house breeding program, and half are sourced from reputable breeders they work with across the country.

"We primarily train Labrador Retrievers and Golden Retrievers due to the biddability of these breeds to work with multiple handlers," says RFI's John Drach, Director of Training. "A dog that has retriever drive with middle-of-the-road energy makes a good service dog."

Prince, for example, was whelped by "Faith," who is part of RFI's in-house breeding program. Faith came from the Kerrybrook Labrador Retriever kennel owned by Chris Wincek of Chardon, Ohio. Originating in 1980 from English field trial lines, Kerrybrook has produced Master Hunters, a Field Champion, Qualified All-Age dogs, two Champion Master Hunters, and show Champions. Wincek has donated to service dog programs since 1990.

"Service dogs must have a temperament that is highly intuitive, confident, introspective, empathetic, and resilient with a bit of stubbornness. The stubbornness comes in handy when a dog perceives something as a risk and refuses a command for all the right reasons," Wincek says. "I look



These RFI service dogs in training are practicing "place," in which they are taught to stay on the raised dog beds amid distractions until released.

for puppies for RFI that have unflappable temperaments and that are extraordinarily willing to please."

Duo Dogs are bred, whelped and raised at the facility, where volunteers provide 24-hour care of newborn puppies. Dams are chosen from their own breeding program, and Duo partners with reputable breeders to match stud dogs.

Crissy Smith, Duo Dogs' Director of Canine Services and Assistance Dog Trainer, says, "Labrador Retrievers are our standard choice dog breed due to their high trainability and ease of transfer to clients. We breed for specific temperaments that include good behavior, discipline, training, and acceptance of strangers."

Duo Dogs and RFI adhere to a strict review of potential breeding dogs' pedigrees, health clearances and genetic testing. "Purposefully bred dogs from breeders across the country with proven traits that make for a successful service or assistance dog have been instrumental in the past and future success of our programs," Cory-Yaeggi says.

The dynamics of the human-animal bond make dogs ideal partners for people with disabilities. Their intuitive nature combined with training of specific tasks allows them to help people struggling with physical and emotional challenges in unique ways. A bonus is their companionship and unconditional love.

Typically, a two-year wait on both ends — for the recipient and the service dog in training — allows time to prepare for the life-changing partnership. A visit to James and Prince's house these days might find them playing games of hide-and-seek or fetch. At night, James nestles in with Prince lying at the foot of his bed. By morning, the sweet Labrador Retriever has carefully worked his way to the top of the bed close to James. ■

*The family's first names have been changed and last name omitted to protect their privacy.



Duo Dog Opal gets lots of petting in her job as a facility dog at St. Louis Children's Hospital. Opal, who offers emotional assurance to children in the Child Protection Program, is part of the Purina Paws for Hope partnership with Duo Dogs.

‘TRUMPET’ IS FIRST BLOODHOUND TO WIN BEST IN SHOW AT WESTMINSTER

The graceful, fluid movement, sleuth-hound attitude and sweet disposition of a black-and-tan male Bloodhound named “Trumpet” (MBIS/MBISS GCHB Flessner’s Toot My Own Horn) tracked straight to Best in Show at the 146th Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show Presented by *Purina Pro Plan*.

The first Bloodhound to win Best in Show at Westminster — and the 15th of the past 16 winners that are fed *Purina Pro Plan* — Trumpet topped more than 3,000 dogs of 211 breeds at the iconic show held June 20 to 21, 2022, at Lyndhurst

Estate in Tarrytown, New York. Trumpet is the eighth Bloodhound to win Hound Group First, following his sire, “Nathan” (MBIS/MBISS GCHP Flessner’s International S’Cess MTI), who won in 2014.

Handler Heather Buehner of Berlin Center, Ohio, who showed her family’s Irish Setters in Juniors and who has co-bred and co-owned Bloodhounds, including Trumpet, with Chris and Bryan Flessner of St. Joseph, Illinois, since 2007, says, “I went into the Best in Show ring with no expectations, but knowing that anything is possible.”

“I WENT INTO THE
BEST IN SHOW
RING WITH NO
EXPECTATIONS,
BUT KNOWING
THAT ANYTHING
IS POSSIBLE.”

Heather Buehner, Trumpet’s handler, co-breeder and co-owner

It was a “pinch-me” moment for Team Trumpet when Best in Show judge Dr. Donald Sturz Jr. of Brooklyn, New York, who is recognized internationally as a prominent show judge, named the Bloodhound as the winner. “Trumpet had flawless movement and athleticism. This breed must have endurance to track and trail, and that is what I saw in this Bloodhound,” Dr. Sturz said after the show.

Watching the live broadcast from their homes, the Flessners, co-breeder and co-owner Tina Kocar of Puyallup, Washington, and co-owner Missy Bettis of Orlando, Florida, were overwhelmed with joy. Heather’s proud mother, Mary Zitek, watched on television, as did Heather’s boyfriend, Chuck Stanaitis, who later welcomed her home with a red-carpet rollout, balloons and signs. Heather’s aunt, Linda Krawczonek, who was at Westminster so Heather

could show her Long-Coat Chihuahua, an Award of Merit winner, was thrilled to be ringside. All have rewatched the show many times.

As for Trumpet, he went into Westminster a debutant who had just started his Specials campaign in January 2022. The handsome 130-pound hound took his ninth Best in Show at Westminster. Shown only 10 weekends in 2021, Trumpet finished the year as the No. 1 Bloodhound in breed and all-breed points. Highlights included winning two Hound Group Firsts on the Florida Circuit and Best in Specialty Show at the American Bloodhound Club (ABC) Specialty in Temonium, Maryland. Physically mature at 4 ½ years of age, Trumpet’s thick bone, solid structure, pendulous ears, and superabundant wrinkled head are the hallmarks of the scent hound breed.

Trumpet is one of few linebred Bloodhounds from the *Flessners* breeding program, now in its 35th year, as they generally practice type-to-type outcross breedings. Trumpet is reminiscent of his sire, Nathan, the Best in Show winner at the 2014 National Dog Show Presented by *Purina Pro Plan*.

“Trumpet has Nathan’s showmanship, good looks and beautiful gait, which comes from proper structure, form and function,” says Heather, who also handled Nathan.

Trumpet’s dam, “Buckles” (CH Fessner’s Rock’Em Don’T Knock’Em), finished her show championship in 2014 at the ABC National Specialty winning Winners Bitch and Best of Winners. Her first litter, dubbed the “music” litter, produced Trumpet and his brother, “Bugle” (MBISS CH Flessner’s March To Beat Of My Own Drum), who were born Dec. 23, 2017.

Trumpet’s paternal grandsire, “Harvey” (MHOF GCHB Flessner’s International Harvester), was the No. 1 Bloodhound in breed points in 2010 and an ABC Hall of Fame (HOF) Sire of Merit and Show Dog, and Trumpet’s paternal great-grandsire, “Tigger” (2XHOF BIS CH Flessner’s And Tiger Too), was a two-time HOF Sire of Merit. Trumpet is an ABC HOF Show Dog.

Tigger, whelped in 1997 from one of the Flessners’ first Bloodhound litters, was sired by “Rad” (HOF CH Legacy’s Totally Radical), a No. 1 Bloodhound in the 1990s, who was from the breeding program of their mentor, Legacy Bloodhound breeder, the late Anne L. Legge. Tigger’s dam was their foundation bitch, “Amber” (CH Coshelav Sparkling



Westminster Best in Show winner "Trumpet" is from a rare linebreeding by Bloodhound breeders Chris and Bryan Flessner. The handsome male represents the fifth generation of his dam's side of the pedigree, and the fourth generation of his sire's side.

Amber), a No. 1 bitch in the 1990s. Notably, Tigger, the Flessners' first homebred champion, is listed in the Guinness World Record book for having the longest ears on a dog. His right ear measured 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches long, and his left ear was 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long.

Importantly, Tigger sired a litter that produced a bitch named "Lola" (CH Hold The Mayo at the Magpie), who became the catalyst linking Heather and the Flessners. "I showed Lola for the first time at the ABC National Specialty in 2006, and she won Grand Sweepstakes and the Top Twenty," says Heather. "I campaigned Lola to No. 2 Bloodhound that year.

"I fell in love with her breed type and blonde face. Knowing that Lola was a lot like Tigger, I reached out to Chris and Bryan and got on their waiting list for a puppy."

The Flessners allowed Heather to have the third-pick bitch from a litter of 13 pups whelped in 2010. "Lexie" (GCH Flessner's Pursuit Of Perfection At Skipton), the first Bloodhound to include Heather's Skipton prefix in her registered name, was from an outcross breeding, though her maternal grandsire was Tigger.

As the partnership between the Flessners and Heather began to evolve, it proved advantageous for both parties. "Chris and Bryan are like my second mom and dad," Heather says. "We talk pedigrees, hips, heart, and skin problems.

They are very careful breeders who produce about one litter every three years."

"When we started with the breed 37 years ago, we wanted a large dog for our farm and for our children who were just a baby and toddler," Chris says. "We went to a lot of dog shows and found the Bloodhound folks to be really friendly. The Bloodhounds were clunky, funny, sweet, and laidback. They would lick the kids' faces."

As they got hooked on the breed and the sport, Chris and Bryan got involved in their local kennel clubs. They developed a keen eye for recognizing crosses that would give them a well-balanced Bloodhound with correct breed type and structure.

"We're always looking for that one pup like Trumpet. It takes a lot of luck and a lot of hope. You give it your best guess and go with what you believe," Chris says.

Meanwhile, there's no time for retirement for Trumpet who has just come into his prime. Reiterating her philosophy, Heather says, "Anything is possible, and if you go into it with no expectations, you will be happy whatever comes your way. For us, at the end of every day, Trumpet is still our dog."

Sound off! Congratulations Team Trumpet on your Westminster Best in Show! ■

WATERMARK RETRIEVERS

MAKE A MARK

A foursome of like-minded retriever enthusiasts step back to strategize setups to run water drills with young field trial hopefuls. The Texas training grounds of [Watermark Retrievers](#) provide ideal conditions for practicing water marks with these rising stars.

Called “the farm” by Dr. Mary Tatum, her 38-acre property outside Giddings has two technical ponds and ample area for setting up blind and marked land retrieves. The talents of these retrievers are rooted in good breeding, thanks to Mary, and positive reinforcement training, thanks to the innovative retriever trainer Bill Hillmann.

Getting ready to make a blind water retrieve is a stylish and intense 4-year-old black male named “Shadow” (Watermarks Shadow), the 2020 Purina High-Point Derby Dog. Waiting their turns are Shadow’s sons, “King” (Watermarks King Of Hearts), 1 ½ years old, and “Choir Boy” (Watermarks Choir Boy), 2 ½ years



Mary introduces puppy “Rosebud” to a paint roller brush, which will be used to teach fetch.

old, both of whom inherited their sire’s fierce competitive drive. A 1 ½-year-old male Golden Retriever, “Danger” (Watermark’s Danger SH), is gearing up for Master Hunter tests.

With her friendly, down-to-earth outlook and contagious smile, Mary makes training retrievers fun. Although her passion is field trials and hunting tests, she wholeheartedly believes all her purposeful-bred retrievers have a niche.

Appreciation of the versatility of these breeds is a common thread between Mary and Bill. The handler of six Purina High-Point Labrador Retriever Derby dogs, Bill, of Caldwell, Texas, is well-known for his training seminars and videos covering puppy basics to advanced skills. His

progressive training method capitalizes on a dog’s success.

“Labrador Retrievers have more jobs than any other breed, and Golden Retrievers are in the same category,” he says. “When you produce dogs like Mary does that have



Training at Watermark Retrievers in Giddings, Texas, are, from left, Leslie Wills, Mary Tatum, Bill Hillmann, and Mike Wills with “Crash” (Watermarks Crash Gordon).

Right: “Shadow” (Watermarks Shadow), now 4 years old, was the 2020 Purina High-Point Derby Dog.



both tractability and trainability, you also get an extreme desire to please. Both breeds are fabulous athletes and easy to transfer from one person to another.”

The foursome — Mary, Bill, and Mike and Leslie Wills, amateur competitors who have owned Watermark retrievers for 17 years — takes to heart this early-season training. Their mutual goal is to develop retrievers that deliver a high-drive, memorable performance without losing the breed’s natural charisma and companionship.

“The desire, temperament and trainability make Watermark retrievers exceptional dogs. Not only do they like to work in the field, but they are great house dogs as well,” says Mike, who recently transitioned to field trials after years of doing hunting tests. Mike and Leslie enjoy training at Mary’s and benefit from Bill’s training tips and help with setups for their 4-year-old black male Labrador, “Crash” (Watermarks Crash Gordon).

“Bill’s style is good for dogs and people,” adds Leslie, walking their latest addition, a 3-month-old black male Labrador puppy, “Chev” (Watermark’s Chevalier). “It’s

about building a relationship with a young dog. Dogs and people respond to that.”

Besides having bred and co-owning Shadow with Bill, Mary is the breeder of two National Field Champions. “Emmit” (NFC-FC Watermark’s Running Back MH), the 2011 National Open winner, was owned by Cynthia Tallman, and “Legend” (NAFC-FC-AFC Coolwater’s Hawkeye Legend), the 2016 National Amateur winner, was owned by Alex Washburn. In 2015, Mary was named the AKC Breeder of the Year for Retriever Field Events, an honor recognizing her long-term commitment to the sport and the breed.

Bill’s insights identifying and developing a dog’s potential and Mary’s commitment to producing top competitors are hallmarks of the program. “It was a very nice breeding that produced Shadow, and Bill said, ‘We can make this dog great,’” Mary says. “Shadow is a powerful dog and very strong in the water.”

The Watermark family is a close-knit community. Nearly 50 percent of puppy buyers are repeat buyers, and many are amateur competitors in various sporting venues. Mary, a veterinarian, advises puppy buyers throughout the dogs’ lives.

Co-breeders and co-owners with whom Mary has partnered on dozens of Field Champions contribute to Watermark’s success. Bill has co-owned several Watermark retrievers with Mary through the years. Pros like Danny Farmer work with Bill and Mary on some of the dogs, and pro trainers Tim and Lauren Springer ready some of the dogs for hunting tests. An avid competitor herself, Mary has titled many Labradors in amateur field trials and Golden Retrievers in hunting tests and working certificates.

Although semi-retired, Mary is excited about her latest veterinary endeavor. Along with veterinarian Sarah Burbridge, she is opening the Watermark Veterinary Hospital in fall 2022 in Brenham, Texas. “We will have a breeding center that will include frozen semen breedings and OFA and PennHIP certifications,” Mary says. “I will oversee the breeding program.”

Mary’s beginning with retrievers was in 1977 with a Golden bitch named “Amiga” (Mans Buena Amiga CD), whom she bought from an ad in the *Houston Chronicle*. With help from her father, she bred her first litter out of Amiga four years later.

“I just wanted to train dogs,” says Mary, who put an obedience Companion Dog title on Amiga. “Golden Retrievers are a wonderful, willing breed. I competed in conformation and obedience. Then, I was introduced to working certificates and hunting tests, and so began my passion for hunting tests and field trials.”

Today, about 70 percent of Watermark’s litters are Labrador Retrievers and 30 percent are Golden Retrievers, a flip from the beginning when most were Golden litters. Keeping up with puppy requests is virtually impossible.

“Golden Retrievers really started all of this,” Mary reflects.



Bill prepares to cast “King” (Watermarks King Of Hearts).



Mary works "Danger" (Watermark's Danger SH) on water marks.

A VETERINARIAN & RETRIEVER BREEDER

As a girl growing up in Houston, Mary Naschke was one of seven children from a family whose German paternal grandparents settled in Galveston, Texas, in the early 1900s. She loved to visit her uncle's 300-acre farm in Ledbetter, Texas. "We went to the country a lot," she says. "I especially adored the dogs."

Wanting a dog of her own, Mary saved her babysitting money to buy an Irish Setter like the one in "Big Red" by Jim Kjølgaard. "I paid \$125 for 'Marigold' in 1968," says Mary. "She was lovely but had allergies and hip dysplasia. I began researching Golden Retrievers. I wanted a service-oriented dog, as I had enjoyed training Marigold for obedience."

Mary's passion for animals and interest in biomedical sciences landed her at Texas A&M University at College Station in 1975 enrolled in the five-year veterinary program.

Two years of year-round undergraduate school and three years of veterinary school turned out a veterinarian with a keen interest in reproduction and performing health test certifications.

"I went to Charlie Quick, a board-certified veterinary radiologist in Houston who was on the board of OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals), and asked him to show me how he took X-rays of a dog's hips," she says.

During veterinary school, Mary married Jack Tatum, a teaching assistant working on a doctorate degree in physics. Although they did not have the same interest in dogs, as Jack had a fancy for his Rottweiler "Astra," Mary showed the Rottie in conformation. They were married 38 years when Jack passed away in 2016.

After becoming a veterinarian, Mary bred Amiga, her first Golden, in 1981 to a prominent stud dog, AM/CAN CH Southern's Gold-Rush Traveler OS SDHF. A male from the litter, "Strider" (CH Tatum's Gallant Strider), became Mary's heart dog, going everywhere with her. When he finished his show championship, she says, "He was still just my dog."

Her progression to a powerhouse field trial Labrador Retriever line came in 1991 when breeder John Broucek of Kingston, Tennessee, sold her a black bitch, Troublesome Bailey. Mary bred "Bailey" to NAFC-FC Gusto's Last Control HOF, the 1992 National Amateur winner. The loose line-breeding included paternal great-great-grandsire NAFC-FC-AFC Dude's Double or Nothin' HOF and maternal great-great-grandsire Super Powder HOF.

Between working as a veterinarian at Brittmoore Animal Hospital in Houston, raising a son, Russell, and training and showing dogs, Mary bred Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers. Importantly, she was developing a knack for reading pedigrees and identifying good breeding matches that would produce standout performance dogs.

Mary's early Golden Retrievers were from show-bred litters, many which she also trained in obedience. As she trained with other enthusiasts, Mary began discovering the thrill of fieldwork competition.

A male Golden born in 2007, CH Déjà Vu Ducat Watermark Dante, sired several litters for Watermark and other kennels. Mary co-owned "Dante," who was bred by Alice Lipe Juda, with her longtime friend and mentor Helen Dorrance, who owns Gold Ducat Kennels. Dante sired a litter in 2010 bred by Helen and Susan Scribner to Ducat Brytlea Arielle that produced a Grand Champion and Outstanding Dam for co-owners Mary and Helen.

"Ticket" (GCH Ducat Watermark Brtlea's The Cricket On The Hearth OD) produced litters that turned out nine progeny earning titles in conformation, hunting tests, obedience, and rally. Mary put a Junior Hunter title on Ticket's daughter, Watermark's Apollo Queen Of Tarts JH.

"I still have frozen semen from Dante," she says.



“Choir Boy” (Watermarks Choir Boy) follows hand signals on a water blind retrieve.

The versatility of Watermark’s Golden bloodline is notable. Mary’s bitch, Watermark’s Sunsplash Keepn’ Pace With Meadow OD, a therapy dog and hunting companion born in 2011, was linebred to MACH11 Fast-Trak’s Little Deuce Coupe MXB4 MJS4 FTC1 MFB2 TQZ T2B4 OS ADHF. “Pace,” who was bred by Andy and Susan Pilkerton, was sired by Topbrass Rascher Dasher out of Sunsplash Zest for Life. “Coupe,” who was bred by Margaret Closson, was owned by Lois Williams.

The cross was so successful, Mary repeated it. Altogether, Pace, an Outstanding Dam, produced 12 offspring that held performance titles. Five were Master Agility Champions, of which three were ranked among the Top 10 agility dogs and four competed at the National Agility Invitational. Her offspring also earned titles in obedience, tracking, dock diving, and rally.

On the Labrador side, the breeding that produced Emmit, the 2011 National Field Champion, was out of FC-AFC Watermark’s Mardi Gras, whom Mary got as a pup from Chris Eskind and finished her Amateur Field Champion title. “Mardi” had a prominent bitchline, as her dam, FC-AFC Bayou Bend’s Ebonstar Peg, was sired by 2XNAFC-FC-AFC Ebonstar Lean Mac. Emmit’s sire was NAFC-FC-AFC Carbon

Copy Of Horn Creek, whose grandsire was FC-AFC Wilderness Harley To Go HOF.

The breeding that produced the 2016 National Amateur Champion, Legend, was a miracle litter that saved the life of the dam, Watermark’s Mercy Me. Bred and owned by Mary, “Mercy” went back Troublesome Baily, who was her maternal granddam.

“Mercy had done well in derby stakes and was the No. 6 derby dog in the country,” Mary says. “I sold her and then missed her terribly.”

Years later, Mary was able to get Mercy back through her friend Joyce Williams, who owned “Tank” (NFC-NAFC-FC-AFC Candlewood’s Super Tanker).

Mary wanted a litter out of Mercy and knew it would be her last one. She bred Mercy to a yellow male, FC Colonel Bowe’s Revenge, who was sired by Watermark’s foundation male, FC-AFC HRCH Watermark’s The Boss. An outstanding field trial dog, “Boss” qualified for and competed in four National Open Championships. Boss was sired by “Harley,” the paternal great-grandsire of Emmit, whose maternal grandsire was 2XNAFC-FC River Oaks Rascal HOF. On Boss’ dam’s side, his maternal grandsire was the National Open and National Amateur Champion Tank.

"I still have frozen semen from Boss, who was born in 1994," Mary says. "Two of his offspring from AI (artificial semination) breedings are competing now."

During Mercy's pregnancy, Dr. Wayne Whitney of Gulf Coast Veterinary Specialists in Houston, discovered liver cancer. "Mercy had three puppies by cesarean section and at the same time a soft-tissue surgeon removed the lobe of liver with the cancer," says Mary. "Mercy enjoyed the rest of her life with me as a companion and hunting dog, passing away at 15 ½ years of age."

Legend was one of the pups from Mercy's last litter. To have bred a second National Champion was a defining moment for Watermark.

Back to training for the fall 2022 season. It promises to be exciting. Shadow and "Fee Fee" (Watermarks Celebration) will be competing in open stakes. Shadow is from a frozen semen breeding sired by FC-AFC Hawkeye's Candlewood Shadow out of 3XNFC-FC-AFC Candlewood's Tanks A Lot HOF. A powerful female, Fee Fee, is owned by Jimmy and Mary Eller.

"I have frozen semen from Shadow," Mary says. "I am really pushing him because he is proving to be a great producer."

Shadow's sons King and Choir Boy are being prepped for trials by Bill and Mary. King, who is owned by Bill and Richard Tooke, is out of Watermarks Songbird. King will compete at the National Derby Championship in October in Sedalia, Missouri. Mary owns Choir Boy, whose maternal grandsire is FC HRCH SRS Watermark's Texas Welcome MH and maternal great-grandsire is 2XNAFC Lean Mac.

Amateur competitor Creg Jones, of Giddings, who trained Golden Retrievers with Mary 30-plus years ago at soccer



Watermark Retriever puppies go to their new homes with [Purina Pro Plan Large Breed puppy food](#), a [Purina Pro Plan Puppy Starter Kit](#), a lead, puppy blanket, and a bag with the Watermark Retriever logo. As pictured here, adult retrievers are fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula](#).

BREEDING TIPS FROM DR. MARY TATUM

- Take time to research a potential breeding partner's pedigree to learn whether its close relatives have passed health clearances for hips, elbows, eyes, and cardiac tests as well as breed-specific genetic tests
- Reach out to the owners of potential stud dogs to learn about their overall health and whether they experienced conditions that are not part of health testing, such as skin allergies and cruciate ligament rupture
- When studying pedigrees look for common ancestry, as a linebreeding, even a loose linebreeding, provides some prediction of traits in contrast to a total outcross, which is used to improve a trait but is not predictable
- Although more costly and involves artificial insemination surgery, a frozen semen breeding is generally 85 percent successful, as long as the semen is good quality and the bitch is healthy. It also provides convenience and allows you to breed a quality stud dog that has passed away
- A successful breeding outcome requires quality care of the bitch during pregnancy and delivery and of neonatal puppies, which includes providing stimulation and socialization throughout the first eight weeks



Mary Tatum, a veterinarian, was the 2015 AKC Breeder of the Year for Retriever Field Events.

fields and parks around Houston, will compete in trials with two Labradors he co-owns with her. Watermarks Primrose Lane is starting in open stakes, and Watermarks Queen Of Hearts will also compete at the National Derby Championship.

The versatility of Mary's retrievers includes doing service work. "I donated 'Duke,' a black male, in 2019 to the Texas State Troopers," she says. "He is a trained drug detection dog. 'Punch,' a yellow female, was a bomb detection dog who completed three tours of duty in Iraq and Iran."

Imparting words of wisdom to breeders, Mary cautions, "It is easy to fall into making breeding decisions through rose-colored glasses. It is important to keep your standard high and not breed dogs having marginal health tests or lacking conformation or performance quality."

The notion of Mary's dogs being beloved companions foremost stays with her today. It goes back to the beginning when Strider became a show champion. "He was still just my dog," she said.

Watermark Retrievers have made a mark on the sport. Most of all, they have made a mark on the heart of Mary Tatum. ■



OPTIMAL NUTRITION FOR PREGNANCY & PUPPIES

IS TIED TO ENERGY DEMANDS

Many aspects of dog breeding cannot be controlled. One of the most important facets — providing optimal nutrition to the dam and growing puppies — is controllable.

Purina nutritionist Raj Naik, DVM, DACVIM (Nutrition), a board-certified veterinary nutritionist, relates the energy and nutrient requirements of the stages of pregnancy and puppy development to optimal nutrition. Dr. Naik recently shared these nutritional insights during a Good Dog Good Breeder webinar.

“For optimal reproduction performance, it is vital for the sire and dam to be in peak body condition,” Dr. Naik says. “An underweight body condition in dams may cause puppies to have reduced birth weight, hypoglycemia and

even poor survival. Overweight dams may have a lower ovulation rate, reduced litter size and poor lactation.”

Just as it is important for the breeding partners to have an ideal, hourglass body condition, it behooves breeders to gradually increase the food fed during pregnancy to meet the dam’s energy demands due to growing fetuses. “Starting at week six through week nine, a pregnant bitch should be fed 10 percent more food per week than her adult maintenance level, as her fetal puppies gain 75 percent of their birth weight during the last three weeks,” he says. “The dam’s total body weight should increase 15 to 25 percent during pregnancy.”

The energy demands for a dam during the peak of lactation are three times greater than adult maintenance. “It

NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS* DURING PREGNANCY & LACTATION

Week of Pregnancy	Energy Demand	Week of Lactation	Energy Demand
Weeks 1 to 5	Adult maintenance	Weeks 1 to 2	Adult maintenance x 2
Week 6	Adult maintenance + 10 percent	Weeks 3 to 4	Adult maintenance x 3
Week 7	Week 6 + 10 percent	Weeks 5 to 6	Adult maintenance x 2
Week 8	Week 7 + 10 percent		
Week 9	Week 8 + 10 percent		

*Pregnant and lactating bitches should be fed a complete and balanced all-life stages or puppy food to meet their increased nutrient and energy requirements. A high-quality, highly digestible food that is energy- and nutrient-dense is recommended.

LARGE- & GIANT-BREED PUPPY NUTRITION WATCHOUTS

Although large- and giant-breed puppies have a higher growth rate than small and medium breeds, they should not be fed an excessive amount of calories to maximize this growth. Dr. Naik advises feeding these breeds to ideal body condition throughout puppyhood and adulthood. “If large- and giant-breed puppies grow too quickly, it could lead to skeletal health concerns and growth and developmental problems,” he says. “It is particularly important to avoid feeding excess calcium in these breeds, as it can do more harm than good by unbalancing the diet, increasing the dietary concentration of calcium, and decreasing the absorption of phosphorus.” Dr. Naik advises feeding these puppies a diet such as one of the [Purina Pro Plan Large Breed](#) puppy foods that has targeted levels of calories and fat to support a moderate growth rate throughout growth and development.



is vital to feed enough food to prevent weight loss and to keep the milk production up during lactation,” says Dr. Naik. “Consider feeding several small meals throughout the day. This also helps during pregnancy when the growing fetuses reduce abdominal space for a large meal.”

The dam’s milk produced during the first 72 hours after whelping is nutritionally critical for puppies. Colostrum contains antibodies that provide passive immunity, highly concentrated energy nutrients and growth factors. Puppies have a small window to benefit from the passive immunity in colostrum, yet it is so important.

Until puppies are 3 to 4 weeks of age, they rely entirely on mother’s milk to survive. “Puppies grow at a high rate and need about 25 calories per 100 grams of body weight,” Dr. Naik says. “In the first 10 days, their birth weight typically doubles. They spend most of the time sleeping and eating.”

Developmentally, puppies go from needing their dam to stimulate them to urinate and defecate in the first two weeks to doing so independently in weeks two to four. They go from having no sight or hearing in weeks one and two to having functioning hearing and vision in weeks two to four. Baby teeth start appearing, and puppies begin exploring their environment and reacting to littermates and the dam. Puppy barks, wagging tails and unsteady walking signal their awareness and social beginnings. Between weeks four to seven, puppies can fully regulate their own temperature.

“In weeks three to four, breeders should start introducing a semi-soft gruel mixture that is one part kibble soaked in two parts warm water,” says Dr. Naik. “This begins their gradual change to eating on their own, as after four weeks, the mother’s milk alone does not provide enough nutrients for puppies and she begins to lose interest in nursing. Nutritional weaning should be completed around 6 weeks of age. In contrast, behavioral weaning in which puppies are separated from the dam and littermates should not happen until they are 8 weeks of age to ensure optimal social behavior.”

Dr. Naik advises feeding pregnant bitches and puppies a complete and balanced all-life stages or puppy food, such as one of the [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance or Active Formulas](#) or [Purina Pro Plan Puppy](#) foods, that has:

- High-quality protein of which 25 percent is metabolizable energy to help build new tissue and support muscle, skin and coat, and organ development
- Calcium to phosphorus ratio that is 1:1 to 1.6-1.8 for proper bone growth
- Essential fatty acids from omega-3 fish oil with DHA for optimal brain-retinal development
- Antioxidants to support a developing immune system

Importantly, Dr. Naik says, when feeding a complete and balanced food, there is no need to supplement with vitamins and minerals. “Balanced diets provide the appropriate levels of nutrients that are critical to get puppies off to a good start in life. Optimal nutrition should be the goal throughout pregnancy and lactation and when feeding developing puppies.” ■



Ideal reproduction and pediatric nutrition is provided in a complete and balanced all-life stages or puppy food, such as one of these [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance or Active Formulas](#) or [Purina Pro Plan Puppy](#) foods.

THE ATTRACTION OF OPPOSITE DOG BREEDS

Most breeders profess that the joy of breeding lies in their passion for a particular dog breed. Imagine adding a second breed, one that is polar opposite in size, temperament or purpose. *Today's Breeder* interviewed breeders whose breed pairings offer a glimpse of how contrasting breeds may complement each another.



Border Terrier “Fendi” (CH Dickendall Spensive) romps with a Labrador Retriever puppy.

Best friends taking a pond swim are Labrador Retriever “Heath” and Border Terrier “Fred.”

Most lazy summer afternoons at Dick and Kendall Herr’s house at Main River Ranch in Gainesville, Texas, a boisterous bunch of Labrador Retriever show dogs and their sidekick Border Terriers are taken out for a pond swim to cool off.

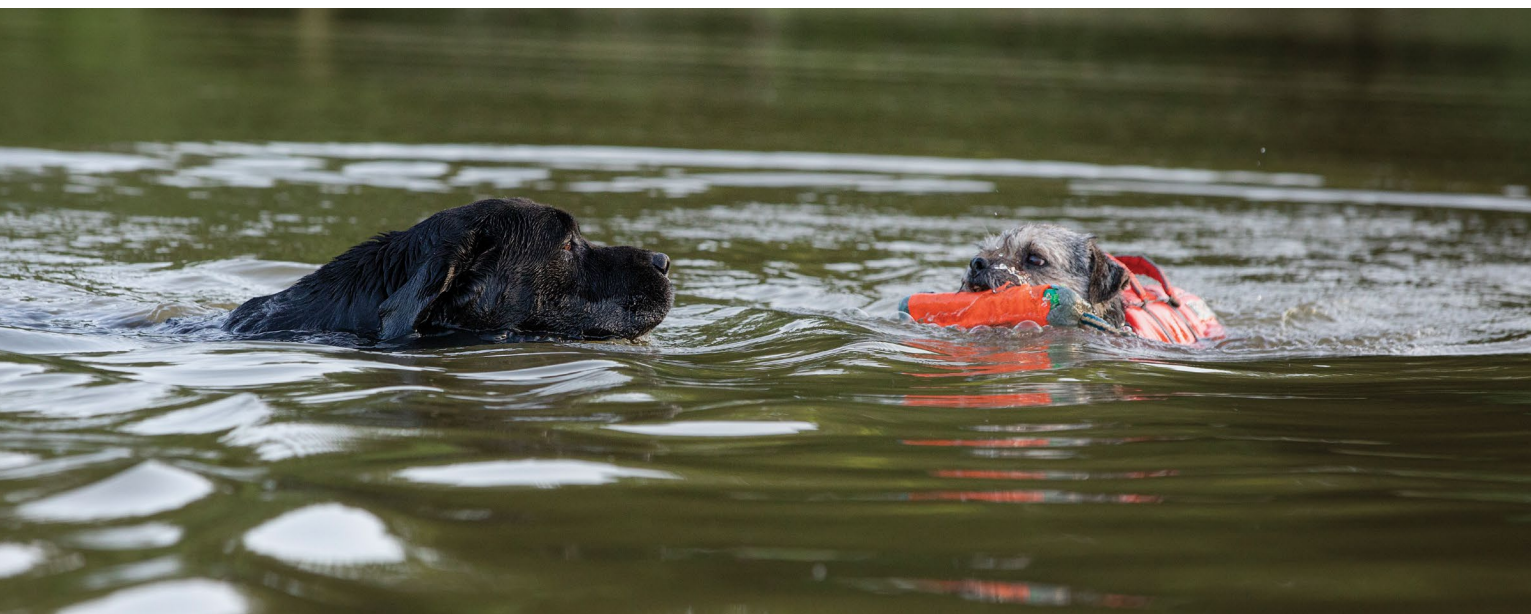
Border Terriers “Fred” (GCH Fred CD BN RE SE CA TKA) and his mom, “BB” (Dickendall Copperstill Blueberry Buckle JE), wear orange life vests so they bob up should they get kicked under the water by the strong-swimming Labrador Retrievers.

“Labrador Retrievers have amazing temperament and are so biddable,” says Kendall, who began with the most popular breed in the country 58 years ago and with Border Terriers 48 years ago. “Labradors are devoted, always seem to know what you are thinking, and are easy to live with. Border Terriers are pretty much the same, except they have a little more energy.”

When Dick and Kendall got their first Labrador Retriever, a black female named “Hobie,” in 1964, they were seeking a companion and duck hunting dog for Dick. Living at Willow Brook Farms in Catasauqua, Pennsylvania, where Dick was the stallion manager, they fell in love with Hobie and were sold on the breed’s A-list virtues.

Their start as breeders of Labrador Retrievers under the [Dickendall](#) prefix — a combination of their first names — was inspired by a neighbor, Margaret Crothers. She had advertised in the newspaper a litter sired by ENG/AM CH Sandylands Midas WC from the famous Sandylands’ kennel of Gwen Broadley in the U.K.

“Margaret’s Labradors were really pretty, and I ended up buying my first show puppy, Gairloch’s Sandy Leo,” Kendall says. “She encouraged me to attend obedience class, and that eventually led me to showing in obedience and conformation. While ‘Leo’ did





Kendall Herr is shown with some of her Dickendall family of dogs. Pictured, from left, are: “Marky Mark” (Dickendall Buckstone Trademark); “Heath” (MIBISS GCH Dickendall Buckstone Hou’s He); “Chill” (BISS CH Dickendall Churchill); “Tucker” (Dickendall Defender); “BB” (Dickendall Copperstill Blueberry Buckle); “Fred” (GCH Fred CD BN RE TKA SE); “Zinger” (Dickendall Buckstone Eyezing On the Cake); and “Rhonda” (CH Dickendall Buckstone Rendezvous at Midnight).

not end up a show dog, he achieved his CDX (Companion Dog Excellent) obedience title and was Dick’s hunting dog.”

Their second Labrador Retriever, “Palangus,” became their foundation bitch, whelping Dickendall’s first show champion in 1970, a black male called “Flip” (CH Dickendall Flip Flop CDX), who was also sired by “Midas.” Kendall breeder-owner-handled Flip in conformation and obedience. “Flip was an excellent sire,” she says. “He had great temperament and was especially trainable.”

The mold was set. Dickendall launched a breeding program founded on its top sires. Multiple Best in Specialty Show winners and all-breed Best of Breed and Sporting Group placers have come from Dickendall. “We have been involved with some of the breed’s most influential sires of recent times,” Kendall says.

About 10 years after Flip, Ken Hunter of Cranspire Labradors leased “Rever” (ENG/AM CH Receiver of Cranspire), the top show dog and top producer in England, to Kendall and Jean Sasaki. Rever finished his American championship in three shows. His first win was Best of Breed from the classes at the prestigious Labrador Retriever Club of the Potomac Specialty Show.

“Rever was a well-balanced, great mover with show dog attitude, and he had a pretty head, super hind quarters and short back,” Kendall says. “He was heavily used as a stud dog in the U.S., which helped to raise the quality of the breed at that time.”

When Rever’s first puppies hit specialty shows, they were easily identified as Rever puppies. Dickendall’s first Rever champion was “Ruffy” (CH Dickendall Ruffy SH) out of CH Moorwood’s Jewel. One of the first champion

show-bred Labradors to achieve a Senior Hunter title, Ruffy also was a notable sire.

Ruffy’s son, “Arnold” (MIBISS Dickendall Arnold), became the top-producing Labrador Retriever sire in the history of the breed — a record that holds today. The No. 1 producer in 1996, 1997 and 1998, Arnold sired 110 show champions. Many of his show champion children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren also hold titles in hunt tests, obedience and agility. Arnold also produced guide dogs, bomb detection dogs and service dogs, plus many beloved companions.

Born in 1988, Arnold was a masculine black male with thick bone and coat, kind expression and beautiful outline. He was bred by Liz Muthard and Ted Roseberg, as Muthard had bought Arnold’s dam, Dickendall A-HA, from Kendall. Arnold was Kendall’s stud fee puppy that she took back from the litter.

One of Arnold’s greatest gifts to Dickendall was as a producer of producers. His son, “Drifter” (MIBISS CH Tabatha’s Drifter at Dickendall JH), was a top producer of champions in 2001. Present day top-producing sires related

DICKENDALL LABRADOR RETRIEVERS & BORDER TERRIERS*

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



Border Terriers:
1/2 to 2 cups per day



Labrador Retrievers:
5 to 8 cups per day

*Each dog is fed individually with the amount fed based on age & body condition

to Arnold are: "Trace" (MBISS GCH/POL CH Dickendall Buckstone Three Dog Night), an Arnold great-grandson born in 2011; "Heath" (MBISS GCH Dickendall Buckstone Hou's He), a Trace son and Arnold grandson born in 2015; "Tipper" (MBISS GCH Dickendall Buckstone Hou's Who), a Heath son and Arnold great-grandson born in 2019; and "Charles Arthur" (MBISS CH Dickendall Buckstone Prince Charming), a Trace great-great-grandson born in 2020.

Dickendall's segue into Border Terriers in 1974 was through Diane Jones, a Labrador Retriever friend, whose neighbor, breeder Joanne Frier, had a Border Terrier litter on the ground. "Diane and I both bought a puppy," Kendall says. "I thought Borders were really cute, a small but rugged and appealing dog. My puppy ended up as CH Lothlorien Smidgen CD and a beloved house dog."

Photographer Elizabeth "Betsy" Arellano recalls getting her Border Terrier, Fred, from Kendall in 2011. "At the time, I didn't have a dog, as I was traveling a lot," Betsy says. "Fred was really fun and easy to take along in a car or airplane."

"Betsy came to take pictures of my dogs, and she never left," says Kendall, who bred Fred and his mother, BB. "Now, Betsy shows our Labradors and our and her own Border Terriers, as she has now bred a few litters under the Blueprint prefix."

When Kendall and Betsy are on the road, BB and "Chill" (BISS CH Dickendall Churchill), an Arnold son, patiently wait their return under the live oak in the front yard. It is befitting. After all, BB and Chill are house dogs who go to work with Kendall every day at the kennel. Their loyalty shows as neither is ever far from her side.

WINGSSONG'S PAPILLONS & MILLENNIUM'S MASTIFFS

The No. 2 all-systems Papillon, a handsome 6-year-old tricolor male called "Marley" (MBIS/MBISS GCHP Wingsong This Could Be Love), has a happy demeanor and distinctive confidence undoubtedly influenced by being raised with Mastiffs.

While just young puppies in the whelping box, weighing under a pound, Marley and his littermates



Chris Jones and her husband, Tim Plezbert, are shown with Wingsong Papillons "Promise" (CH Wingsong High Hopes), left, and "Marley" (BIS/BISS GCHP Wingsong This Could Be Love) and Millennium Mastiffs "Traveler" (GCH Millennium's Traveling Man), left, and "Rumor" (GCHB Millennium's Talk of the Town FDC).



Chris has fun with Promise, left, and Marley, the No. 2 Papillon all-systems whose impressive pedigree includes three generations of Best in Show and Best in Specialty Show winners.

had frequent visits from a 220-pound fawn male Mastiff named “Rush” (GCHP Millenniums Ain’t No Stopping Us Now RN FDC TT CGCA TDI) and his relatives. In their curious ways, the gentle giants would softly nuzzle the toy puppies.

Breeder-owners Chris Jones, a professional handler, and her husband, Tim Plezbert, of Maple Park, Illinois, have spent more than four decades developing the bloodlines of her Wingsong Papillons and his Millennium Mastiffs. They share their lives with the fine-boned, dainty toy spaniel breed and the massive, heavy-boned giant breed.

“All our Papillon litters are born in our house with the Mastiffs watching over them,” Chris says.

“Mastiffs love everyone,” adds Tim. “They have such a mellow temperament, though they can be protective if they need to be. In the old days, they had to be tough to guard estates and run off intruders. At our house, it is the Papillons that rule.”

Tim and Chris’ 15-acre home in the country has a show kennel, though the handful of resident adult and puppy Mastiffs have kennel quarters in the home’s downstairs. The Papillons live upstairs, hence their sovereign status.

When the couple met in 1988, Chris was an apprentice working with professional handlers Bryan and Nancy Martin of Libertyville, Illinois, while also showing the Papillons of her and her mother, the late Pat Jones. They had just bought their first show Papillon, “Jimmy” (CH Ken Mar Loteki Totally Radical), who became a Toy Group One winner.

Jimmy was a relative of the Loteki Papillons bred by Lou Ann King, whose “Kirby” (CH Loteki Supernatural Being) won Best in Show at Westminster in 1999, the only Papillon to do so. Before Papillons, Chris and her mom bred and showed Doberman Pinschers under the Black Gold prefix.

Tim had accompanied his friend, veterinarian Jean Churan, to take a Great Dane she had bred to the Martins for showing. A Mastiff enthusiast, Tim had become smitten with an 8-week-old fawn puppy bitch named Kodiak’s Robin in 1982 and had worked odd jobs to buy her. “Robin” grew into a sound, beautiful mover with a rock-hard topline.

Tim did not show Robin, but he bred her to an impressive male, CC Mug of Duke, hoping to build size and throw good bone. The litter produced six puppies, and Tim handled four of them to their champion titles. “Bridger” (CH RR’s Cambridge of Silver Reef TDI CDX WD), “Diana” (CH RR’s Lady Diana), “Dot” (CH RR Dots Friendly Persuasion), and “Miss T” (CH RR Rolling Thunder Miss T) carried the RR prefix, as Tim was co-breeding Mastiffs with Denise King at the time.

“I enjoyed handling my dogs and winning,” he says. “We had a friendly group of owner-handlers in the Midwest who hung out at shows and went to dinner together.”

Charmed by Chris and her enthusiasm for dogs and showing, Tim stayed in touch with her. After two and a half years with the Martins, Chris went to work as the show and kennel manager for Cheryl Wagner, who bred Samoyeds under the Tarahills prefix, in South Lyon, Michigan, and later Atlanta.

While at Tarahills, Chris showed her and her mother’s next show dog from the late Mary Jo Loye of Auburn Hills, Michigan, breeder of Josandre’ Papillons. “Bugsy” (BIS/MBISS CH Josandre’ Watchmewin) lived up to his name winning a Best in Show and several Bests in Specialty Show.

“Our Papillon bloodline was becoming an impressive blend of Josandre’ and Loteki, a mix of pretty, fancy and solid,” Chris says.

With her and Tim’s long-distance relationship blossoming, Chris moved home to Illinois in 1994 and started her own professional all-breed handling business. Tim began breeding under the Millennium prefix, and Chris was his dog handler.

Shortly after Bugsy, Chris showed a male Papillon, MBISS CH Josandre’ Masquerade, whom the Papillon Club of America (PCA) awarded its top honor of Gold Butterfly in 1997. These extraordinary males were behind Wingsong’s first homebred Best in Show champion, MBIS/MBISS CH Wingsong Easy Does It, who at 10 months

WINGSSONG PAPILLONS & MILLENNIUM MASTIFFS

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



Papillons:
¼ to ½ cup
per day



Mastiffs:
8 to 12 cups
per day

*Each dog is fed individually with the amount fed based on age & body condition



Adam Levy and Devon Kipp are pictured with “Hank” (MBIS GCHP Sandbar’s Hardcore Hank MH QAA), the first Chesapeake Bay Retriever Best in Show winner to have a Master Hunter title.

of age won the Central Indiana Kennel Club show in 1999. Chris showed another Gold Butterfly winner in 2006, BISS CH Wingsong Alydar. In 2018, MBIS/MBISS GCHG Wingsong Winning Colors was PCA’s Silver Butterfly winner.

When the couple married in 2000, Tim had been breeding Mastiffs for nearly 20 years, and Chris had contributed immensely to breeding decisions and the campaigning of his top dogs. “Our goal has always been to breed beautiful, healthy dogs with good temperament that live a long time,” Tim says.

The gentle temperament of Millennium Mastiffs accounts for many becoming certified as therapy dogs. From the first litter that Tim bred out of Kodiak’s Robin, Diana and Dot were therapy dogs. “We would frequent senior centers, where residents loved them partly because they didn’t have to bend down to pet them,” he says.

Rush, who helped nurture Marley and his littermates, was a therapy dog as well as an important breed winner. At 7 months of age, Rush took Winners Dog and Best of

Winners at the 2014 Mastiff Club of America National Specialty. As an adult, he placed Working Group Third at the Westminster Kennel Club in 2020 — one of only six Mastiffs in history to place at the Garden.

The economies of simultaneously showing giant and toy breeds can be seen when Chris hustles around leading her current Mastiff special, “Traveler” (GCH Millennium’s Traveling Man), to her setup with Marley tucked under her arm. She says, “Everyone stops and asks, ‘How much does he weigh?’ Then, they see Marley and ask, ‘And, how much does he weigh?’”

Opposites, indeed, in terms of how much they weigh and the groups in which they compete but not in terms of the love Chris and Tim share for their Wingsong Papillons and Millennium Mastiffs.

DEVLYNN’S WHIPPETS & NEXT GENERATION’S CHESSIES

The dog fancy world of professional handler Devon Kipp and the hunting retriever world of trainer Adam Levy collided in the summer of 2017 when Adam met Devon ringside so she could handle his Master Hunter and Qualified All-Age Chesapeake Bay Retriever “Hank” (MBIS GCHP Sandbar’s Hardcore Hank MH QAA) at the Waukesha Kennel Club show in Wisconsin.

A waterfowl and pheasant hunter at heart, Hank was spot on his game at Waukesha, winning Best of Breed from the classes and capturing the major needed to finish his championship title. Describing Hank’s signature show-ring style that would make him the breed’s first Best in Show winner to have a Master Hunter title, Adam says, “Hank was always very animated at shows. He stood out from the beginning.”

Adam is co-founder and co-owner of [Next Generation Gun Dog Training](#) in Rochester, Minnesota. As head breeder of Next Generation’s Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, Adam strives to produce versatile dogs capable of earning hunt titles and show titles. Hank is an iconic example of the ideal combination.

“I like a dog that is structurally sound and can do its job all day because it is built properly,” Adam says. A native of Long Island, New York, who enjoyed hunting along the Eastern shore, Adam appreciates the Chessie’s ability to withstand harsh conditions with its dense, oily coat, powerful rear legs and incredible endurance.

Meanwhile, Devon grew up stacking dogs and leading them around at shows, following in the footsteps of her parents, Scott and Susan Kipp, all-breed professional handlers. She and her sister, Dylan Kipp-Keith, are third-generation dog fanciers, whose grandparents on both sides were breeders. Their parents bred Norfolk Terriers, Brussels Griffon and Airedale Terriers under the Huntwood prefix.

As a junior handler, Devon fell in love with Whippets after getting “Jordan” (GCH Kamada’s Happy Hour) from

mentor Debbie Davenport of DeKalb, Illinois. “I adored Jordan’s personality,” she says. “Whippets are great house dogs, and they love to show. They can be aloof, yet they are friendly, comforting and snuggly.”

Just as Adam delved into learning about how structure impacts the movement and endurance of Chessies, Devon embraced the connection between a Whippet’s deep-chested, flowing topline conformation and its athleticism running at speeds up to 35 mph. It shaped her vision as she built her [Devlynn Whippet](#) breeding program blending Kamada, Cottonwood and Snow Hill bloodlines.

Devon got her foundation bitch, “Moon” (GCHB Cottonwood Under A Pale Moon), a beautiful fawn 5-year-old, in 2014 from breeder-co-owner Harriet Vincent of Grayslake, Illinois. Moon, whose sire was Davenport’s GCH Kamada’s Instant Millionaire, embodied the traits that Devon loved about Jordan. In 2015, Moon whelped a litter that produced

a fawn-and-white female called “Hannah” (BIS GCHS Devlynn’s Frosted Moon), who became Devon’s first Best in Show Whippet.

“I got very lucky with this first litter,” Devon says. “Out of nine in the litter, four including Hannah finished their championships.”

After the Waukesha dog show win with Hank, Devon moved to Houston to work with her sister, Dylan, also a professional dog handler. She took with her a young Chessie bitch named “Comet” (GCHB Next Generations No Mercy JH), bred and owned by Adam.

Devon finished Comet and specialied her in 2018, achieving Sporting Group wins and Select Bitch at the American Chesapeake Club National Specialty, and then she switched to special Hank in 2019.

Keeping her line going while showing Adam’s Chessies and other clients’ dogs, Devon bred Hannah, her heart dog, who whelped the next generation of Devlynn Whippets in 2018. The sire, GCH Snow Hill Mindbender MC, was breeder-owned by veterinarian Susanne Hughes of Durham, North Carolina.

Like her dam, Moon, Hannah produced winners. Both pups in the litter became Multi-Hound Group winners: “Serena” (GCHB Upper Mtn Beat The Odds V Devlynn), a fawn female Devon co-owns with Jeffrey Winton and James Modica of Upper Mountain Hounds, and “Venus”



Devon is shown with her first Best in Show Whippet, “Hannah” (BIS GCHS Devlynn’s Frosted Moon).

(GCHB Upper Mtn Changed The Game V Devlynn SC DCAT), a blue brindle-and-white female owned by Sara Flour.

During 2018, Devon added to her Whippet program an outcross fawn-brindle female bred by Dr. Hughes that she co-owns with Winton and Modica. Before coming to Devlynn, “Teal” (CH Snow Hill In The Pocket) was bred to Hannah’s brother, CH Cottonwood Chase The Moon, producing four champions including Multi-Hound Group winners and a Reserve Best in Show winner.

Devon bred Teal in 2019 to a lure coursing field champion, GCH DC Summit Good Vibrations MC BCAT. The cross gave her a second Best in Show Whippet, “Violet” (GCHG Upper Mountain Violet’s Are Blue V Devlynn), the No. 2 Whippet in breed rankings in 2021. Devon co-owns Violet with Winton and Modica.

Between Devon’s raising Whippet litters and showing dogs and Adam’s busy schedule at Next Generation Gun Dog Training, the couple kindled a romance that led to their marriage in April 2021. The marriage revolves around the dogs in their lives.

“Without Adam, I could not have these litters while on the road,” Devon says.

Likewise, Adam benefits from Devon campaigning his dogs like “Mister” (MBIS/MRBIS GCHB Next Generation’s Have Mercy MH), the No. 1 Chessie all-systems whom he co-owns with Rae Lewis. Comet is Mister’s dam.

Adam credits his mentor, Diane Baker of Sandbar Kennels in Utica, Illinois, with guiding him to his foundation bitch, “Stormy” (CH Sandbar’s Original Sin), the dam of three litters that produced multiple champion hunt-titled dogs. Stormy is Comet’s maternal granddam and Mister’s maternal great-granddam.

“Diane spent countless hours teaching me about pedigrees and helping me understand correct breed structure,” Adam says.

Added to his, mine and our dogs, Adam and Devon welcomed a son, Ashton, born Jan. 4, 2022. The fourth generation is being raised with lots of love from Chessie house dogs, Comet and Hank, and Whippets, Moon, Hannah and Serena. The eclectic mix of show and sporting dogs, some that do both sports, are paving the future of Devlynn Whippets and Next Generation Chessies. ■

DEVLYNN WHIPPETS & NEXT GENERATION CHESSIES*

Are Fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Beef & Rice Formula



Whippets:
2 to 3 cups per day



Chesapeake Bay Retrievers & Labrador Retrievers:
4 to 5 cups per day

*Each dog is fed individually with the amount fed based on age & body condition

Circle of Champions

KERRY BLUE TERRIER NAMED 'PADDY' EXCELS AS A TOP TERRIER

An exuberant, dog-show loving 4 ½-year-old male Kerry Blue Terrier named “Paddy” is the No. 2 Terrier and No. 10 all-breed dog in the country. Paddy’s campaign is a family



PHOTO: DEREK GLAS

“Paddy” is reminiscent of his famous maternal and paternal great-great-great-grandsire, ENG/AM CH Torum’s Scarf Michael, the Triple Crown winner at Crufts in 2000, the AKC National Championship in 2002 and Westminster in 2003.

affair for BlueCrush Kerry Blue Terrier breeder-owner Eva M. Hansen, of Jupiter Farms, Florida, and her son, Blake Hansen, of Jupiter, Florida, a professional handler. MBIS/MBISS GCHG BlueCrush Freedom And Whiskey! represents their 20-year passion for Kerry Blues that has been nurtured by their friendship with mentors Philip and Jarka O’Brien of Dublin, Ireland, breeders of Edbrios Kerry Blues. “We typically campaign our Kerry Blue Terriers when they are mature and retire them on top after they have been awarded Multiple Bests in Specialty Show or a Best in Show,” Eva Hansen says. “Paddy and Blake have a special bond, so we have decided to keep this dynamic duo out for the rest of the year.” Paddy’s 17 Bests in Show in 2022 include back-to-back wins in May at Jefferson County Kennel Club and Spirit of the Heartland at Purina Farms in Gray Summit, Missouri, and in June at Saline County Kennel Club of Arkansas in Conway. A two-time Best of Breed winner at Westminster, having won in 2021 and 2022, Paddy also won the United States Kerry Blue Terrier Club National Specialty in 2021. Paddy was sired by INTL CH/GCHS Dalstar IL Divo out of CH Kingael BlueCrush Dracarys BCAT. The upstanding Paddy is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Salmon & Cod Formula](#) dog food.

FEMALE NAMED 'BB' WINS U.S. OPEN BRITTANY CHAMPIONSHIP FOR SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR

Delivering an all-around exceptional performance, a 10-year-old female Brittany named “BB” won the [2022 U.S. Open Brittany Championship](#), a repeat of her win in 2021. GFC GAFC FC AFC 6XFCH 5XRUCH MK’s My Lil Ammo eased through first series with one quail covey find to come back in second series. “BB ran a classy, forward race with plenty of speed and range,” says pro trainer and handler Scott Johnson of [Covey Find Kennel](#) in Winfield, Kansas. “In second series, she had three divided covey finds with her bracemate and three solo finds.” Scout Richard Beaver of Wichita Falls, Texas, found the far-ranging Brittany many times pointing covey finds during the one-hour horseback stakes. Owner Nick Blasi of Wichita, Kansas, picked BB as a puppy and started her on birds and developed her to steady, wing and shot. Bred by Matt Kitchen of Pittsburg, Kansas, BB was sired by FC AFC Sniksoh Free Boy out of Chief’s Nubbins My Lil Lady. Johnson, who has trained BB steadily since she was 4 years old, notes her consistency in earning 22 career placements in one-hour stakes despite whelping four litters. Thus far, BB has produced four Field Champions, including her daughter, FC AFC Sigbrit’s Not In

Kansas Anymore, who ran in the first brace of second series at this year’s U.S. Open Brittany Championship. BB is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula](#) dog food.



PHOTO: JESSICA CARLSON

“BB” delivered a top performance to win the 2022 U.S. Open Brittany Championship in March at Lake Murray Field Trial Grounds in Ardmore, Oklahoma.

TREEING WALKER COONHOUND NAMED 'CLIFFORD' IS 2022 GRAND AMERICAN NITE HUNT CHAMPION

Natural ability gifted a 5 ½-year-old male Treeing Walker Coonhound named “Clifford” with the talent to win the [2022 Grand American Nite Hunt Championship](#). PKC Silver CH ‘PR’ Iron Swamp Carolina Clifford outperformed nearly 1,400 coonhounds from the registered class to capture the top spot at the 57th running of the prestigious event held in January at Orangeburg, South Carolina. Breeder-owner-handler Wade Windham of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, who raised Clifford’s litter when the dam died shortly after they were born, says, “I recognized Clifford was special when he started treeing raccoons on his own at 7 months old.” At the Grand American, Clifford treed 10 raccoons — 11 if you count a raccoon treed during a timeout. Clifford made the Final Four based on cast wins and points earned over two nights of competition. “Clifford hit a hot track and was the first to strike and tree. That is how he won,” Windham says. Having grown up pleasure hunting, Windham began dabbling in competition nite hunts about 20 years ago. He attributes Clifford’s keen intelligence and accuracy to the Grand Nite Champions behind him on both his dam’s and sire’s sides. Clifford is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula](#) dog food.



In his third United Kennel Club nite hunt competition, “Clifford” captured the top spot at the 2022 Grand American Nite Hunt Championship.

NO. 1 TOY DOG IS ‘COOPER,’ AN ENGLISH TOY SPANIEL

An outgoing, Russian-bred 4-year-old male English Toy Spaniel (B&PC) named “Cooper” has charmed his way to being the No. 1 Toy dog and No. 2 all-breed dog in the country. “Happy and engaging, Cooper always shows with his head up and his tail wagging,” says Patti Caldwell of Lavon, Texas, owner with her husband, Richard. Handled



PHOTO: DEREK GLAS

A friendly, happy English Toy Spaniel, “Cooper” won Best of Breed and placed Toy Group Third at the 2022 Westminster Kennel Club show.

by Christopher Keith of Spring, Texas, GCHB Ringo Star Ot Nevskogo Hobbita started 2022 with a breed record-setting Best in Show in January at the Kennel Club of Palm Springs topping 3,858 dogs. In the first four months, he won nine Bests in Show, nine Reserve Bests in Show and 39 Toy Group Firsts, as well as three Toy Dog Specialties and an English Toy Spaniel Regional Specialty. Cooper was brought to the U.S. as an 8-week-old puppy by Clussexx Spaniel breeders Doug Johnson and Jamie Hubbard, of Bloomington, Indiana, who are well-known for producing the Westminster Best in Show winners, “Brady,” a Clumber Spaniel, and “Stump,” a Sussex Spaniel. “Cooper was already walking on lead at 8 weeks,” Johnson says. “He was smart, clever and had a sense of humor, traits that are so important for this breed.” Impressed with the temperament of English Toy Spaniels bred by Yana Nevskaya of Saint Petersburg, Russia, Johnson and Hubbard learned that Nevskaya credited them with changing the course of her breeding program when she bred to their male, “Bennie” (GCH Clussexx Champagne Breakfast), a prominent Best in Show winner in Europe for many years and Cooper’s paternal grandsire. The Caldwell, longtime Golden Retriever and Pug breeders, began with English Toys in 2015 and have campaigned many Clussexx dogs as well as those they have bred under the Bookmark prefix. Cooper, their top-winning English Toy Spaniel, is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Beef & Rice Formula](#) dog food.

POINTER NAMED 'BO' CAPTURES WIN AT 2022 NATIONAL OPEN SHOOTING DOG CHAMPIONSHIP

An 8-year-old white-and-orange male Pointer named "Bo" powered through his 90-minute brace with seven covey finds to win the [2022 National Open Shooting Dog Championship](#). Michael Martino of Fort Davis, Alabama, who became one of the youngest handlers in history to win the esteemed horseback championship, says, "It was an emotional win because Bo has given us so much during his career." Scouted by Murphy Renfro of Union Springs, Alabama, NCH RUCH Bo Bunda delivered a stunning, stylish performance to capture the win out of 64 dogs competing. Owner Jack Arlington of Seale, Alabama, co-bred Bo's litter with Alan Atkins of Phenix City, Alabama, the owner-handler of the sire, NCH Conway Twitty, winner of the 2016 National Amateur Shooting Dog Championship. Days after winning the National Open, Bo won the Southern Bird Hunters Association Invitational on the eve of his retirement. Arlington, who started Bo as a derby with Martino, won the 2019 Amateur Shooting Dog Classic with the talented bird dog. Meanwhile, with Martino, Bo won the 2016 and 2017 Open Shooting Dog Classic and the 2016 Leon Shiver Derby Classic. Arlington, a 45-year competitor in all-age

and shooting dog stakes, recently retired from the sport. Bo is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula](#) dog food.



"Bo," the 2022 National Open Shooting Dog Champion, was stunning, highly motivated and all business during the 90-minute stake, says handler Michael Martino, one of the youngest handlers in history to win the prestigious event.

STANDARD SCHNAUZER 'BOGART' IS NO. 1 IN ALL-BREED FOUR STRAIGHT YEARS

Described as a charismatic stallion who graces show rings with steely confidence, a 6-year-old pepper-and-salt male Standard Schnauzer named "Bogart" is the No. 2 Working dog and No. 7 all-breed dog in the country. The winner of 37 Bests in Show, MBIS/MBISS GCHG Crivitz Humphrey



"Bogart," who has won Best of Breed at Westminster for three straight years and placed Working Group Third in 2022, is an exceptional breed ambassador who owns the ground he walks on, says breeder-owner Amy Shaffer.

Bogart Von Diable represents the vision of breeder-owner Amy Shaffer who used 30-plus-year-old frozen semen from one of most important sires in breed history to produce his litter. The pedigree includes the old German Von Hahlweg bloodline behind the sire, MBIS Charisma Café Diable, and her own Crivitz and her mentors' Charisma bloodlines behind the dam, GCH Crivitz Diamonds Are Forever. "Bogart is living up to his pedigree," says Shaffer of Crivitz, Wisconsin. Handled by co-owner Tiffany Skinner of Stanwood, Washington, Bogart has been the No. 1 all-breed Standard Schnauzer since 2019. John Low and Bill Matthews, longtime breeders of West Highland White Terriers under the Arbroath prefix, of Riverside, California, also are co-owners. Bogart was the Best in Specialty Show winner in 2021 and 2022 at the Standard Schnauzer Club of America National Specialty. At the 2021 National, he won Bests of Breed at two regional specialties while also winning four of five Bests in Show at the Celebrate Virginia Cluster. Shaffer began in Standard Schnauzers in 2001 with a male from the Charisma bloodline of her mentors, the late Trevor Adel and his wife, Constance. The Adels bred and owned AM/CAN CH Charisma Jailhouse Rock, whose record of 75 Bests in Show stands today. "Rocky," a two-time Working Group One winner at Westminster, is the sire of Shaffer's first male and is Bogart's maternal great-great-grand sire. The outgoing Bogart is fed a mixture of [Purina Pro Plan Sensitive Skin & Stomach Salmon & Rice Formula](#) and [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula](#) dog foods.

2022 AMERICAN BLACK & TAN COONHOUND CLUB NATIONAL SPECIALTY WINNER IS ‘MCFLY’

A high-achieving 8 ½-year-old male called “McFly” enjoyed being back in the ring and won Best of Breed from the Veterans Class at the 2022 American Black & Tan Coonhound Club (AB&TCC) National Specialty. During the COVID-19 pandemic, breeder-owner Traci Mitchell of Phelan, California, introduced McFly to scent work, barn hunt and Fast CAT. The fast-learning male quickly earned six titles that combined with his conformation championships earned him a spot in the AB&TCC Versatility Hall of Fame. Inducted into the Hall of Fame at the 2022 National Specialty, McFly is only the second dog in breed history to be honored. NBISS GCHG/CSG/INTL CH/MEX CH/ PANAM CH/UKC MBIS CH Carlin ScoutOut Black To The Future HOF BCAT RATI RATN SBN SIN FDC was co-bred and is co-owned by Mitchell’s daughter, Amanda Pillow of Midland Texas. Emily McCarthy of Merrimack, New Hampshire, is a co-breeder. “McFly was a standout from the beginning,” says Mitchell who breeds under the Carlin prefix and continues the Li'l Moore Black & Tan Coonhound bloodline begun by her mother, Jeri Moore, in the early 1990s. McFly also won the Stud Dog Class at the National Specialty with his sons, GCHB CGCH Carlin Black Tie Affair FDC and GCHB CSG Windbourne Fade to Black at Carlin BCAT

FDC. McFly is fed [Purina Pro Plan Adult 7+ BRIGHT MIND Large Breed Chicken & Rice Formula](#) dog food.



The Best of Breed winner from the Veterans Class at the 2022 AB&TCC National Specialty, “McFly” also was the second hound in history to be inducted into the Versatility Hall of Fame and won the Stud Dog Class.

2021 ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIEL NATIONAL OPEN CHAMPION IS TWO-TIME WINNER NAMED ‘SOLO’



Hardwired to find, flush and retrieve game, a 6 ½-year-old white-and-black male named “Solo” gave a riveting performance to win the [2021 English Springer Spaniel National Open Championship](#). The two-time National Open Champion, who also won in 2020, was handled by pro Jason Givens of [Lighthouse Kennels](#) in Cambria, Wisconsin. 2XNFC FC AFC Rocky’s Solo outperformed more than 100 starters over five land series and a water series to win the event. “Solo had an exceptional performance with 15 pheasant finds despite extremely dry conditions. In his calm, level-headed style, he made short work of everything,” Givens says. The superstar springer, who has earned 100 career all-age points, gave Givens his second and third National Open wins. In 2003, Givens won the National Open with NFC Lighthouse Reverence. Solo is the first all-age springer for owner Chuck Cloninger of Greenleaf, Wisconsin, who bought him at 9 months of age from Gary Riddle of Rocky’s Kennels in Trenton, Utah, and who handles him in amateur stakes. Givens handled the talented male to National High Point Open Dog in 2018. Solo’s maternal great-grand sire, NFC FC AFC Crosswinds Warpath HOF, was the 2006 National Open winner. Solo is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula](#) dog food.

A classy spaniel with exceptional bird-finding ability, “Solo” won the English Springer Spaniel National Open Championship for the second time in 2021.

SUNLIT AFGHAN HOUND NAMED 'LOUIS' GOES TO TOP AS NO. 1 HOUND

With a regal air befitting the king of dogs, "Louis," a 4-year-old black male Afghan Hound, has become the No. 1 Hound and No. 5 all-breed dog in the country. MBIS/MBISS GCHG Sunlit's King of Queens began 2022 winning Reserve Bests in Show in January at the Kennel Club of Palm Springs on Saturday and Sunday, besting 3,857 and 3,711 dogs, respectively, followed by winning Bests in Show two weeks later at three of four shows at the Dog Fanciers Association of Oregon and Tualatin Kennel Club cluster, topping entries of 1,508, 1,657 and 1,481 dogs.

Representing the third generation and highest achiever of the Sunlit Afghan Hound bloodline of breeder-owner Tara M. Richardson, of Cameron, Missouri, Louis is a consummate show dog. "Louis walks into the ring and then stops and stares to make sure everyone is watching him," says Richardson, who handled him at 15 months old to his win at the 31st Annual Afghan Hound Club of America Breeders' Cup out of 60 litter-nominated hounds competing. "Louis has a beautiful outline that he holds moving and standing. He moves effortlessly, using every inch of himself."

After the Breeders' Cup win, Louis took a hiatus from showing to mature. Richardson handled him to his championship in four shows in 2020 at 2 ½ years of age. The pair then promptly won Best in Specialty Show at the Heartland Afghan Hound Club of Greater Kansas City and a Hound Group First at the Capital City Cluster in Topeka, Kansas, and then Richardson handed Louis to pro handler Alicia Morrison-Jones of Seaside, Oregon, in October 2020 to continue his Specials campaign, finishing the year as the No. 1 Afghan Hound in the breed despite limited showing.

Louis has taken Richardson full circle since she became fond of Afghan Hounds 20 years ago as a junior handler watching Morrison-Jones campaign the famous black male, BIS/BISS CH Fabelhaft Zoot Suit, whose outline and breed type she has tried to emulate in her breeding program. "Louis resembles 'Corbu,'" she says.

A highlight for Richardson was Louis' Best of Breed at the 2021 Westminster Kennel Club handled by Morrison-Jones, while Richardson handled his dam, MBIS/MBISS GCHG Sunlit's Queen Of Everything CGC, to Select Bitch. "Araina," the dam, was whelped by a Swedish champion, GCH Kingsleah Fire Queen, whom Richardson

PHOTO: RHONDA CASSIDY



A consummate show dog, "Louis" was sired by the top specialty-winning Afghan Hound of all time. In his litter of five, all have won Specialty Bests in Show or Hound Group Firsts.

brought to the U.S. from the world-renowned Kingsleah Kennels of Sweden. Louis' sire is the top specialty-winning Afghan Hound of all time, GCHP Agha Djari's Fifth Dimension Of Sura, a German-bred blue brindle male.

Louis is co-owned by Morrison-Jones, Pam Winklemeier of St. Louis, Jamie Souza of Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and Michelle Hunter of Springfield, Missouri. The all-systems top Afghan Hound is fed [Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula](#) dog food.

CLUMBER SPANIELS BRING SPEED & FUN TO FAST CAT AT NATIONAL SPECIALTY

Generally mellow and dignified, Clumber Spaniels raced down the 100-yard Fast CAT straight course at the Clumber Spaniel Club of America (CSCA) National Specialty joyously chasing a bouncing white bag, the artificial lure, in the sport known to give dogs a rush of adrenaline. Fifteen Clumber Spaniels along with dogs of nearly 50 other breeds took their turn to run while being clocked on their speed.

The Clumber Spaniel owners rallied together with spirited camaraderie. They cheered on first-timers and seasoned competitors. In mere seconds, the Clumbers completed the course, a couple reaching the breed's fastest speeds of almost 20 mph. Beautiful, sparkly rosettes were awarded by CSCA even for Turtle Clumbers, the newest competitors still learning the game. Importantly, all agreed, these flushing spaniels performed with sheer joy and an eagerness to please. ■



An accomplished competitor, "Blossom" (RACH Friar's Air Field At Pearl Harbor UD RM4 RAE3 BCAT SWA SCNE SCM SIE SEE SHDE THD CGCA TKP), 12 ½ years old, earned the BCAT title in Fast CAT March 26 at the CSCA National Specialty at Purina Farms. Cheering Blossom on from the finish line was owner Susan Field of Long Island, New York.

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MUDI: A RARE HUNGARIAN HERDING BREED

An all-purpose farm dog, the Mudi evolved naturally in the 19th century from Hungarian herding stock. A courageous working dog well-suited for handling the most stubborn livestock and even hunting wild boar, the Mudi today is revered for his biddability and friendly, playful disposition. The newly recognized American Kennel Club herding breed is an enthusiastic, highly intelligent, versatile competitor.

The sheepherding virtues of the Mudi continue in his native Hungary where the Magyars rely on the breed to work sheep and cattle. The medium sheepdog was produced from crosses of Pumi, Puli and German Spitz breeds. Around 1930, Dr. Deszö Fényesi, a museum director and one of the first to breed Mudi separately, is credited with naming the breed. A loyal protector and excellent watchdog, the Mudi would alert larger flock guardians, the Kuvasz and Komondor, when he sensed trouble.

With only a few thousand Mudi worldwide, this breed is adept at conformation, agility, obedience, flyball, Fast CAT, Barn Hunt, tracking, dock diving, herding, and search-and-rescue work. Males are from 16 to 18 ½ inches tall and weigh from 24 to 29 pounds, and females are from 15 to 17 ½ inches tall and weigh from 18 to 24 pounds. The breed has a short, curly, wash-and-wear coat in multiple coat colors and patterns and may be born with or without a tail, some having a natural stump tail. The Mudi excels with exercise, training and an owner dedicated to discipline.

Source: [The Mudi Club of America](#).

Below: AKC GCH/UKC BIS CH Bariguard Full Moon Larry CM CD RE PT FDC CA FCAT4 DSX AJ CGCA CGCU TKE ATT is owned by Patti Garcia and was bred in Hungary by Papp Robertne.



PHOTO: SAVAN PHOTOGRAPHY