



TODAY'S BREEDER

A Nestlé Purina Publication Dedicated to the Needs of Canine Enthusiasts

Issue 89



BREEDER ICON

Kimani Rhodesian Ridgebacks

- **HEALTHY, STRONG SENIOR DOGS**
- **SAFE SUMMER TRAINING TIPS**
- **PURINA PRO PLAN BRIGHT MIND**



Above, from left, “Hanna,” a 10-year-old female owned by Pat Solkshinitz of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, intently tracks the line; and “Katja,” a 6-year-old female owned by Greg and Nikki Newton of Warkworth, Ontario, Canada, finds the leather glove at the end of the trail.

WEIMARANERS SNIFF OUT TRACKING TITLES AT PURINA FARMS

Following trails laden with sweeping turns, deceptive cross tracks and planted “articles,” intense-working, nose-down dogs whiffed out tracking titles at the Weimaraner Club of America National Specialty. Cool, damp conditions shifted into high gear the natural scent abilities of these sleek silver-gray dogs.

Tethered from a harness to an owner-handler who gingerly guided a 40-foot tracking line, each Weimaraner set out to find the leather glove at the end of the track. “Tracking dogs are tested on their ability to follow a track and find the articles along the way,” says judge Carol Clark of Waverly, Missouri. “All dogs know how to use their noses. The goal is to teach them to do it with the games we play.”

As the dogs maneuvered challenging courses, their handlers closely watched for



Posing with Katja after she earned the Tracking Dog title are, from left, Maria Rothwell, who laid the track, judge Linda Baschnagel, owner-handler Greg Newton, and judge Carol Clark.

signs they had found the hidden articles. Missed corners and missed articles are the most common mistakes that eliminate a bid for a title. With a limited entry allowed due to the amount of work involved and area needed to lay tracks, dogs are certified to participate and then chosen by lottery.

Sprinting along the 500-yard, triple-turn TD (tracking dog) course, 6-year-old “Katja,” handled by owner Greg Newton of Warkworth, Ontario, Canada, suddenly stopped and raised her head, holding the coveted leather glove in her mouth. The new TD-titled Weimaraner made her owner proud.

“It always amazes me a dog can follow a scent that we never see,” Newton says. “They do it naturally and think it is fun. What I love best is spending time with my dogs.” ■

The tracking test at the Weimaraner Club of America National Specialty took place at Purina Farms, a 300-acre facility about an hour from St. Louis. Purina Farms is ideally suited for outdoor canine sports and indoor all-breed and specialty dog shows, which are held at the custom-made Purina Event Center. Contact Kaite Flamm to book an event at kaite.flamm@purina.nestle.com or 888-688-PETS (888-688-7387).

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Use sensibility when training dogs in summer heat and humidity.

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Healthy aging gets sidetracked when a dog develops cognitive dysfunction syndrome.

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Alicia Hanna started on top by producing a National Specialty Best of Breed winner in her first litter. The years that have followed have been equally rewarding.

22 BRIGHT MIND FOR SENIOR DOGS

Purina Pro Plan BRIGHT MIND Adult 7+ dog food naturally nourishes the minds of dogs age 7 and older to help them think more like they did when they were younger.

DEPARTMENTS

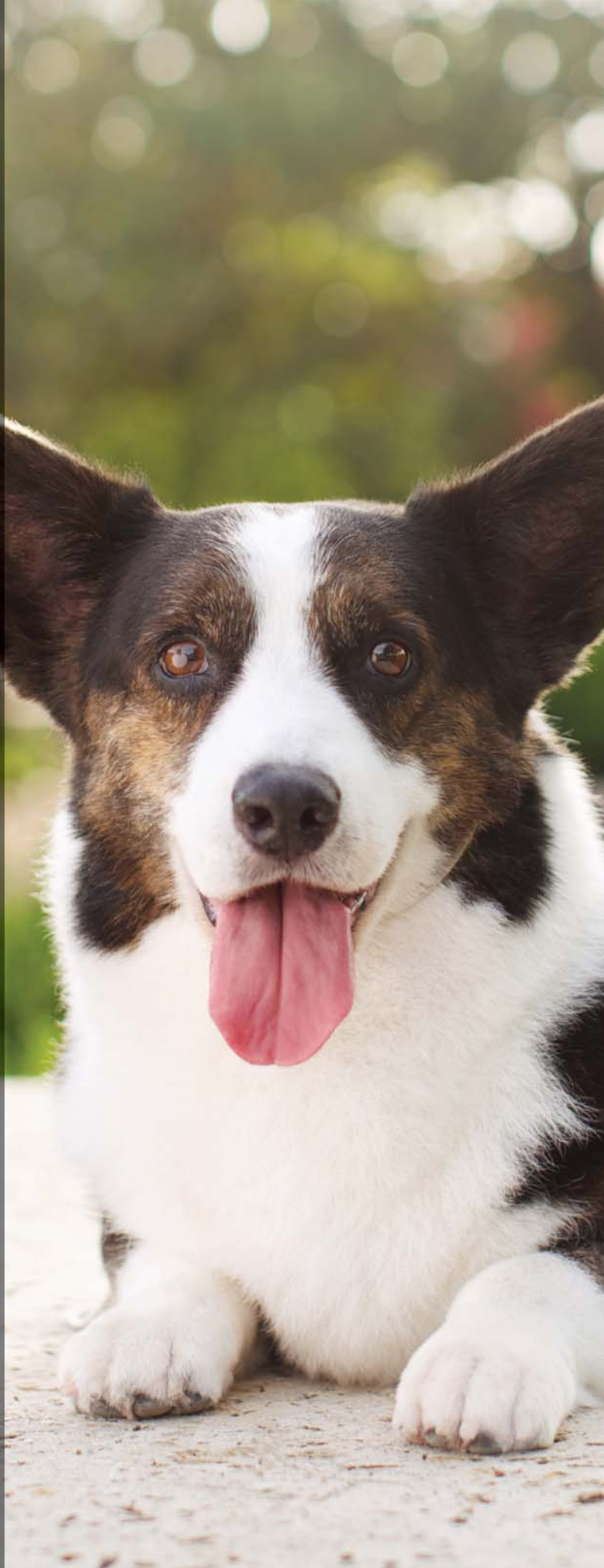
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ON THE COVER

CH Kimani's Borne O'The Best is a 15-month-old male Rhodesian Ridgeback bred and owned by Alicia Hanna. Cover photo by Diane Lewis. See story on page 14.

THIS PAGE

Age shouldn't keep senior dogs from enjoying life. This 12-year-old Cardigan Welsh Corgi, GCH Heart Of Gold Power Play, owned by Sherri Hurst, is fed *Purina Pro Plan BRIGHT MIND Adult 7+* Chicken & Rice Formula. See story on page 22.



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Visit *Today's Breeder* on the *Purina Pro Club* website (purinaproclub.com) for more photos and information



Pictured as a 2-year-old, “Bailey,” a Pudelpointer who is now 7 years old, excels on long hunts in South Dakota with owner Dr. John R. Salassa, thanks to the *Purina Pro Plan SPORT ReFUEL* nutritional supplement bar.

I AM A RETIRED PHYSICIAN and lifelong athlete — I was an All-American swimmer in college — with a keen interest in human exercise performance. I also am a lifelong hunter. Over the past four years, I have bred Pudelpointers and become interested in canine performance.

Since the early '90s, it has been a common practice for human athletes to take a nutritional supplement within 30 minutes post-exercise. I believe this is equally important in athletic dogs. Each fall my now 7-year-old dog and I enjoy South Dakota duck hunting in the mornings and pheasant hunting in the afternoons. We do this for up to 10 days straight. Without the *Purina Pro Plan SPORT ReFUEL* nutritional supplement bar, I don't think we would make it.

Thank you, *Pro Plan*, for understanding canine sports performance and giving us hunters such a great product to sustain our dogs in the field.

John R. Salassa, MD | Ponte Vedra, FL

I RECENTLY WAS THRILLED to put AKC Junior Hunter titles on my two Labrador Retriever girls. These are the first titles I have put on dogs in the hunting/retriever sport. We are having a blast! I am looking forward to the future with *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Active 26/16 Formula*.

Jessie Broadway | Las Vegas, NV

WE ARE SO PROUD of our hound, CH Hound Hill Vale of Aerie, for winning Best of Breed at this year's Irish Wolfhound Club of America's National Specialty in Greeley, Colorado. We have been feeding *Purina Dog Chow* for over 30 years, are members of *Purina Pro Club* and participate in the PPCP (Purina Parent Club Partnership) Program. Thus, we couldn't help but share our success with you. Thanks, Purina!

Doug Marx & Amy Benjamin | Aerie Irish Wolfhounds | Landenberg, PA
Donna Brown | Hound Hill Irish Wolfhounds | Bahama, NC



Proud owner-handler Jessie Broadway is shown with her new Junior Hunters, “Shimmer” and “Twister.”



The Irish Wolfhound Best of Breed winner is “Vale,” shown with, from left, breeder judge Gretchen Bernardi, Doug Marx, Amy Benjamin, Donna Brown, and Pat Cobb, president of IWCA. As her dam, “Valley” (CH Hound Hill Valley of Aerie), won Best of Breed in 2013, they are the first mother-daughter pair to win the National.

Today's Breeder loves hearing from Purina Pro Club members! Tell us about your dogs and how Purina nutrition and Purina Pro Club help you achieve your goals. Send your letter and photos to editor@purina.nestle.com or mail them to Today's Breeder, c/o Editor, Nestlé Purina PetCare, 2T Checkerboard Square, St. Louis, MO 63164. Today's Breeder retains the right to edit and publish letters, including names, addresses and photos, to a worldwide audience.

DUCKS UNLIMITED & PURINA ARE NEW PARTNERS



Honk! Honk!

Big news surfaced in waterfowl circles this spring when Ducks Unlimited (DU) and Purina announced a new sponsorship agreement, making *Purina Pro Plan* the official performance dog food of DU. The synergistic partnership links the leading conservator of North American wetlands and the maker of the performance dog food fed to 104 of the top 127 sporting dogs in the country.¹

“Through this partnership Purina brings a wealth of expertise in nutrition, training and conditioning to benefit our faithful canine athletes and companions,” says Jim Alexander, Senior Director of Corporate Relations for DU. “*Purina Pro Plan* is synonymous with ‘Nutrition That Performs,’ which translates to giving dogs outstanding nutrition to be their absolute best.”

DU and Purina each have a long, rich history devoted to supporting outdoor enthusiasts who are passionate about their sports and their beloved

canine companions. Established in 1937, DU has conserved more than 13 million acres in waterfowl habitat with help from more than 1 million supporters. In 1926, Purina opened the first facility in the world dedicated to pet nutrition and care with the founding of the Purina Pet Care Center at Purina Farms in Gray Summit, Missouri.

“We look forward to working with DU members to help conserve wetlands and build healthy habitats for hunting, training and field trials,” says Sean Fitzgerald, Vice President of the Purina Professional Engagement Team. “Without these natural habitats, there would be no wildlife.”

As the exclusive dog food sponsor of DU, Purina will participate in select DU events and be the presenting sponsor for DU TV’s “Sporting Dog” segment that airs on the Pursuit channel starting in July through December. ■

¹ Based on national, world, regional, and breed championship winners during the 12-month period ending April 15, 2014. The handler or owner of these champions may have received *Purina Pro Plan* dog food as Purina ambassadors.

5 WAYS TO TRAIN DOGS SAFELY *in the Summer*

Summer is the ideal time to rev up training to get ready for fall field trials and hunting. Road working, sprint racing and interval training can cause dehydration quickly, particularly in high temperatures and humidity. Proactive trainers look for signs of distress and are ready to spring to action to help a dog in trouble. Here are expert tips to help you safely train your dog.

1 WATER IS GOOD The harder and longer a dog works, particularly in very warm or cold temperatures, the greater the loss of body water. Exercise produces heat, and water helps to dissipate about 60 percent of heat through water evaporation in the respiratory tract. Water also helps to remove the byproducts of energy metabolism, perhaps the most important determinant of endurance and performance. Be sure your dog always has access to fresh water. When going to events, carry water with you to help hydrate your sporting partner.

2 DEHYDRATION PREVENTION Dehydration is dangerous for dogs because it increases the heart's workload, impairs the delivery of nutrients and removal of water from the muscles, and reduces the body's ability to maintain a normal body temperature. Sporting dogs should be well-hydrated but not carry excess water in the stomach or bladder. To minimize the risk of dehydration, encourage dogs to drink by soaking their food with water, baiting water with low-sodium chicken broth, and giving ice cubes after exercise. Overweight dogs and those out of condition are more susceptible to dehydration.



3 EVENT HYDRATION Dogs that compete in endurance stakes lasting longer than 60 minutes should be offered small amounts of water every 15 to 20 minutes. Use a squirt bottle to shoot water into the dog's mouth. After an event a dog should have access to water as it rinses the saliva from the back of the throat and helps improve cooling when panting. Wait until a dog's panting slows down before allowing him to drink a large volume of water. Avoid ice cold water as it could cause vascular constriction, slowing or blocking blood flow to the body. An effective cool down is to rub a mixture of cool water and alcohol under a dog's front legs and in the groin area.



4 SIGNS OF OVERHEATING A dog's temperature is the most telling sign of overheating. A normal temperature is from 101 to 103 degrees, but after hard work, it could be as high as 107 degrees. As a dog starts to cool down, his temperature should drop to below 104 degrees in 5 minutes. Rapid breathing, shade-seeking behavior, lack of motivation, and wobbly gait are signs of heat stress. Consider carrying a rectal thermometer to track your hardworking dog's temperature.

5 KNOW WHEN YOUR DOG NEEDS HELP An overheated dog — one whose temperature stays at 106 degrees or higher after several minutes — should receive emergency veterinary care. A mildly overheated dog usually responds rapidly. Most dogs are good at controlling their body temperature except in stressful situations when their temperature goes past a critical level. Such dogs will never be able to regulate their body temperature as well as before suffering heat stress. In extreme cases, a dog could die from overheating. ■





HELPING SENIOR DOGS STAY HEALTHY, STRONG

Healthy senior dogs love to run and play, albeit not as rambunctiously as when they were younger. Their sparkling eyes and wagging tails show that they feel well. They always know who you are and precisely when it is dinnertime.

Sadly, some dogs don't get the chance to gracefully gait into their senior years. A neurodegenerative disease, cognitive dysfunction syndrome (CDS), robs them of the dog they used to be. Behavioral changes due to cognitive decline happen slowly so owners don't always recognize the red flags until dogs are well into their senior years.

A study of 180 senior dogs experiencing age-related behavioral changes found that 23 percent of 11- to 12-year-olds and 68 percent of 15- to 16-year-olds had one or more signs of cognitive dysfunction.¹ Among the signs, these dogs had become disoriented in their homes and yards, had lost housetraining skills, and were sleeping more during the day and waking up more at night. They also got stuck or had difficulty getting around objects, stared blankly at walls, floors or into space, walked into doors, aimlessly paced or wandered about, and were not as socially interested in their families.

The pervasiveness of CDS upsets many basic behaviors due to degenerative changes that impair memory and learning. "In the beginning, dogs may sleep more and seem anxious," says animal behaviorist Karen Overall, VMD, PhD, DACVB. "They may appear needy, which then often turns into aloof disengagement. Senior

dogs that age successfully share in common lives that are rich in physical and cognitive exercises and behavioral stimulation."

Most veterinarians deem toy- and medium-sized dog breeds to be seniors when they reach age 7, and large and giant breeds as early as age 5. Advances in nutrition and preventive veterinary care combined with greater awareness of canine health and well-being have led to dogs living longer today. Eventually, end-of-life health problems, such as failing organ systems and/or degenerative brain changes, occur. This is why a veterinarian should regularly examine a senior dog to rule out medical conditions that can cause similar changes in behavior.

The main culprit causing a senior dog to have a mixed-up, changed personality is oxidative stress. "The cumulative burden of oxidative stress over time affects brain aging," explains Dr. Overall. "Physical atrophy occurs in certain areas of the brain due to oxidative damage and decreased energy metabolism. The brain is particularly susceptible to free radicals because it has a high rate of oxidative metabolism, a high content of lipids (fats) and a limited ability to regenerate."

Purina Research Scientist Yuanlong Pan, PhD, who studies healthy aging in dogs, says, "Reduced brain-glucose metabolism is a common feature of aging, which at least partially contributes to the decline in brain function in middle-aged and old people and dogs. One of the strategies is to provide the brain with an

Pro handler Sherri Hurst counts "Laney" (CH XIV Karat Trip Down Memory Lane), an 11 1/2-year-old Rhodesian Ridgeback, as one of her beloved old dogs.

WEIGHING IN

Avoiding obesity, a primary cause of increased oxidative stress and low-grade chronic inflammation, is key to helping dogs live a long, healthy life. Overeating and a lack of exercise contributed to the 52.6 percent of adult dogs considered overweight or obese in a 2013 survey of veterinary clinics.¹ In addition, in the breakthrough Purina Life Span Study, the first lifelong canine diet study, it was shown that feeding the Labrador Retrievers in the study to a lean or ideal body condition extended their healthy years by 1.8 years and significantly delayed the need for treatment of chronic conditions compared to the moderately overweight dogs in the control group.²

¹ 2013 National Pet Obesity Awareness Day Survey. Association for Pet Obesity Prevention.

² Lawler DF, Larson BT, Ballam JM, et al. Diet Restriction and Aging in the Dog: Major Observations Over Two Decades. *Brit J Nutr.* 2008;99: 793-805.

alternative energy source called ketone bodies. This natural energy source, which is mainly produced by the liver from body fat, is used by the tissues such as the brain, heart, kidney, and muscle.”

Dr. Pan was the lead investigator of a study² that focused on learning if a diet containing medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs) improved cognition in

aging dogs by providing their brains with ketones as an alternative energy source. “We showed that dietary MCTs, serving as the precursors for ketone body production, can significantly improve cognitive function in senior dogs,” says Dr. Pan.

Older dogs, randomly assigned to one of two groups based on cognitive testing, were fed a control diet or a diet containing 5.5 percent MCTs for eight months. During the trial, the dogs were tested on their learning ability, memory and attention.

“Dogs fed the MCT diet showed significantly better performance on most of the tests than the control dogs,” Dr. Pan says. “This study showed that dietary MCT supplementation can significantly increase blood ketone concentrations and improve cognitive function in old, healthy dogs.”

Growing old for dogs can be clouded with confusion and disruptive behavior. Although it can be hard for owners to recognize subtle changes in their beloved dogs, an owner’s ability to stay on top of a senior dog’s changing needs can effectively offset many of the negative effects of old age. ■

¹ Neilson JC, Hart BL, Cliff KD, Ruehl WW. Prevalence of Behavioral Changes Associated with Age-Related Cognitive Impairment in Dogs. *J Am Vet Med Assoc.* 2001;218(11):1,787-1,790.

² Pan Y, Larson B, Araujo JA, et al. Dietary Supplementation with Medium-Chain TAG Has Long-Lasting Cognition-Enhancing Effects in Aged Dogs. *Brit J Nutr.* 2010;103:1,746-1,754.

A friendly, smiling Cardigan Welsh Corgi, “Bess” (CH XIV Karat I’m Wild About Harry), an 8 ½-year-old Cardigan Welsh Corgi, is one of Sherri Hurst’s house dogs.



PURINA HONORS AWARD-WINNING HOUNDS

BY KAYLA MILLER

The leading Small Pack Option Beagle and top-performing nite hunt and bench show Coonhounds in 2014 were honored this spring in their respective Purina Award ceremonies. Noted for exemplary tracking skills and intense love of their sports, these hounds went farther and achieved more

than the competition — all with true style and grit.

A 6-year-old 13-inch tri-color male Beagle, FCGD Cable's Aesop tracked new ground as the first repeat winner in the 16-year history of the Purina Outstanding SPO Field Trial Beagle Award. Recognizing the top rabbit tracker in field trials run in packs of five to nine hounds, the award bestowed on "Aesop" affirmed his power and strong desire, which came to life at 29 weekend field trials.

Owner-handler Dr. John W. Cable Jr. of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, says, "Aesop's greatest quality is his consistency. He doesn't shake too easily." The competition

beagler got involved in field trials in 2001, though he has been passionate about rabbit hunting since his father introduced him to the sport as a 12-year-old.

Husband-wife team, Jody and Penny Jessup of Rural Hall, North Carolina, took the highest nite hunt and bench show honors in the Purina Coonhound Awards, both won with English Coonhounds. GR NITE CH 'PR' Moores Hardtime Dixie, a 6-year-old white-and-lemon hound, stood her own to win the 34th annual nite hunt award. The well-

conditioned, small-framed female, expertly handled by Jody Jessup, a six-time winner of the prestigious award, ran hard to track raccoons at 30 weekend nite hunts.

"Dixie' is a lean powerhouse with a good mouth, strong nose and loud voice," says breeder-owner Richard Moore of Jamaica, New York, who won the award in 1988 with English Coonhound GR NITE CH Smith's Hardtime Rocky. "Her even temperament, independence and intelligence set her apart from the competition."

Penny Jessup captured the 10th annual bench show award, her first after winning the English or Plott Hound breed award every year since the award began in 2004. Her 4-year-old red-ticked male, WSHOWCH NITE CH CCH GR CH 'PR' Kentucky Mtn Diamond Cutter, was the winner.

"Cutter' is a once-in-a-lifetime hound," Penny Jessup says. "It is a dream to finally win the Purina Award, especially with a dog I bred, trained and campaigned." ■



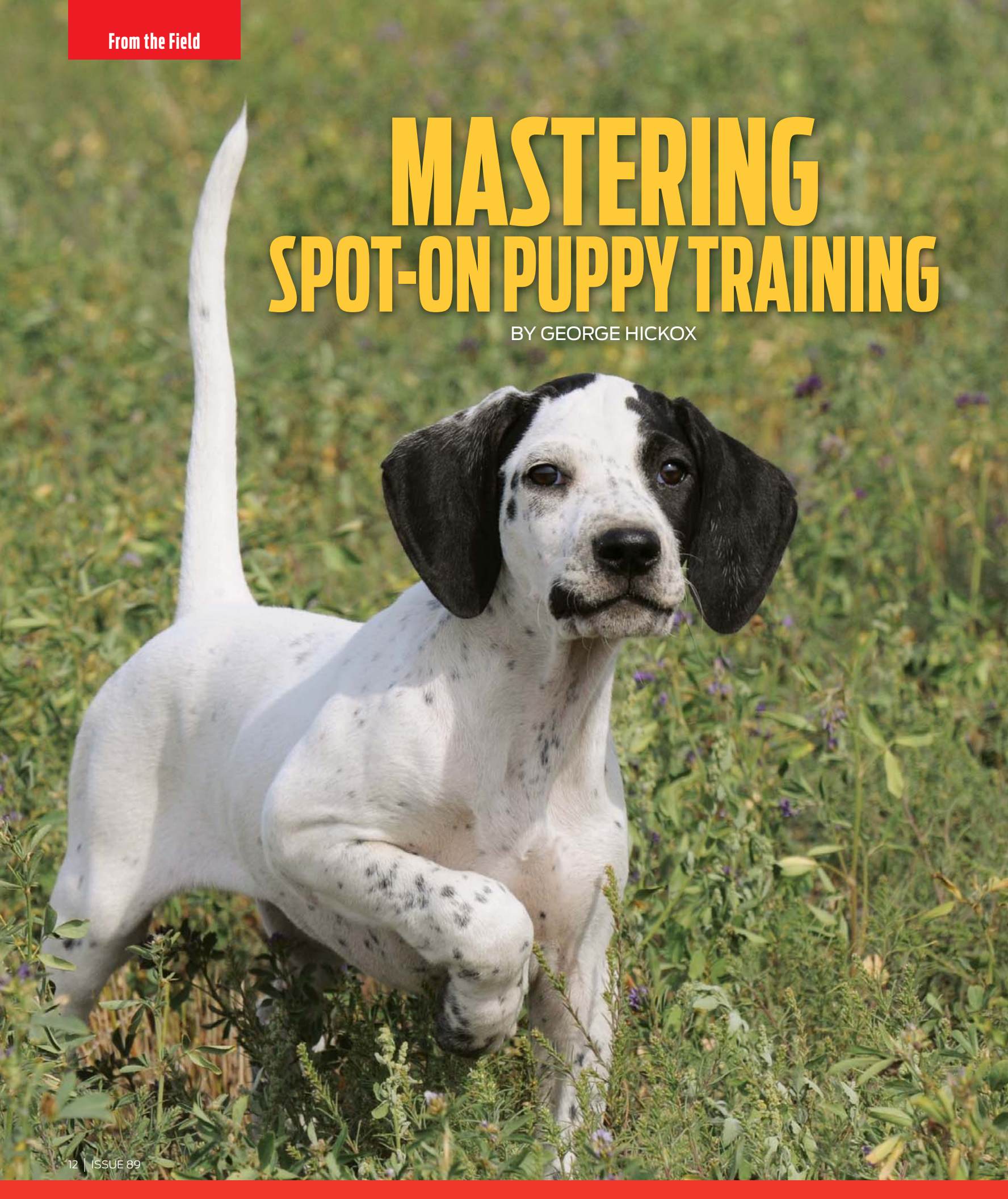
Dr. John W. Cable Jr. and his SPO Beagle "Aesop" win their second Purina Award.



Jody and Penny Jessup capture dual Purina Awards with English Coonhounds, "Dixie," left, and "Cutter."

MASTERING SPOT-ON PUPPY TRAINING

BY GEORGE HICKOX



Training a young bird dog to respond reliably to commands starts in the backyard, where a rambunctious, tail-wagging pup learns to sit and to come.

If all goes well, in a few years this playful, attention-demanding pup will become a stylish, high-performance canine — in large part because you practiced generalization.

Generalization is the process of teaching a dog to respond in a timely manner to a learned command under all circumstances and in all locations. Consistent training will help you develop a dog that responds with enthusiasm and spot-on excellence the first time he receives the command. Using a step-by-step approach to training is far more effective than a helter-skelter method.

Dogs are extremely place-oriented, thus it is important to train a dog to respond reliably to a command in a number of places. For example, you cannot expect dogs to respond to commands such as “Here” or “Come” in the field if they have not mastered them in the backyard. Adrenaline always runs sky high in the field, and there are numerous distractions that taunt even a well-trained dog.

When I start teaching generalization to a young dog, I teach a command using positive reinforcement. I mark the desired behavior using clicker training and then reward the dog with food. It isn’t long before the dog eagerly comes to receive the reward for the appropriate behavior.

Dogs learn by association and consistent repetitions. The idea is to pair the command with the behavior. I say, “Here,” as the dog is coming to me. Gradually, dogs begin to understand the meaning

of the command and associate the food reward with the desired behavior. Dogs that do not respond appropriately do not receive rewards. Positive reinforcement makes a more enthusiastic dog that responds better to training.

My benchmark for introducing a correction is when I am certain a dog understands by complying 80 percent of the time, or eight of 10 times, to a specific command in yard training. I mark the undesired behavior with a “No” correction. Once a dog catches on that compliance means getting a reward and that noncompliance leads to a correction, the dog chooses the desired behavior. Remember, rewarding a dog for offering the desired behavior and correcting for noncompliance enforces reliability.

When a dog responds reliably to yard training without correction, I take the dog to different locations. I initially use a check cord, a 12- to 15-foot cord with a snap on one end that connects to the collar allowing you to control the dog. I give the recall command and reward the dog if he responds appropriately. If the dog does not respond correctly, I say, “No,” to give a correction. Keep in mind that a correction should not be harsh. If you achieve appropriate benchmarks in yard training, you shouldn’t need to use harsh corrections.

Achieving benchmarks that teach a dog to respond to a command in a timely manner in a number of locations removes the possibility that the dog will make an unwanted negative association in the bird field or when questing for game. Your goal is to develop a shining dog that competes with style. Following benchmarks, not rushing and ensuring your dog responds enthusiastically and reliably in the field helps to guarantee the outcome. The only shortcut to A+ training is to get it right in the first place. ■

Clicker training can be used to mark positive behavior when training young dogs.

GENERALIZING THE BASICS

Training a pointing or flushing breed to perform with polished style in the field requires excellence in yard training. Here are commands that George teaches in the backyard before training in other locations. Reliability is required before he adds a new location to the training program.

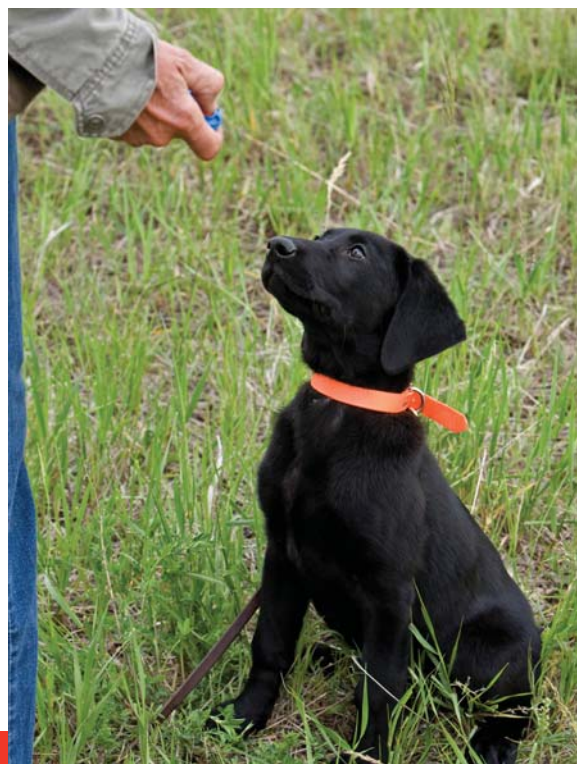
Pointing Breeds

Here or Come (Recall Command)
Whoa (Stop)
Change Direction (Two Short Whistle Blasts)

Flushing Breeds

Sit (Word Command or One Short Whistle Blast)
Here or Come (Recall Command)
Change Direction (Two Short Whistle Blasts)
Back (Hand Signal)
Over (Hand Signal to the Right or Left)

A professional trainer and handler of pointing and flushing dogs, George Hickox conducts training schools for owners and their dogs as well as private clinics for individuals and organizations. For information about the George Hickox School of Dog Training or Hickox’s four training DVDs, please visit georgehickox.com.



THE RIDGEBA



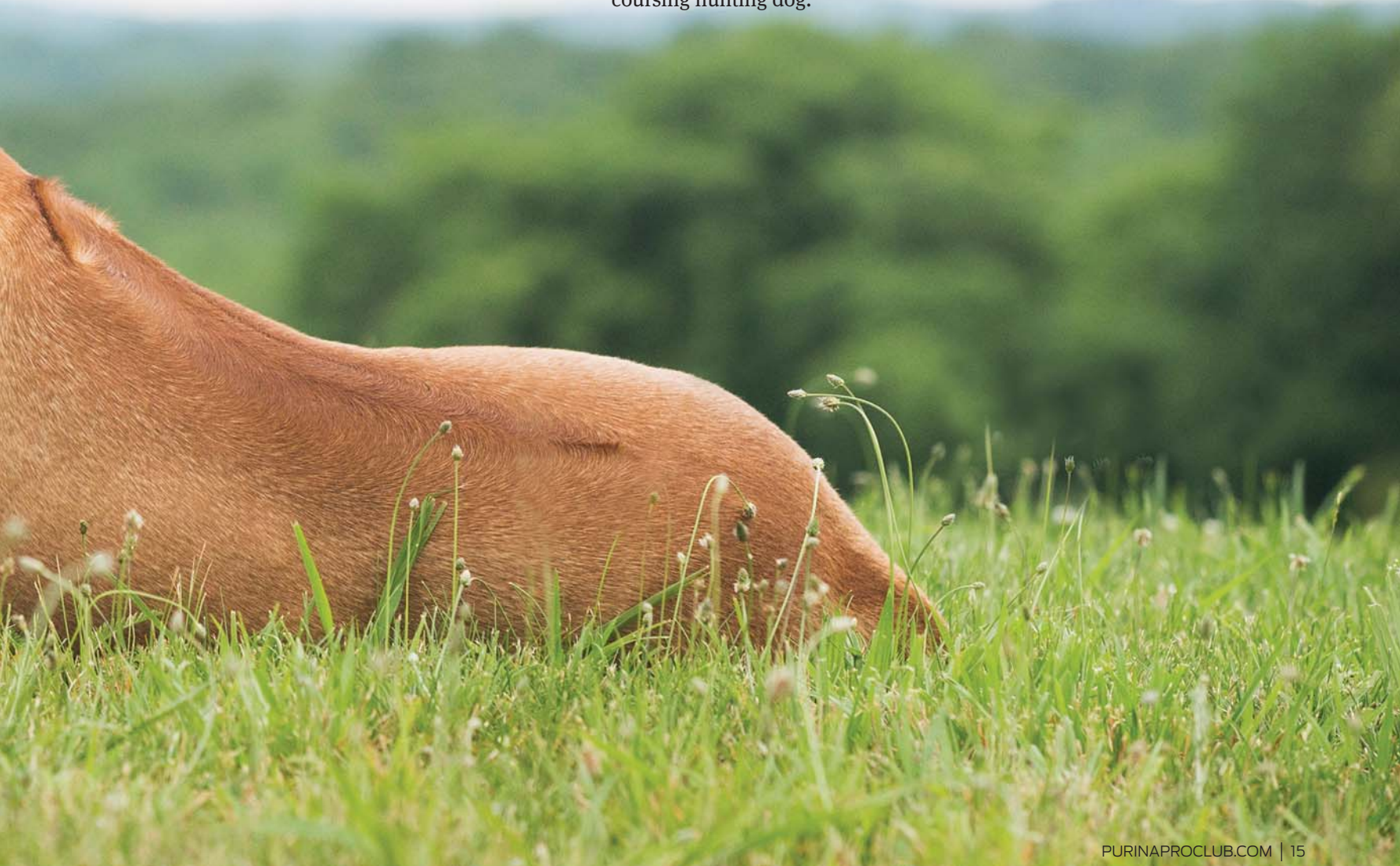
CKS *of* KIMANI

BY BARBARA FAWVER

The red-wheaten ridged-back dog posing restfully on a scenic New Jersey hillside sizzles with intensity. Embodied in the spirit of the 15-month-old 85-pound male, and captured in his fiery eyes, is high-powered energy. “Irish” (CH Kimani’s Borne O’ The Best) will soon spring to action.

Kimani Rhodesian Ridgeback breeder Alicia Hanna, grinning, says, “When his eyes are smiling, it will steal your heart away.”

Fifty-two years since discovering the African sighthound breed, Alicia is as impassioned today as she was then about her beloved “dog for all seasons.” As the breeder of dogs that have produced more than 700 show champions, Alicia has discriminately developed the Kimani line, contemporizing the Ridgeback without forgetting the form and function of the original big-game coursing hunting dog.





Snuggling 5-week-old Ridgeback puppies, Alicia typically breeds two litters a year. Her Kimani Ridgeback line has retired every National Specialty conformation challenge trophy, including the Kimani Best of Breed trophy, two times.

Out of the first litter Alicia Hanna bred came the Best of Breed winner of the 1968 Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the United States (RRCUS) National Specialty, BISS CH Weecha's Kimani. "It was scary," she says. "I had to live up to this level even to myself."

Her early success was followed by the agony of a 10-year hiatus before a Kimani dog would again win the National. "Breeding and showing is not all about winning trophies and ribbons," says Alicia. "There is a lot of sacrifice and heartfelt tragedy in breeding."

"I believe my dogs should be perfect, but the genetics don't allow it. Still I keep trying. I know every flaw in my own dogs and what needs repaired and how to fix it." — Alicia Hanna

After that amazing first litter — which gave her structurally sound, handsome dogs with sweet temperaments and free of the painful genetic disease hip dysplasia — Alicia had to step back and grasp what she had achieved. "I struggled to understand how important shoulder angulation is to correct structure and gait," she says. "Ridgebacks should have an upstanding presence that radiates from the front assembly."

The Kimani imprint on the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed is undeniable. Stamped in history are 12 RRCUS National Specialty Best of Breed winners, some of legendary fame. "Chip" (Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS CH Kimani's Blue Chip Image, JC, ROM) was a three-time National winner, having won in 1994, 1995 and 2000 under renown judges Anne Rogers Clark, Patricia Trotter and Barbara Rupert, respectively. In all-breed rings, Chip was one of an elite group of Ridgebacks to win multiple Bests in Show.

Littermate record setters "Durbin" (BISS CH Kimani's Lasting Impression, JC, ROM) and "Mafu" (BISS CH Kimani's Aires Above the Ground, JC, ROM) flip-flopped in 2006 and 2007, respectively, to take Best of Breed and Best of Opposite Sex to each other. Mafu, the sire of Chip, "was a gift for all," Alicia says. "The breed is better for his example."

Irish, whelped on St. Patrick's Day in 2014, was sired by Mafu out of "Binga" (GCH Kimani's Time Honored). A linebreeding, Binga was bred to her maternal grandsire Mafu. "I've used linebreeding since the beginning," says Alicia. "Outcrossing can help stabilize genetic problems because it suppresses recessive genes, but it also can be disastrous. If I outcross, I will then linebreed from the outcross."

Humbled to have been recognized by the American Kennel Club as the 2012 Hound Group Breeder of the Year, Alicia built the Kimani dynasty by breeding two bloodlines. "I have a couple of threads going," she says. "It is very difficult to breed for conformation while focusing on health issues. I've been lucky that I was able to keep the good conformation and improve upon and eliminate in my line early health concerns such as hip dysplasia."

Observing Alicia as she watches her dogs stack, trot and run at full speed is like wallowing in ruthless perfectionism. "Americans are drawn to perfection," she explains. "I believe my dogs should be perfect, but the genetics don't allow it. Still I keep trying. I know every flaw in my own dogs and what needs repaired and how to fix it."

Conceding that she primarily breeds dogs for herself for showing, Alicia also adores her puppy buyers. "They love their dogs and keep coming back generation after generation," she says. "Ridgebacks are companion dogs first."

LEARNING FORM & FUNCTION

A self-described neophyte when she bought her first Rhodesian Ridgeback in 1963, Alicia, a newlywed at the time, eagerly believed the breeders when they told her the lovely female puppy's short ridge down the back would eventually grow. The breed's satiny coat and athletic, muscular build stoked a fondness she already had for those qualities in horses.

Her love of horses was apparent when she chose a five-gaited American Saddlebred over a car when she was 17. "I knew I could drive my father's car almost any time," she says.

Alicia took her first Ridgeback, Mohr's Makanga Weecha, to obedience class and earned a CD (Companion Dog) title. She bred "Weecha" to her paternal uncle, which resulted in the first litter that gave her "Kimani," the 1968 RRCUS National Specialty winner from the classes. The puppies were whelped in her second-floor apartment in Livingston, New Jersey. Dog breeding came naturally to Alicia, as her parents had bred Cocker Spaniels and instilled in her "how wonderful it was," she says.



Puppies eagerly eat Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula, an all life stages food fed to every Kimani Ridgeback.



Alicia gaits "Irish," a 15-month-old male who depicts the correct long, free stride of the breed. "A study of gait will tell you precisely how desirable a Ridgeback is in terms of his conformation," she says.



Nine-year-old “Beryl” (CH Kimani’s Time After Time, ROM), left, and 3-month-old “Armani” depict correct Ridgeback heads. Both have big, round, dark eyes, with no cheek outside the eyes, and their ears are high on a flat skull and lay close to their face. Their intelligent expressions are a classic characteristic.



Alicia trims “Changa” (CH Kimani’s Visual Effects). The 18-month-old is losing her puppy coat as it changes to a beautiful red-wheaten adult coat.

Motivated to one day show at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, a childhood dream, Alicia took Kimani to the New York Ridgeback Specialty held at the same time and thus began her love for the show ring. Alicia attained her dream of winning Best of Breed at Westminster with her beloved Mafu in 2005 and again in 2007.

When Alicia bred her second litter, out of Kimani, her foundation bitch, the family had moved to the countryside in Chester, New Jersey, where she still lives today. A small hobby kennel accommodated her growing interest in dog breeding. With few prominent males in the East, Alicia arranged an outcross breeding to a male bred by Blanche Brophy of Pinebush, New York, Hopehill’s Matchless, out of the Gazeley line of Major T.C. Hawley of Johannesburg, South Africa.

The litter gave her “Urimba” (CH Kimani’s Urimba of Mohridge, ROM), her foundation sire. “Everything goes back to him,” she says. Among more than 10 champions Urimba sired to earn Register of Merit

status were two RRCUS National Specialty Best of Breed winners: CH Kimani’s Star of Africa in 1977 and CH Calico Ridge Sweet Music Man in 1982.

Endeavoring to get back on top after Kimani, Alicia began studying the sporty sighthound breed. “The closer the dog’s shoulder blades are to a 45-degree angle, the better,” she says. “Angulation of the shoulder blade affects reach and balance, all which affects gait. A Ridgeback’s gait should be effortless and flowing, covering the maximum amount of ground with the least amount of effort. No trait is harder to breed for or easier to lose than a good front. It can take generations, if at all, to recover.”

In his native South Africa, the Rhodesian Ridgeback was a courageous, powerful hunter developed by early Dutch settlers to track and course wild game. Great endurance and the ability to run at exceptionally high speeds were essential for the job.

“The hindquarters of the Ridgeback are like that of other fast runners,” says Alicia. “The length of the femur must be shorter than the tibia-fibula to have total efficiency of the limbs. The extended tibia-fibula lengthens the Achilles tendon, one of



the longest tendons of the body, producing strength and power to the thigh muscle seven times a dog's body weight. This allows for maximum retraction and extension of the leg."

A primary source for her information on the breed was a book titled "The Rhodesian Ridgeback: The Origin, History and Standard," published in 1957 and written by Major Hawley, who was considered the foremost authority on the breed. Alicia counts as one of her crowning achievements winning Best of Breed under Hawley at the 1982 RRCUS National Specialty with BISS CH Kimani's Currituck.

It was a good time for learning. Veterinary schools frequently offered seminars for dog breeders on structure and movement and the effects of genetic diseases. "They would teach us what makes a correct Ridgeback," Alicia says. "This tutoring was so important."

Alicia became a lifelong believer in health testing. Ridgebacks are tested for hip and elbow dysplasia, thyroid disease, eye diseases, and deafness. In 2006, the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals named her bitch, CH Kimani's Motion Picture II, as the 1 millionth dog screened for hip dysplasia since the test was first offered in 1966.

An active member of the parent club, Alicia was president and also served as chair of the standards committee. During her tenure the club began rotating the location of the National Specialty after being held for several years in New York during Westminster. She was instrumental in introducing a Sweepstakes competition to encourage novice enthusiasts.

Her most impactful contribution to Ridgeback lovers is sharing her knowledge. As an educator, Alicia has presented her breed seminar throughout the world and in the U.S. She is preparing to publish a book of the same title, "The Standard's Image: An Inside Look at the Form and Function of the Rhodesian Ridgeback."

A LIFETIME OF LOVE

Back to Irish lying on the hillside, this impressive, statuesque Ridgeback is eagerly awaiting the chance to chase anything that moves. Alicia describes him as a "high-powered stallion beautifully put together, upstanding, strong and agile."

"All my dogs' qualities are coming to fruition in great number," she says.

She fully credits the Kimani bitches for their contributions. "The bitch is everything!" she exclaims.

"You can breed a slightly less bitch out of a great family and be better off than if you breed a better bitch from a family of less quality."

Kimani has been blessed to have countless Register of Merit dogs and bitches. Reflecting on the sires, Alicia says, "A lot of people said Mafu was my greatest dog, and he was pretty close to perfect, but he descended from a lot of great dogs."

The two-time Best of Breed winner at Westminster, Mafu was the first American-bred Ridgeback to win a Challenge Certificate for Best Dog at Crufts and was a frequent RRCUS Top Stud Dog. Mafu is remembered by Alicia for other things. "He was very noble and aristocratic, unflinchingly loyal, an ever faithful companion," she says.

Mafu passed away in April, two months before turning 12. He left a void painfully felt by Alicia and his fellow house dog and littermate sister, Durbin. They both grieve for him. Durbin, with her graying muzzle and gentle, loving eyes, isn't as interested in chasing toys, and Alicia is taking time before bringing another dog into the house. The empty dog beds are reminders that Mafu is gone.

"I am very loyal to my old dogs," Alicia says.

The passing of a beloved Ridgeback is certainly among the heart-felt tragedies of dog breeding. One gets the feeling that a lifetime has not been long enough for Alicia to enjoy her beautiful Kimani Ridgebacks. "My love for this breed equals my love for each individual dog," she says. "This dedication has given me the required objectivity that has enabled me to achieve many accomplishments of which I am most proud."

In short, "I am a well-seasoned breeder who really loves her dogs." ■



CH Kimani's Borne O' The Best

'THE LION DOG': A MISLEADING MONIKER

The African Lion Dog, as the Rhodesian Ridgeback is often known, takes his name for keeping big game, not necessarily lions, at bay during hunts. The Ridgeback was a superb hunting dog that could turn in a split second, swerve and fake an attack as well as pursue fleeting game. The courageous, powerful breed was developed more than 350 years ago by Dutch settlers in South Africa, where today the Ridgeback is the national dog.

A sighthound with tremendous speed to course game, the Ridgeback's most distinguishing characteristic is a long ridge on his back inherited from the indigenous African dogs that were crossed with domestic breeds to build resistance to diseases and parasites of the region. The ridge, due to hair growing in the opposite direction of the rest of the coat, starts at the shoulder and ends at the hips. It should have two symmetrical crowns, or whorls, and should be clearly defined and tapering.

PURINA[®] PRO CLUB[®] Circle of Champions

CHIHUAHUA 'SONNITO' SETS BREED RECORD AS TOP WINNER



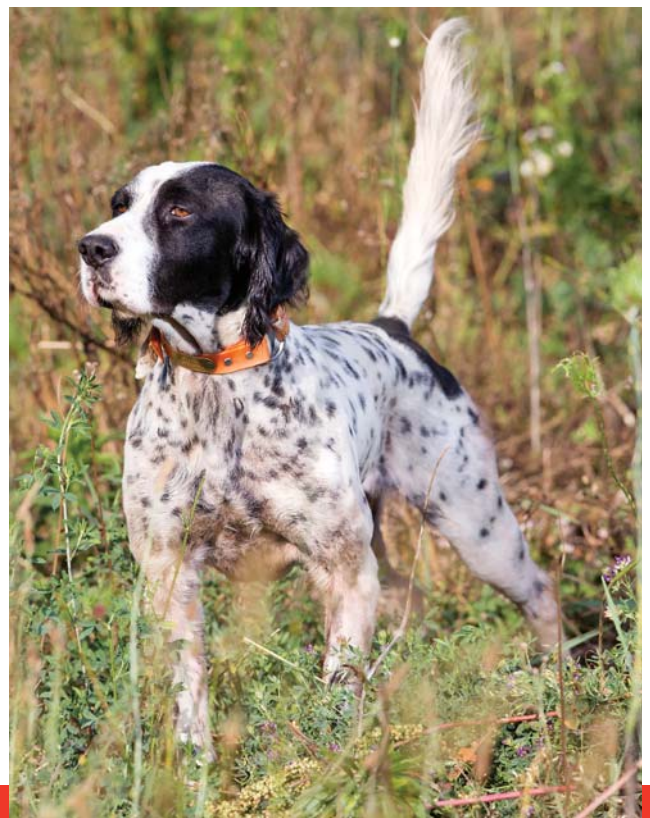
Earning 32 Bests in Show in just over a year, from February 2014 to May 2015, a spirited 3-year-old male Smooth Coat Chihuahua named “Sonnito” has become the winningest Chihuahua of all time. The Mexican-bred dog, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS MEX/AM GCH Sonnus Filho (Sanchez), captured 93 Group Firsts in 2014, finishing the year ranked No. 1 in the Toy Group, a first for the breed. Pro handler Erika Lanasa of Stewartstown, Pennsylvania, says, “Sonnito shines at dog shows with his outgoing, affectionate nature and beautiful breed type.” The toy dog was bred by Dr. Romulo Sanchez Torres of Mexico City, who co-owns him with James Moses and Janet Lange-Moses of Wentzville, Missouri. Sonnito is fueled by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula.

A powerful Toy dog with a fast-moving gait, “Sonnito” has charmed his way to setting a breed record for the most Bests in Show.

NSTRA NATIONAL CHAMPION IS AN ENGLISH SETTER NAMED 'JAKE'

A high-powered English Setter called “Jake” stylishly came away with five covey finds to win the 2015 National Shoot to Retriever Association (NSTRA) Trial of Champions. Handler Greg Wood of Shelbyville, Kentucky, attributes the 7-year-old blue-belton male’s strong performance in the three-hour stake to his “never-ending desire to find birds.” Outperforming over 192 dogs, representing five breeds, Tomoka’s Smoking Gun stood out in chilly, rainy conditions with his efficient, ground-covering stride and keen nose. Sired by 18XNSTRA CH Tomoka’s Smoking JR, Jake was co-bred by Wes Barr of Abilene, Texas, and Wood, who co-owns the dog with Jim Kirkman of Angier, North Carolina. Jake, the 2014 NSTRA Dog of the Year, is powered by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula.

“Jake,” the winner of the NSTRA National in Amo, Indiana, is described by breeder-owner-handler Greg Wood as “a gentleman in the house and a machine in the field.”



LABRADOR RETRIEVER 'ROXIE' IS 2015 NATIONAL AMATEUR CHAMPION

Owner-handler Bill Benson of Northfield, Illinois, brought his stylish, high-drive 9-year-old black female Labrador Retriever “Roxie” to the 2015 National Amateur Retriever Championship in Ronan, Montana, with one goal in mind – to have fun. Acing 10 challenging series of multiple land and water marks and blinds, NAFC-FC Hardscrabble Roxie McBunn outperformed 134 retrievers to give Benson his first National win. Only five weeks before the event, Benson had a scare when he discovered a mammary lump on Roxie that fortunately was benign. Roxie’s pro trainer, Ray Voigt of Handjem Retrievers in Montello, Wisconsin, credits the retriever’s “intelligence, athletic condition and natural ability in helping to set her apart from the competition.” Having qualified for nine Nationals, including four National Opens, during her stellar career, Roxie is fed Purina *Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula.

Owner-handler Bill Benson casts “Roxie,” who won the National Amateur Retriever Championship, giving Benson the biggest win of his 12 years in the retriever sport.



NO. 1 DOG IN THE COUNTRY IS GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG CALLED 'RUMOR'

Achieving star status rapidly since beginning her Specials career in January 2015, a German Shepherd Dog called “Rumor” has captured 45 Bests in Show and become the No. 1-ranked all-breed dog in the country. A beautifully moving dog, GCH Lockenhaus’ Rumor Has It V Kenlyn is handled by owner Kent Boyles of Edgerton, Wisconsin, who describes her as “well-muscled and smoothly contoured.” Boyles co-bred the 3 ½-year-old female with Pam McElheney of Maumee, Ohio, and they are the co-owners with Deborah Stern of Calabasas, California; Pamela Buckles of Columbus, Ohio; and Patti Dukeman of Mahomet, Illinois. Rumor is fueled by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula.

A stunning, beautifully moving dog, “Rumor” has gone straight to the top since January to become No. 1 in all-breed competition.

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



An exuberant 12-year-old Cardigan Welsh Corgi, “Powell” (GCH Heart Of Gold Power Play) thrives on *Purina Pro Plan BRIGHT MIND Adult 7+ Chicken & Rice Formula*, says owner Sherri Hurst.

BRIGHT MIND GIVES SENIOR DOGS BRAIN ENERGY

A longtime, loyal *Purina Pro Plan* feeder, professional handler Sherri Hurst was excited to try new *Purina Pro Plan BRIGHT MIND Adult 7+* dog food on her retired show champion house dogs. That was four months ago.

“The results have been incredible,” Hurst says. “They have been most pronounced in ‘Powell,’ my 12-year-old who won the Veteran Dogs 11+ class at this year’s Cardigan Welsh Corgi National. It was like a light bulb went off in his head. He started wagging his tail and gaiting effortlessly.”

Introduced in January in pet specialty stores, the BRIGHT MIND nutritional platform includes: *Purina Pro Plan BRIGHT MIND Adult 7+ Chicken & Rice Formula* and *Purina Pro Plan BRIGHT MIND Adult 7+ Large Breed Formula*. Both foods naturally nourish the minds of dogs age 7 and older to help them think more like they did when they were younger.

Purina scientists who study cognition in senior dogs noticed that around age 7 a dog’s glucose metabolism in the brain begins to change. These changes affect memory, learning, awareness, and decision-making. They discovered that enhanced botanical oils could be used as an additional energy source for the brain and when added to the daily diet of dogs 7 and older promoted memory, attention and trainability.

“This breakthrough technology generates visible results usually within 30 days,” says *Purina Pro Plan* Senior Brand Manager Lisa Pacatte. “Owners may notice their dog starting to show interest in playing and an ability to adapt and cope with change.”

Among the nutritional benefits to senior dogs, BRIGHT MIND Adult 7+:

- Is made with high-quality protein including chicken as the first ingredient
- Contains enhanced botanical oils shown to promote alertness and mental sharpness in dogs 7 and older within 30 days
- Contains EPA, an omega-3 fatty acid, and glucosamine to help support health and mobility
- Includes vitamin A and linoleic acid, an omega-6 fatty acid, for healthy skin and coat
- Contains a natural prebiotic fiber from wheat bran that helps promote digestive health

“Not a day goes by that I don’t tell someone about BRIGHT MIND,” Hurst says. “My old dogs mean everything to me. Powell feels good and his coat looks wonderful. BRIGHT MIND is definitely helping!” ■

Has *Purina Pro Plan BRIGHT MIND* made a difference in your senior dog? Let Purina know by clicking here to write a review.

DISCOVER A BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATION FOR DOGS 7 AND OLDER



THE INSIGHT

around age 7, a dog's glucose metabolism in the brain begins to change, which can affect memory, learning, awareness or decision-making.



PURINA DISCOVERED

enhanced botanical oils can be used as an additional energy source for the brain in dogs age 7+.



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Breed Snapshot

AKITA: AN ESTEEMED JAPANESE BREED

The true story of “Hachiko,” an Akita who faithfully marched to a Tokyo train station every day for nine years to wait for the return of his master who had died, stirred the emotions of Helen Keller when she visited Japan in 1937. The moving account of the strong-willed, fiercely loyal dog led to Keller receiving her own Akita puppy, a gift from the Ministry of Education, as well as credit for bringing the first Akitas to the U.S.

A handsome working breed with upright, alert ears and tail that curls over the back, the Akita today is a large-sized descendant of the ancient dog carved in tombs of seventh-century Japanese people. Named for the Akita prefecture, a rugged, mountainous region in the northernmost province of the island of Honshu where the breed originated, the Akita was selectively bred to hunt large game, including the great Yezo, the largest, meanest Old World bear. The fearless, sturdy, large-boned Akita became known as “matagiinu,” meaning esteemed dog hunter.

In Japan, the Akita has earned spiritual status. When a child is born or someone is ill, they receive a small statue of the Akita signifying health, happiness and a long life or a wish for a speedy recovery. In 1931, the government designated the Akita as a national monument and one of Japan’s national treasures.

A regal, independent dog that is sometimes aloof with strangers, the Akita is affectionate and loving with those he knows and trusts. This highly intelligent breed thrives on human companionship but can be aggressive with other dogs and animals.



An active breed, the Akita takes part in conformation, obedience, rally, and agility, and some are loving, comforting therapy dogs. Males are 26 to 28 inches tall at the withers and weigh from 100 to 115 pounds, and females are from 24 to 26 inches tall and weigh around 80 to 90 pounds.

Source: *The Complete Dog Book*, Official Publication of the American Kennel Club. i-5 Publishing, Irvine, CA. 2014.