



# TODAY'S BREEDER

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

Issue 103



ONE-OF-A-KIND ENGLISH COCKERS  
**Ryglen Gundogs**

- ADDRESSING CANINE PYOMETRA
- PHOTOGRAPHERS' FAVORITE PICS
- TRAVEL FIRST-AID KIT FOR DOGS



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A male German Shorthaired Pointer, Dog Pond Mr. Brown, called "Brown," was photographed by Mark L. Atwater of UpClose Photo. See photographers' favorite dog photos in the story on page 6.



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# HURRICANE HARVEY RESCUE RETRIEVER PRO RODY BEST IS MNRC HUMANITARIAN SPORTSMAN AWARD RECIPIENT



Strapping rescued animals in crates to their boat for transporting to a safe, dry kennel are, from left, Drake Best and Wade Cushion, part of the Best Retrievers team rescue effort.

Hurricane Harvey hit Houston hard. The catastrophic Category 4 hurricane ravaged the fourth largest city in the country, dumping up to 50 inches of rain in areas and causing \$125 billion in damage. Harvey became Houston's most destructive storm in history and the second costliest hurricane behind Katrina to strike the U.S. mainland.

The dismal forecast going into the weekend of Aug. 25, 2017, prompted professional retriever trainer Rody Best of Paige, Texas, two hours northwest of Houston, to cancel the snake proofing clinic planned for that Saturday at his training facility. About 100 retriever enthusiasts were coming to train their dogs to recognize the sight, smell and sound of snakes, a potentially life-saving skill when trialing or hunting.

"Our inconvenience was nothing compared to the serious flooding going on in Houston," Best says. "Come Monday, they had gone through three solid days of rain."

At Best's Monday morning staff meeting, he asked his six trainers and assistants, "Is there something we could do to help?"

With three flat-bottomed fishing boats among them, Best suggested, "We could take our boats down there and see if people need help."

Hence, the idea to help rescue Hurricane Harvey victims was hatched. Two years later, Best was chosen to receive the 2019 Humanitarian Sportsman Recognition Award — the first one ever — from the AKC Master National Retriever Club (MNRC). Due to the COVID cancellation of the 2020 Master National, the award will be officially presented in October 2021 at the MNRC annual meeting held in conjunction with the Master National at County Valley, Idaho.

In the award announcement, the late Bill Teague, former MNRC president, said, "Rody epitomizes the very essence of the AKC code of sportsmanship. He and his team arrived in Houston before many first responders to help in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. In his sport, he helps out at every weekend hunting test he runs. He has mentored several trainers and offers his training grounds for hunting test events. Rody Best is a most befitting recipient of this inaugural Humanitarian Sportsman Award."



MNRC president, the late Bill Teague, right, presents Rody Best with the Humanitarian Sportsman Award plaque in October 2020.



Rody Best drives a boat to help rescue victims of Hurricane Harvey. It was a team effort, he says, that included: trainers Luke Cour, Tyler Page and Trey and Carly Holladay, his wife, Kristin Best, and sons Dylan and Drake Best, Dr. Seth Landry, Victoria Hamilton, Amber Carr, Danielle Perez, Jason and Lola Hall, Wade Cushion, J.C. Strange, and Chris Krause.

After the rescue, Best started a GoFundMe account and raised \$6,000 for retriever enthusiasts affected by the hurricane. “We sent out \$1,000 to six people in the retriever community — judges, trainers, breeders — basically anyone in the retriever world who had losses from the flooding,” he says.

Looking back, Best says, “We had dogs that needed to be trained, but we knew their owners would be understanding of the situation.”

The pro trainer with 20-plus years’ experience and his training staff are well-known for turning out top-notch waterfowl and upland game hunters. Best Retrievers has produced an impressive 100 plus Master Hunters, 30 Hunting Retriever Champions, eight Master National Hall of Famers, 13 Grand Retriever Champions, seven Super Retriever Series Champions, and countless gundog hunting companions.

Later that day the Best Retrievers team began loading their boats on trailers and packing up for Houston. “We had no idea what we would get into or the magnitude of the flood,” says Best. “Before we left, we posted on Facebook that we were going to Houston and to please contact us if you or anyone you know needs help.”

A fellow trainer alerted the team about a boarding kennel in the Houston suburb of Cypress that was completely under water on its first floor. “They had moved the animals to the second floor but needed to get them out,” Best says. “We started making trips down a flooded access road hauling dogs and cats in our boats. Luckily, they had enough crates, and we made four trips transporting 30 animals.”

On the last trip, a strong undercurrent made a section of water treacherous. “The dangerous water conditions proved almost deadly for three guys in a pontoon boat not equipped to handle the fast-moving current,” says Best. “Their boat flipped and was sucked under an overpass bridge. They were fortunate to grab onto some trees and climb up before they were sucked under with their boat.”

Several hours later, the threesome was rescued. “Attempt after attempt failed because the current was so strong,” he says. “Five guys in boats were trying to help them only to find themselves thrown from their boats. Altogether eight people were pulled out at that spot.”

Night came and the weary rescuers stayed in their trucks parked on a pitch-black parking lot. “I couldn’t sleep,” Best says. “Our Facebook post had been shared

over and over, and I had hundreds of texts and phone calls from people trapped and needing help. I felt helpless and desperate, not knowing how we could possibly help them all.”

The next day, the Best Retrievers team split up to help as many people as they could. Thousands were stranded, their homes and apartments flooded with 3 to 10 feet of water. Among the people Best transported was photographer Andrew Burton shooting for *The New York Times* who hitched a ride in his boat to document the devastation. Best came upon a college friend, Dr. Seth Landry, a veterinarian, who had grown up in the area

and helped him to navigate shortcuts. Besides people, they joined others in boats as they collectively herded cattle, donkeys and deer to safety.

“After two days and three nights in Houston, people and boats were pouring in from everywhere to help,” Best says. “I could tell we

had done our part, and it was time to head home.”

Exhausted emotionally and physically, Best reflected on the experience on the drive home. “I felt extremely grateful to have been able to do what we could,” he says. “We saw that people needed help and thought we could maybe do something. I did not realize at the time, it would change my life forever.” ■

## PURINA SENDS AID TO HURRICANE HARVEY PETS & PEOPLE

Purina sent six truckloads — 170,000 pounds of pet food and 74,000 pounds of cat litter — to pet shelters in the areas affected by Hurricane Harvey. Purina also donated \$25,000 to Greater Good to support people and pets impacted by the disaster.



# DOG ART

## PHOTOGRAPHERS' FAVORITE PICS

Dog photography is an art. Photographers who have mastered the art stir a gallery of emotions in all who view their unforgettable images. Pictures that capture the instinctual, driving intensity of dogs, their gentle souls reflected in doe-eyed expressions, or their sheer beauty remind us of their unswerving loyalty and companionship. *Today's Breeder* asked six top photographers to share their favorite recent images. Here are their picks — The best from the best.

PHOTO BY JULIE INUELLER



### GAY GLAZBROOK

**Gay Glazbrook Photography**  
Arlington, Texas

Hired in 1989 to sell ads for the monthly *Kennel Review Magazine*, Gay Glazbrook quickly became ad director responsible for graphic design and photography. "When the sale of the ad was contingent on getting a photo of the dog, I took the old office workhorse of a camera off the shelf to capture the shot that reflected the dog's essence," she says. "This was before computer design, so the ads were created by cut and paste."

Glazbrook became the first photographer/graphic designer in the country in the sport of dogs to offer both services. In the mid-1990s, she moved back to her hometown of Dallas to start her own business, though she currently lives in nearby Arlington. Among her clients, Glazbrook promoted the top-winning dog of all time, CH Altana's Mystique, the German Shepherd Dog bitch who won 275 Bests in Show, and CH Torum's Scarf Michael, the Kerry Blue Terrier triffecta winner of



Westminster, the AKC National Championship and Crufts in the U.K.

Describing her work, Glazbrook says, "I have a passion for capturing magnificent animals in portraits that show them in the best possible light. My goal is always to bring out the dog's soul and spirit through his expression."



The male Doberman Pinscher above is CH Mariah's Absence Of Malice Mi Casa, called "Sully," and at left is a male Rough Collie, GCHS Pleasant Acre Blue Moon, known as "Seth."



**MARK L. ATWATER**  
**UpClose Photo**  
**Donalsonville, Georgia**

Mark L. Atwater promises to shoot up close and wide open — as most people have never experienced dog photography. Whether he is photographing retrievers at national championships, hunting tests or from duck blinds, Atwater delivers stunning shots bound to give you goosebumps. Over the years, his portfolio has expanded to include spaniels, cockers, pointing dogs, puppies, and training.

His start with a 35mm camera in the early 1980s was tied to college days at Purdue University, where he practiced taking macro shots of plants for a bachelor's degree in agronomy and master's degree in botany focusing on weed science. Atwater began taking dog photos in the early 2000s using newly introduced digital cameras at training sessions with friends working retrievers for hunting tests.

After a decade working full time at his herbicide application business and part time at dog photography — about 80 hours a week — Atwater sold his business and became a full-time dog photographer in 2018. "Great dogs deserve great photos," he says. "When you see the intensity of the dog's eyes, you can see his tail through his eyes, locked and loaded. Capturing something great is what I love to do."



Pictured above is Atwater's male Golden Retriever, HRCH Swamp Collie's Gotta Have Heart MH DS, known as "Falco," and at right is a female Labrador Retriever, Full Throttle's Sassy Duck Queen MH, called "Willow."





## CRIS SKINNER

**Journey Photography by Cris Wasilla, Alaska**

Cris Skinner attributes her launch into dog photography in 2015 to her chocolate Labrador Retriever, “Cooper,” whom she started photographing to document their journey together. “We went through 14 months of intense training for him to become my medical alert service dog,” she says. “Cooper has brought laughter, love and a passion for living back into my life and inspires my goal that every photo I take is a testament to a dog’s grace.”

Skinner’s credo is that a dog’s eyes are the window to the soul. “You can’t understand this until you are staring back into the nurturing gaze of a dog. It’s in that instant, you’ll realize the path of the dog’s journey intertwines with our fates,” she says. “I believe the eyes are the single most important feature of a dog and capturing that emotion, connection and communication is vital in dog photography.”

Action dog photography that allows Skinner to capture the unadulterated euphoria of a dog’s smile and drive is her forte. “It’s in that instant of enthusiasm and an abundance of gusto that a dog’s spirit comes alive,” she says.



The male Labrador Retriever who inspired Skinner to become a photographer is Bayview’s Spirit of Cooper Landing, or “Cooper.”



The female Belgian Malinois, above, performing dock diving is Solachi You’re Just Jealous OA OAJ DE DM AE AM CGCA CGCU, or “Envy,” and at right the male Border Collie easing through agility weave poles is Abfab North To Alaska, called “Hunter.”







**RHONDA CASSIDY**  
**mydoglovesrcphotos**  
**Topeka, Kansas**

With time on her hands in 2020 due to COVID-canceled dog shows, Rhonda Cassidy started combing through 10,000 plus images, a compilation of her photography over the past 20 years, for her soon-to-be published book, "For the Love of Dogs." Adding custom art touches and breed names, Cassidy has produced a 164-page coffee table book featuring 275 remarkable images of dogs intended to appeal to the dog fancy and dog lovers everywhere. "I wanted to share my love of purebred dogs and make people smile," she says.

Dog photography began as a hobby for Cassidy in the mid-2000s when she and a photographer friend began traveling to dog shows in the Midwest to snap photos of dogs that Cassidy later handprinted into head studies on note cards. "We didn't know anyone in the dog fancy," she says. "We would go around with samples in a baggie and ask, 'Can we take a picture of your dog?'" Eventually, Cassidy completed note cards for every American Kennel Club breed.

While working many years for an insurance company, Cassidy began her new career as a dog photographer on weekends until she retired in 2013. She was then able to dedicate herself full time to travel to dog shows and take ringside candid and portraits for ads. "This is my passion," Cassidy says. "I love capturing each dog's personality and beauty."



The male Pekingese above is GCHB Sunrise Dragon Nikola, called "James Bond."

The top-winning Boxer in history is a female, MBIS/MBISS GHP2 Cinnibon's Bedrock Bombshell, or "Wilma."



## DEREK GLAS

**Derek Glas Photography**  
**Santa Ynez, California**

A fondness for animals came naturally to Derek Glas, who grew up in Wisconsin on his family's farm. With encouragement from his brother, Glas worked during high school and college at the kennel of breeder and pro handler Susan DePew, who lived nearby, often traveling to shows to help with the dogs.

Having an artistic eye, Glas went to the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, where he majored in art with a concentration in graphic design. While there, Glas developed an interest in photography and enrolled in several courses. "I began photographing and putting together ads for some of the dogs being shown by Susan," he says. "I realized the importance of having great images to use in advertising to promote a dog's campaign."

Glas moved to California in 2008 and enrolled at Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara. His keen eye for taking exquisite photos led to his starting his own photography and design business. "I love that photography allows me to establish connections with people, nature and animals, capturing moments and making tangible memories through my photographs, documenting the beauty I see in all my subjects including our canine best friends," Glas says.



The 2020 Westminster Best in Show winner is the female Standard Poodle, MBIS/MBISS GCHP Stone Run Afternoon Tea, or "Siba."



The No. 1 Terrier in 2019 and 2020 and the 2019 Montgomery County All Terrier Best in Show winner is the male Welsh Terrier, MBIS/MBISS GCHG Brightluck Money Talks, or "Dazzle."



A breed record-setting Havanese and 2019 Reserve Best in Show Westminster winner is MBIS/MBISS GCHP Oeste's In The Name Of Love, a male called "Bono."



## TRACY CHILSON

**3Rivers Photos To Go**  
**Uhrichsville, Ohio**

Tracy Chilson and her husband, Joe, began their 3Rivers Photos To Go business in 2010 when they realized only winning dogs and their handlers typically were photographed at coonhound events. “We wanted to recognize all the dogs and their handlers,” says Chilson, who honed her skills working as a photographer’s assistant.

Avid competitors at bench shows, nite hunts, water races, and field trials with their own Bluetick Coonhounds, the Chilsons had formed many cherished friendships during their travels. They found their friends plus many other coonhound enthusiasts welcomed the opportunity to have photos taken of special moments with their dogs.

“One consistent thing I’ve noticed is the passion people have for their sports and their love for the dogs,” Chilson says. “I love photographing dogs and feel blessed to be able to share my photography.” ■



Chilson’s Bluetick Coonhounds are, above, GRCH ‘PR’ 3Rivers Northern Blue Fancy, a female called “Fancy,” and at left, NITECH CCH GRCH(2) ‘PR’ 3Rivers Blue Beaux, a male known as “Beaux.”

# ON-THE-ROAD ESSENTIALS A FIRST-AID KIT



Veterinarian and upland game hunter Dr. Seth Bynum is shown with his German Shorthaired Pointers, “Shine” and “River.”

If you're headed out with your dogs, whether it's a single-day outing or a multiday adventure, don't forget to pack a first-aid kit. A zipper bag packed with veterinary medical essentials to tide you over in an emergency is the idea.

“Once you get used to carrying a first-aid kit, you'll be surprised how often it comes in handy,” says Seth Bynum, DVM, an upland game hunter and owner of On Point Reproduction Services veterinary clinic in Hayden, Idaho. “I carry an abbreviated first-aid kit in my vest pocket to handle accidents that occur in the field. It is a small zipper storage bag with supplies for gashes or cuts.”

Among the most common incidents when hunting or trialing with dogs, Dr. Bynum cites cut wounds and travel stress. “Barb-wire fences are the No. 1 offense causing lacerations to dogs,” he says. “If the wound is deep, you should clean it and wrap it with protective gauze and then transport the dog to an emergency veterinary clinic for care.

“Likewise, travel stress is very common in dogs while on the road. You put unfamiliar dogs together, mix up a dog's routine and add the excitement of the sport, and the result is often loose stool or diarrhea. The gut is their stress organ.”

Dr. Bynum emphasizes the importance of using extreme caution when attempting to care for an injured dog. “You've got to really know your dog well to be able to provide care when he is in pain,” he says. “Dogs have a natural defense mechanism that kicks in, and they may try to bite you though you mean well.”

After a day afield, Dr. Bynum recommends taking time for a tailgate check to look for injuries and grass seed awns that could burrow under the skin and cause a severe life-threatening infection. “It's always a good idea to go over your dog,” he says. “You'll be surprised what you'll find. Check around the ears and between the toes for awns. Cheatgrass, foxtail barley and Canada wild rye can quickly do considerable harm.”

Importantly, it is best to seek veterinary advice if you have any concerns about your dog's health and well-being, advises Dr. Bynum. He suggests looking up veterinary clinics in the areas you are traveling and take emergency contact phone numbers with you.

With these considerations, it's easy to see why a travel first-aid kit is worthwhile. Taking time to put together a first-aid kit for your upcoming trip could be a lifesaver. ■

## + FIRST-AID KIT CHECKLIST

### ✓ CUTS & LACERATIONS

- Hydrogen peroxide or saline lotion to flush out the wound
- Sterile gauze and elastic adhesive tape to wrap the cleaned wound
- Pocket knife or scissors to cut the gauze and tape

### ✓ BUG BITES, STINGS OR ALLERGIC REACTIONS

- Benadryl® tablets to reduce swelling, giving 1 milligram per pound or the equivalent of two 25-milligram tablets for a 50-pound dog
- Tweezers for removing an attached tick followed by cleaning the bite area

### ✓ TRAVEL STRESS CAUSING GASTROINTESTINAL UPSET

- *Purina Pro Plan Veterinary Supplements FortiFlora* Canine Probiotic Supplement given daily starting a few days before and throughout the trip
- Metronidazole (Flagyl®) for rare, hard-to-treat diarrhea. Consult your veterinarian beforehand to get a prescription for this antibiotic

### ✓ EXERCISE SORENESS

- Carprofen (Rimadyl®, Novox®, etc.) for pain relief related to muscle soreness and stiffness. Check with your veterinarian beforehand to get a prescription for this nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID)

### ✓ PORCUPINE ENCOUNTER

- Leatherman multitool or knife with pliers to slowly and cautiously remove quills. Emergency veterinary care may be needed for a dog with a lot of quills
- Belt or a slip lead to wrap around the dog's muzzle to reduce the risk of being bitten

### ✓ SPRAYED BY A SKUNK

- Hydrogen peroxide, baking soda and Dawn® dish detergent. Mix a cocktail consisting of 1 cup each of the peroxide and soda and 1 tablespoon of detergent that can be used with water to absorb the malodorous stench of skunk spray, a non-life-threatening but inconvenient condition. Repeated baths may be needed

### ✓ INGESTION OF POISONOUS SUBSTANCE

- Hydrogen peroxide to induce vomiting at a dosage of 1 tablespoon per 5 pounds or 5 tablespoons for a 25-pound dog

### ✓ POSSIBLE BROKEN LEG

- Splint and heavy wrap, though the best course usually is to make the dog comfortable in the back seat of your vehicle for transporting to an emergency veterinary clinic

### ✓ MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLIES

- Thermometer for checking whether a dog is overheated, though common sense should prevail as it is normal for a dog to have a slightly elevated temperature after working. If a dog's temperature reaches 105 degrees, you should start cooling down the dog immediately. A normal temperature is 100 to 102.5 degrees
- Disposable sterile gloves
- Styptic pencil or powder to stop nail bleeding
- Blankets or towels should be available for wrapping an injured dog for warmth or for lying a dog on the back seat of the vehicle for transporting to an emergency veterinary clinic

Dr. Bynum suggests including the items listed above in a travel first-aid kit, though he notes you should seek immediate veterinary advice if you have concerns about an injury.



# THE FAMED ENGLISH COCKERS OF RYGLEN GUNDOGS



“Case,” a 7-week-old cocker

The one and only “Case,” a product of Ryglen Gundogs’ impeccable English Cocker Spaniel breeding, is going home today.

Case owes his life and potential to the Ryglen team. He was a breech and not breathing on Nov. 23, 2020, when kennel manager Buffy Chandler first held him in her hands. She shook him gently, breathed into his tiny nose and mouth, and he responded with a breath of his own. “Then he started screaming and never quit,” Buffy remembers happily.

Case, named after a tractor brand that Buffy admires, survived and spent his next 49 days being socialized and pampered in Ryglen’s pristine puppy room. Ryglen Gundogs’ heart and soul — owner Jay Lowry — almost couldn’t part with Case.

“He’s the only puppy from a really nice breeding,” Jay says. “It’s a repeat breeding of FTCh Mallowdale Quad and FTCh Endowood Faith. ‘Quad’ is a well-known and up-and-coming dog in the U.K. ‘Faith’ won the Irish Cocker Championship in 2019 and placed second in the British Cocker Championship last year. I tried to

buy a puppy from their first litter one and a half years ago and was told I didn’t have enough money to buy that puppy.”

Eventually, Jay was able to acquire Faith, and arranged an artificial insemination breeding with Quad’s owner, Jay’s good friend and legendary British gundog trainer Ian Openshaw.

“One puppy,” Jay says, forcing a smile as he looks Case in the eye. “I thought about keeping this one, but Case is going to Jordan Horak in Wisconsin.”

Horak, now a professional trainer and handler who won both the Cocker National Championship and National Amateur Championship in 2018, is thrilled. “Faith is arguably one of the best females going, and Openshaw really likes that Quad dog,” Horak says. “Jay’s a stand-up guy, and I’m glad to be able to purchase this puppy. On paper, it doesn’t get any better than this.”

And that’s what Ryglen Gundogs in Brownstown, Illinois, strives to deliver.

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The sun rises on Ryglen Gundogs’ owner Jay Lowry and his English Cocker Spaniels.





“People come here for the genetics,” Jay says, “and our goal is to provide the most well-bred English Cocker Spaniels from the U.K.”

### THE DENTIST & HIS MENTOR

When Jay Lowry graduated from Southern Illinois University Dental School in 2000, he didn't own a Cocker Spaniel and the Ryglen Gundogs' brand didn't exist. No kennel. No clients. No cocker passion or panache.

“I always loved the camaraderie of the hunting dog,” Jay says. “My uncle had Brittanys, and I hunted with him. I had English Setters, and in 2003 I bought a Labrador Retriever from Mike Stewart's Wildrose Kennels in Oxford, Mississippi. By 2005 I was an associate trainer for Wildrose, and I spent every minute of my spare time learning to train dogs, learning how to become a better handler, learning everything I could

from Mike. He became my mentor. In addition to all the dog stuff, Mike taught me dog marketing. He is a genius at building a brand around a dog.”

Wildrose is famous for its British and Irish Labradors and producing the classic “Gentleman's Gundog” from imported genetics. “One of the biggest things that came from Mike — he introduced me to the U.K.,” Jay says. “Without Mike, I wouldn't have met Nigel Carville. Without Nigel, I wouldn't have met Ian Openshaw.”

### THE RABBIT HUNT THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

Nigel Carville of Northern Ireland was a key partner and Labrador Retriever resource for Mike Stewart and Wildrose and in turn, became a friend of Jay's. In February 2013 Jay made the trip to the U.K. with Mike to visit Nigel, who arranged for a rabbit hunt over Ian Openshaw's

Jay walks with “Beretta” at heel. The 9-month-old is in training to be a finished hunting cocker by this fall.







famed English Cocker Spaniels. Ian and Wendy Openshaw own Rytex Gundogs and Kennels and in 20 years of trialing have won a record number of British and Irish Spaniel championships as well as four Cocker Spaniel championships in the last seven years.

“I just remember seeing up close the joy in these dogs as they worked for Ian,” Jay says. “I’d never seen a dog that loves to do his job as much as a cocker. After that day of hunting there was one little female on the ground at Ian’s feet. Ian clapped his hands, and she jumped right up into his arms.”

That was it.

“I said, ‘Mission accomplished. Sir, I want one!’”

A few months later, in June 2013, Jay imported his first cocker, Kenine Wild Lavendar (“Cassie”), from Openshaw.

“I was hooked,” Jay says.

After 10 years with Wildrose, Jay left in 2013 to focus on importing and training English Cocker Spaniels and building his own brand — Ryglen Gundogs. The Ryglen name is a combined nod to Openshaw’s Rytex Kennel and Carville’s Astraglen Kennel. “Both men were so important in getting me started with English Cocker Spaniels, so I combined their kennel names to make Ryglen,” Jay says.

## THE RISE OF THE ENGLISH COCKER & RYGLEN GUNDOGS

Timing is everything, and Jay’s was perfect when it comes to importing English Cockers. “We saw the cockers’ popularity beginning to rise again in the U.K., and the U.S.,” Jay says. “By importing the best field genetics in English Cocker Spaniels from the U.K., we saw an opportunity. People want quality field dogs that have been bred for generations to hunt and perform. That’s what we wanted to offer.”

A full-time dentist in Vandalia, Illinois, by day, and a husband and father of two, Jay somehow found the time and energy to bring his sporting cocker passion to life. “We grew minimally for the first few years,” Jay says. “I think we had four dogs total — three momma dogs and one stud.”

Ryglen Gundogs also had a stunning logo, an upscale clientele, and a growing reputation for producing quality, biddable cockers that perform in the field. The logo, now patented, was fashioned from a photo silhouette of Jay and three cockers. It became a fixture in sporting dog and outdoor magazine advertising and ultimately a status symbol for quality cockers that resonated with hunters — especially upland bird enthusiasts.



Top: “Harper,” “Gem,” “Faith,” and “Millie” strike a pose. Above: Kennel manager Buffy Chandler is shown with “Maisie” and her dog, “Corky.”

Ryglen is equipped for in-house monitoring of progesterone levels, pregnancy ultrasounds and blood chemistry profiles using the IDEXX machine below. Right: Buffy sees three puppies on the screen as she performs an ultrasound on Gem.



“Then there’s the fact that if you wanted a Ryglen dog, you couldn’t get one right away,” Jay says. “You had to wait.”

Jay says a gamechanger came in January 2017 — Buffy Chandler.

“She was working at a local pharmacy and offered to help me out by picking up a dog at the airport,” Jay remembers. “Something clicked. I asked Buffy if we could talk seriously about her coming to work for me. She started at the end of January 2017 and has made all the difference in the world. She does all the work, keeps all the records, takes care of all the vet stuff, takes care of the puppies, socializes the puppies with her daughter, Annie. I can’t give Buffy enough credit for helping me live this dream.”

Every successful operation needs a Buffy Chandler. She’s a straight-shooting workaholic who loves the dogs and does whatever it takes to make Ryglen run smoothly. “Jay is my dentist,” Buffy says. “That was the connection. He was always so busy. I told him, ‘I’m done counting pills at the pharmacy today. Do you need me



Jay holds 4-week-old puppies from a four-puppy litter sired by “George” out of “Harper.”

to mow your yard? Can I do anything to help at the kennel?”

With Buffy on board as manager, Jay had more time to devote to Ryglen Gundogs and the operation grew to the point a new kennel facility was needed. Buffy and her husband, Clay Chandler, own and operate a construction company, and Clay was hired to build the state-of-the-art 30-by-120 foot kennel. It was completed in January 2018 and paved the way for the Ryglen Gundogs’ expansion.

### THE RYGLEN GUNDOGS’ KENNEL

No barking. Not a peep from 18 English Cockers, two Labradors, a Brittany, a Weimeraner, and a

Yorkie as Jay leads a tour of the Ryglen Gundogs’ kennel.

“They know I don’t like it when they bark,” Jay says.

“He’s the warden,” Buffy says. “I spoil ‘em.”

The warden can open up every kennel, and no dog moves until Jay says, “OK.” The command releases the hoard, and cockers of every color charge outdoors in unison to a fenced area.

The 19 runs are occupied by “Gem” and “Buster” and “Millie” and “Maisie” and “Kym” and “Fizz” and “George,” and the list goes on down the line.

“It’s the only dog kennel in the world that would hold a buffalo,” Jay says, as he grabs onto a substantial gate and rail. “We worked with a horse stall manufacturer in Missouri and asked if they could fabricate dog kennels for us. They were excited to do that. These should last my lifetime at least.”

Each kennel placard features the name, weight and number of cups of *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula* for each dog.

“We’re super crazy about weight and ideal body condition,” Jay says. “We adjust accordingly.”

For example, Millie, a sister of Faith who placed third in the British Championship last year, weighs 24.8 pounds and receives 2 cups.

The dogs rest in custom-made bunks.

Jay makes his way to a separate climate-controlled puppy room, where Case and another litter of four 4-week-old English Cocker puppies reside. Air purifiers keep the air clean and

smells down by constantly moving fresh air into the building.

The pups are on elevated platforms, “so they don’t live in a dirty world,” Jay says. Like the dog kennels fabricated from horse stalls, Jay found heavy duty slats used in the swine industry for his raised puppy platforms.

“The swine industry and hog houses are obsessed with cleaning and sanitation,” Jay says. “These slats are made in Germany and can withstand all the cleaning we do. The puppy waste and urine just fall right through.”

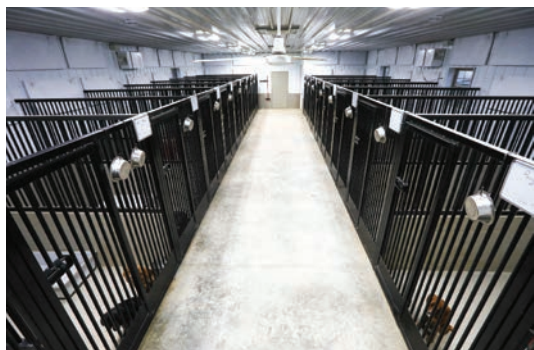
Whelping boxes in the puppy room feature a wool fabric that allows the puppies to grip and not slip. Puppies are moved to the elevated kennel runs at about 3 or 4 weeks old. “Those kennel doors are divided to allow mom to get out and us to get in without the puppies getting out,” Jay says.

Jay points to cameras in each kennel. “We can see exactly what, where, when, and why at any time,” he says. “I was in England last year, and I could look on my phone and see, real time, what was happening. That, coupled with the fact that



Above: Jay measures *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula* for the adult dogs adhering to the amounts determined for individual dogs based on body condition. Below: The 30-by-120-foot kennel building was completed in January 2018.





The pristine Ryglen Gundogs' kennel features sturdy stalls, custom whelping and puppy rearing quarters, cameras, and a television monitoring system in the reception area.

Buffy lives five minutes away, we pretty much have it covered.”

Puppies are fed *Purina Pro Plan Puppy Chicken & Rice Formula*.

“All puppies and their mommas are on *FortiFlora (Purina Pro Plan Veterinary Supplements FortiFlora Canine Probiotic Supplement)*,” Jay says. “Healthy gut equals healthy dogs. It’s been a game-changer for us.”

The kennel office and reception area feature a big flat-screen TV monitor. Camera No. 6 is focused on four puppies sired by FTW Pathfields George Dolbrenin (“George”) out of Mallowdale Revel (“Harper”). The big screen is flanked by classic photos of working English Cockers framed in barn wood.

The facility also features a clinical area with an ultrasound machine, a blood chemistry analyzer, and other technology. “We can do our own progesterone test here, so we know exactly when breeding days are supposed to be,” Jay says. “It gives us a number, and we can see when the spike happens.”

Ryglen Gundogs whelps about a dozen litters each year. Dams are retired and rehomed at eight years. “We have a little over a year wait for pups,” Jay says. “Greater specificity means greater wait time. We have clients say they want a George x Harper female puppy that’s golden. Others say they just

want a Ryglen puppy and send a deposit. We have some that only want a tricolor puppy out of Gus. We tell them it might be three years. They say, “We don’t care.”

Jay currently keeps three stud dogs and 13 “momma dogs,” and says he could double the size of the operation and still be sold out.

“But there’s a few reasons why we won’t do that,” he says. “We’d lose quality, and quality is

everything. And more dogs mean more humans in this building. It adds chaos. We want it to be a boutique, not a mass production facility. That wouldn’t be Ryglen Gundogs.”

Buffy adds, “People who are willing to wait deserve a dog!”

Jay also continues as a full-time dentist, working Monday through Wednesday and as needed throughout the week. “Dentistry pays the bills,” he says.

## THE RYGLEN GUNDOGS' BRAND

Jay scratches his head. “I’m not even sure I understand the brand,” he says and laughs. “It’s a family for sure. A community. It’s like a fraternity. But there’s really no specific socioeconomic class. We have people who fly into the Effingham, Illinois, airport on private jets to pick up a puppy, and we have people who pull up in old pickup trucks.

“In the field, when you’re hunting, doing what you love, there is no socioeconomic class. Our clients want a good gundog, a quality hunting dog from some of the best English Cockers in the U.K. They want a good family dog. And they’re willing to wait for it. Ask if they want an English Cocker, and they say ‘No, we want a Ryglen Cocker.’”

Good marketing and advertising fuel that desire.

Full-page ads in top sporting dog and outdoor publications are strikingly simplistic by design. Gorgeous photography of working Ryglen Gundogs overshadows the copy: *UK Imported English Cocker Spaniels*. That’s it. Five words plus the Ryglen Gundogs website and the classic logo.

“In my opinion, less is more in advertising,” Jay says. “Print ads bring credibility. Articles in publications have longevity, but I sell more dogs because of social media than anything else.”

Jay is a prolific poster on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Hunting in North Dakota. Training in Illinois. Beautiful cockers posing on a snow-covered prairie.

“You need unbelievable photography and videos,” he says. “And you need a good website. It’s simple. Look at what we’ve got. Here is where you can get it.”

The other intangible is the client experience when picking up a puppy.

“Pre-COVID we always brought all the owners of the litter in for the puppy picking weekend,”



Jay says. “Friday night we had a supper catered for as many as 40 people. Bring the kids, the more the merrier. Nobody sees the puppies until Saturday morning, and then it’s like Christmas morning opening presents.”

Owners become part of the “Ryglen Family.”

“We had two clients from Colorado here to pick puppies. While they were here, they learned they lived two blocks apart in Denver, never met before they got their puppies. Ryglen brought them together,” he says.

Jay also has clients participate in a mandatory classroom session and a 90-minute PowerPoint on getting started with their puppy. In addition to their puppy, all owners receive a custom Ryglen Gundogs’ gift box, a *Purina Pro Plan* Puppy Starter Kit, and a bag of *Purina Pro Plan* puppy food.

“When we say feed *Purina Pro Plan*, they do, and they’ll likely be lifelong users,” Jay says.

Jay offers training at his 53-acre property using the techniques he acquired after years of hunting over his English Cocker. “Some clients want started dogs, others want a finished dog. Some want to train their own dogs, so we’re always available to answer questions and help make our clients and their dogs a successful team.”

Jay is training “Beretta,” a promising cocker sired by “Gus” out of “Gem,” to be a finished dog.

Today, she’s doing some simple retrieving drills with a tennis ball.

“She’ll be here a year for training, and I’ll hunt her this fall on upland birds in North Dakota, then turn her over to the owner in October so she’ll be ready for his hunting season,” he says.

## PUTTING CASE ON THE MAP

A map of the United States and Canada hangs prominently in the kennel building between two U.S. patent and trademark documents authenticating Ryglen Gundogs’ name and logo. The map is perforated with 154 colorful stick pins. Each represents a puppy placement. Soon pin No. 155 — Case’s pin — will pierce the state of Wisconsin at the town of Fremont where Jordan Horak’s Juggernaut Kennel is located.

“Hopefully Jordan can do something with Case in the field trial game,” Jay says.

Horak says he’ll give it his best.

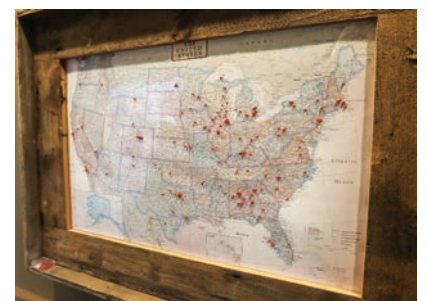
Buffy is happy, but sad.

“Case is pretty special to me,” Buffy says.

“I mean, when you give them mouth-to-mouth ... Come on, he’s precious. I spoiled the heck out of Case while he was here, and I know he’s going to a good place.”

Case, the one and only, is going home. ■

Above: Ryglen Gundogs represent a variety of breed coat colors and go to clients across the U.S. and Canada who become part of the Ryglen Family. Below: A map decorated with colorful stick pins represents the locations where puppies of Ryglen Gundogs have been placed.



# PRESERVING A BLOODLINE SMART STEPS TO ADDRESS CANINE PYOMETRA

Breeders have long grappled with when to breed a bitch having a successful show or sporting campaign. These accomplished females may be the linchpin of a legacy bloodline via their ability to produce the next generation of champions. Yet 20 percent of intact bitches<sup>1</sup> are at risk of developing the potentially fatal disease pyometra by 10 years of age — a disease that may end their chance of whelping puppies should it occur early in life.

“It is heartbreaking when breeders whose prized bitches just finished their careers tell how they assumed their only option to treat pyometra was spay surgery,” says Karen Von Dollen, DVM, MS, DACT, who completed a theriogenology residency at North Carolina State University in 2019 and is board-certified in veterinary reproduction.

“Although not every bitch is a candidate for medical treatment, a breeder’s goals for his or



Bitches that develop pyometra may require a life-saving ovariohysterectomy that would end their breeding career. Enjoying her third litter, “Emma” (Stay Not Sell Bella Mare) is a Labrador Retriever owned by Heidi Hartman of Lawtons, New York, and Sonia Czajor of Poland.

## PYOMETRA AT A GLANCE

**One in five bitches over age 10** develops pyometra<sup>1</sup>

**The mortality rate** for pyometra is up to 10 percent<sup>3</sup>

*Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) is the **most common cause** of pyometra<sup>2</sup>

**The recurrence rate** for bitches medically treated for pyometra is up to 86 percent<sup>4</sup>

Information presented by Dr. Karen Von Dollen during an educational webinar that is part of the AKC Canine Health Foundation/VetVine canine health topics series.

<sup>1</sup> Jitpean S, et al. Outcome of Pyometra in Female Dogs and Predictors of Peritonitis and Prolonged Postoperative Hospitalization in Surgically Treated Cases. *BMC Veterinary Research*. 2014;10:6.

<sup>2</sup> Fransson B, et al. Bacteriological Findings, Blood Chemistry Profile and Plasma Endotoxin Levels in Bitches with Pyometra or Other Uterine Diseases. *Transboundary and Emerging Diseases*. 1997;44(7):417-426.

<sup>3</sup> Hagman R. Diagnostic and Prognostic Markers for Uterine Diseases in Dogs. *Reproduction in Domestic Animals*. 2014;49(Suppl 2):16-20.

<sup>4</sup> Jena B, et al. Physiological and Haematological Parameters of Bitches Affected with Pyometra. *Veterinary World*. 2013;6(7):409-412.

her kennel should be considered,” says Dr. Von Dollen, who studied antimicrobial treatments for pyometra during her residency program that was supported by the Theriogenology Foundation, American Kennel Club and AKC Canine Health Foundation.

An infection of the uterus, pyometra is Latin for “pus uterus.” Triggered most commonly by *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) bacteria, pyometra becomes dangerous when sepsis, endotoxemia or uterine rupture occur. Some bitches show no signs of pyometra until the illness is advanced and require emergency treatment to prevent overwhelming infection and death. Because pyometra is one of the most common reproductive emergencies, it is considered in any intact bitch that is sick.

Early detection of pyometra, more easily recognized in open cervix pyometra due to a vaginal discharge draining from the cervix, has a greater chance of success with medical management. However, up to 86 percent of bitches<sup>2</sup> medically treated for this reproductive disease will have a recurring episode.

If medical therapy is desired for bitches needed to help preserve a breeding program, diligent monitoring for possible harmful side effects from prostaglandin and antibiotic treatment is needed. Owners and veterinarians should work closely together to ensure a healthy recovery, while also being on guard for subsequent pyometra. Spay surgery is recommended after the bitch has produced puppies.

“Because of the significant risk that pyometra will return, I advise breeders to make every effort to breed a bitch on her next heat cycle following successful medical treatment of the disease. An idle uterus is the ideal setting for pyometra,” Dr. Von Dollen says.

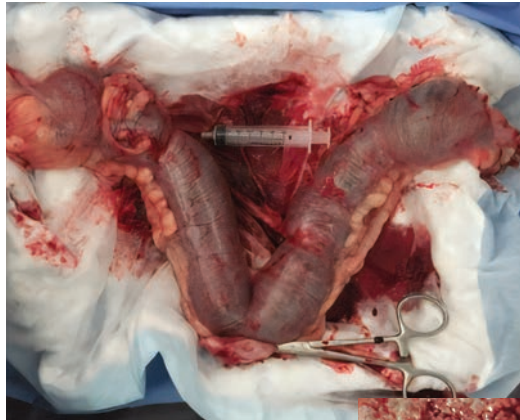
Taking steps to optimize the potential for successful breeding after medical management is helpful. “This involves using precise ovulation timing, selecting a proven stud dog that has sired a litter within the previous six months, breeding twice during the fertile window, and

## SIGNS OF CANINE PYOMETRA

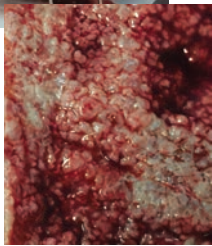
Recognizing pyometra can be challenging, as some bitches show only subtle signs that may go unnoticed until late in the illness. By then, the severity of the condition may be life-threatening. Board-certified veterinary reproduction expert Karen Von Dollen advises breeders and owners to monitor bitches closely during the two months following their heat cycle to help detect changes in attitude, appetite and behavior that could indicate pyometra.

Signs of pyometra include:

- Depression, lethargy or listless behavior
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Anorexia or loss of appetite
- Pale mucous membranes
- Excessive water intake and excessive urination due to bacterial toxins that affect the kidney’s ability to retain fluid
- In open cervix cases, a purulent vaginal discharge from pus draining from the uterus may appear on the skin or hair under the tail or on bedding and furniture where the dog has lain
- In closed cervix cases, pus that is not able to drain collects in the uterus, causing abdominal distention, releasing toxins that are absorbed into the circulation, and making dogs severely ill very rapidly



Above: The excised uterus of a bitch that underwent ovariectomy for closed cervix pyometra is distended due to fluid accumulation. Right: The interior surface of the same uterus shows small, raised cysts, a condition known as cystic endometrial hyperplasia, which promote pyometra by providing an ideal environment for bacteria.



using intrauterine insemination,” says Dr. Von Dollen.

On the other hand, “if you are not planning to breed a bitch, spay is the recommended treatment for pyometra,” she says. An ovariectomy in which the ovaries and uterus are removed effectively eliminates the pus-filled uterus and prevents a recurrence of the disease.

Dr. Von Dollen cautions, “Owners of intact breeding bitches should not delay in breeding their animals. As soon as you have decided to breed your bitch and her show or performance career allows, you should breed her

to produce the desired litters needed to safeguard her genetics before she ages into a risky category for pyometra.”

## UNDERSTANDING A COMPLEX DISEASE

Pyometra is a complicated disease that is not well understood and varies among bitches. To help advance understanding, the AKC Canine Health Foundation is currently funding two

studies of canine pyometra. At the University of Helsinki in Finland, investigators are gathering insights about the effectiveness of antimicrobial treatment in bitches after ovariectomy for pyometra out of concern about a possible detrimental effect from antimicrobial resistance. A research team at the University of Veterinary Medicine of Vienna in Austria is working on the first study to analyze the role of lipid composition and lipid droplets in pyometra cystic endometrial hyperplasia (CEH), a condition that promotes the proliferation of bacteria.

In pyometra, the uterus of affected females is filled with bacteria and inflammatory cells that could burst or seed its contents throughout the body at any time. If severe sepsis and organ failure develop, the prognosis is not favorable.

The nature of a bitch’s heat cycles along with hormonal changes and delayed breeding contribute to the development of pyometra. The hormones progesterone and estrogen fluctuate during a heat cycle and change the uterus in preparation for breeding and pregnancy.

“We know that the hormonal environment of the bitch lays the foundational groundwork for this disease to take hold. Over a bitch’s lifetime, the cumulative effect of the cyclic exposure to these hormones predisposes her to develop pyo-

## EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ANTIBIOTICS IN POSTOPERATIVE PYOMETRA

The risk of postoperative infection at the surgical site or in the urinary tract accounts for bitches being prescribed an antibiotic treatment for at least 10 days following spay surgery for pyometra. At the University of Helsinki, a study aims to determine the risk of postoperative infection and whether antibiotics are warranted.

“Our main goal of this study is to determine whether we could refrain from using antibiotics in these dogs without significantly increasing their risk for developing postoperative infections,” says lead investigator Sari Mölsä, DVM, PhD, DECVS. “The consequences of unnecessary antimicrobial use are already visible in veterinary medicine with bacterial infections being increasingly difficult to treat as the bacteria involved no longer respond to drugs available.”

Funded by the AKC Canine Health Foundation, the four-year study that began in September 2020 is following the occurrence of surgical site infections (SSIs) and urinary tract infections (UTIs) in postoperative pyometra patients. “We hypothesize that with current clinical practices and careful aseptic surgical techniques, the incidence of infections in these patients is very low,” Dr. Mölsä says.

“The risk for the development of SSIs in our patients at the University of Helsinki Veterinary Center is around 2 percent,”

she says. “Pyometra surgeries are generally classified as clean-contaminated as they involve incising the infected uterus. However, in these cases the infected focus is entirely removed, and therefore the need for postoperative antibiotics is questionable. Rare cases in which the uterus has ruptured before or during surgery, causing pus to leak into the abdomen, are considered contaminated or ‘dirty’ surgeries and are more likely to result in infection. These cases are more in need for postoperative antibiotics as there might be bacteria left in the abdominal cavity after surgery.”

Dr. Mölsä says that almost 70 percent of pyometra patients were believed to develop UTIs from studies conducted in the 1970s and 1980s, though the accuracy of the methods used to determine this incidence rate is dated. “Clinical experience has shown the incidence to be much lower than this, and now we are looking to prove this,” she says.

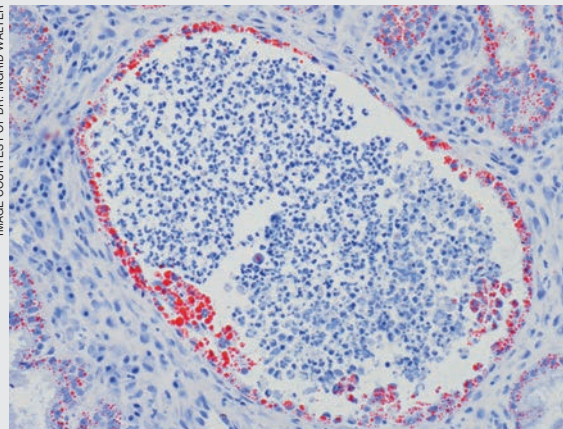
“We believe that in most pyometra patients, antibiotic treatment is unnecessary and may consequently disturb the intestinal microbiome, leading to digestive disorders, or cause the development of antimicrobial resistance,” says Dr. Mölsä. “We also hope to study the characteristics of the bacteria involved in causing canine pyometra and the risk factors for dogs developing pyometra.”



## ANALYZING THE ROLE OF LIPIDS IN PYOMETRA BACTERIAL INFECTIONS

The goal of an *in vitro* study underway at the University of Veterinary Medicine of Vienna is to demonstrate the functional role of lipid droplets (LD) involved in bacterial infections of canine endometrial epithelial cells (cEECs). The hypothesis contends that LD accumulation in cEECs promotes the bacterial infection of pyometra-affected cystic endometrial hyperplasia.

Ingrid Walter, PhD, head of the Vet Bio Bank, leads the AKC Canine Health Foundation-funded



This tissue sample has been stained to show lipid droplets in canine pyometra. The red represents lipid droplets, and the blue depicts cell nuclei.

metra,” Dr. Von Dollen says. “From there, bacteria seize the opportunity to colonize and proliferate.”

The dynamics of the bitch’s cervix during her heat cycle likely contribute to the development of pyometra. “When a bitch is in heat, her cervix is open to allow sperm to gain access to the uterus. This provides a prime opportunity for bacteria to enter the uterus,” she explains. “Ideally, the immune system will attack these bacteria before they cause problems, which is why not every bitch develops pyometra. Once a bitch goes out of heat, the next phase is diestrus and the cervix is closed. If bacteria are trapped, it can set up a perfect storm for pyometra.”

*E. coli*, the most common bacteria cultured from the uterus of pyometra patients, is typically found in the intestines and vagina. The most vulnerable time to contract the illness is following estrus, or the heat stage, as the open cervix provides an opportunity for bacteria to ascend and colonize the uterus.

A disease in which the inside surface of the uterus develops small, raised cysts, CEH promotes

investigation that will be completed in October 2021. “The modulation of host-lipid homeostasis is beneficial for bacteria, especially *E. coli* that are common in pyometra cases, as bacteria incorporate extracellular fatty acids into their membrane lipids and use host cholesterol as nutrition,” Dr. Walter explains.

“In this study, we have isolated cEECs and stimulated them with external fatty acids and/or cholesterol and then infected them with a pathogenic *E. coli* strain from a canine pyometra-affected uterus,” she says. “We plan to analyze the effect of this lipid enrichment on bacterial adherence and uptake to cEECs.”

An earlier study by this group identified increased amounts of lipid droplets in cEECs during early diestrus, the cyclic stage when pyometra most commonly occurs. Analyses of the lipid composition in LDs and LD-coating proteins were compared in healthy early diestrus and pyometra-affected uteri.

“This work led to the current study investigating the expression patterns of LD-coating proteins involved in intracellular lipid metabolism, LD communications and signaling,” Dr. Walter says. “This allows for potential new therapeutic targets for drug recovery in canine pyometra.”

pyometra. “Bitches with CEH are much more at risk for pyometra, though not all will develop the disease,” Dr. Von Dollen says. “CEH creates cozy nooks and crannies in the uterus that are very attractive to bacteria.”

Although pyometra is not well understood, the urgency of promptly and aggressively treating bitches affected by the life-threatening condition is recognized. “Pyometra cases can change rapidly, so close attention by owners and veterinarians is important,” says Dr. Von Dollen. “Vigilant observation particularly during the two months following a bitch’s heat cycle can help detect subtle changes in attitude, appetite and behavior that can lead to early detection of pyometra and a greater chance of success with medical management.” ■

<sup>1</sup>Jitpean S, Ström-Holst B, Emanuelson U, et al. Outcome of Pyometra in Female Dogs and Predictors of Peritonitis and Prolonged Postoperative Hospitalization in Surgically Treated Cases. *BMC Veterinary Research*. 2014;10:6.

<sup>2</sup>Jena B, Rao S, Reddy KCS, et al. Physiological and Haematological Parameters of Bitches Affected with Pyometra. *Veterinary World*. 2013;6(7):409-412.

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**Purina and the  
AKC Canine Health  
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worked together  
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support canine  
health research to  
benefit all dogs.**



# Circle of Champions

## BREED-RECORD SETTING BULLDOG 'THOR' IS NO. 1 NON-SPORTING DOG IN 2020



A classy, indisputably bossy Bulldog named “Thor” has rolled to the top as the No. 1 Non-Sporting dog in 2020. The 3 ½-year-old red-and-white male set a breed record in 2019 for winning the most Group Firsts, surpassing a record from 1988, though shown sparingly in the first year of his U.S. campaign. Bred in Brazil, MBIS/MBISS GCHP Diamond Gold Majesu Pisko Bulls has earned 77 Group Firsts and is the No. 1 Bulldog all systems. Handler Eduardo Paris of Houston discovered Thor at the 2018 Fédération Cynologique Internationale Americas & Caribbean show in Fortaleza, Brazil, where the 13-month-old took two Bests in Show from the classes over a favored U.S. dog. “I knew he was fabulous,” says Paris, who bought Thor with Kara Ferber Gordon of Houston from breeder Jonathan Flores of Lima, Peru. “Thor is a really special dog, a dream. He has a lot of personality.” Paris and Gordon co-own Thor with Flores, Nestor Chavez of Lima, Peru, and Joan Fisher of New York City. The semi-retired Bulldog, who will be shown at select shows in 2021, is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula.

The No. 1 all-breed Bulldog in the country for two straight years, the Brazilian-bred “Thor” represents classic breed type with his heavy, thick-set body, massive short-faced head, wide shoulders, and sturdy legs.

## ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIEL NAMED ‘SOLO’ STANDS OUT TO WIN 2020 NATIONAL OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

True to his name, “Solo,” a 4 ½-year-old white-and-black male, delivered a star performance to win the 2020 English Springer Spaniel National Open Championship. NFC FC AFC Rockey’s Solo outperformed 119 starters over four land series and one water series with his keen bird-finding ability, driving flushes and precision retrieves. Pro handler Jason Givens of Lighthouse Kennels in Cambria, Wisconsin, says, “Solo is a very powerful dog with an above-average nose. Despite tough scenting conditions, he was more impressive with each series.” Solo gave Givens his second National Open win, having won in 2003 with NFC Lighthouse Reverence. Solo’s owner Chuck Cloninger of Greenleaf, Wisconsin, bought the spaniel as a started 9-month-old from Gary Riddle of Rockey’s Kennels in Trenton, Utah. As a 1-year-old, Solo earned top points to be named the Midwest High Point Open Dog, an honor he repeated the next year along with being named the 2018 National High Point Open Dog. Handled by Cloninger, Solo placed third at the 2019 National Amateur Championship. Another National Open Champion in Solo’s pedigree is his maternal great-grand sire, NFC FC AFC Crosswinds Warpath HOF, who won in 2006. The 2020 National Open Champion is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula.



Delivering a solid performance over five challenging series, “Solo” won the 2020 English Springer Spaniel National Open Championship in Clarkston, Utah.

## 2020 NATIONAL DERBY CHAMPION IS A LABRADOR RETRIEVER NAMED 'TATUM'

PHOTO: DEANA WOLFE/COURTESY OF RETRIEVER NEWS



A calm, steady 22-month-old black Labrador Retriever named “Tatum” is the winner of the 2020 National Derby Championship Stake. It was a comeback for the impressive female who went into the stake as the low-point qualifier and for owner-handler David Graf of Medford, New York, who returned to field trials in 2020 after a 22-year hiatus to raise his family. NDC Oklahoma Sooner Be Tatum aced the 10th series with its challenging triple water marks one retrieve at a time, receiving an excellent score that was preceded by excellent scores in the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th series. “Tatum was on autopilot,” says Graf, a longtime retriever enthusiast. “She is a straight-running dog and has a good, steady pace. Her calmness helped me focus.” After retiring in 2018, Graf bought Tatum and a yellow male Labrador Retriever to train for competition. When the pups were only about 3 months old, Graf took them to hunt tests, sitting on the sidelines to help teach them to watch birds and be calm. Bred by Jarod Freeman of Oklahoma City, Tatum has two National Amateur Retriever Champions in her pedigree: Her paternal grandsire, NAFC-FC-AFC Texas Troubador, won in 2014, and her maternal grandsire, NAFC-FC-AFC Coolwater’s Hawkeye Legend, won in 2016. Tatum was fueled to her National Derby win by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula*.

With style and confidence, “Tatum” won the 2020 National Derby Championship in Sedalia, Missouri.

## 'CHARLIE,' AN ASCOB COCKER SPANIEL, IS NO. 1 SPORTING DOG IN 2020

An engaging, fun-loving 3 ½-year-old male named “Charlie” is the No. 1 Sporting dog and No. 1 ASCOB Cocker Spaniel all systems in 2020. The top winner of all time for handler Lisa Arnett of Owosso, Michigan, and for breeder/co-owner Nancy Foley of Noblesville, Indiana, MBIS/MBISS GCHG Foley’s Frat Party CGC also has earned accolades as the winner of 29 Bests in Specialty Show. Charlie won the 2020 American Spaniel Club (ASC) Flushing Spaniel Show and the 2019 ASC National Specialty. At the precocious age of 9 months, the buff-colored spaniel won Best in Specialty Show at the Rhode Island and Connecticut Westchester Cocker Spaniel clubs. “Charlie is everyone’s cup of tea,” Arnett says. “He has good movement, substantial bone and body, and a silly personality that draws you in.” Foley, a Cocker Spaniel breeder for 30 years, says, “I am blown away by his heart and ability to never let down.” Bred from a half-brother/half-sister mating of BIS/BISS GCH Trinity’s Tucked Under His Wing and Foley’s Rum Swizzle, Charlie is reminiscent of his paternal/maternal grandsire, CH Foley’s Hold Your Heart, an ASC Legacy of Merit and top-producing sire of over 40 champion offspring. This affable spaniel was co-bred by Genea Jones of Fountaintown, Indiana, and his co-owners are Susan Carter of Saginaw, Michigan, and Elena Gordon Duggan of Naples, Florida. Charlie is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula*.



The winner of 10 Bests in Show, “Charlie” became the No. 1 Sporting Dog in a short time on the circuit in 2020.

## NO. 1 CHOW CHOW ALL SYSTEMS IN 2019 & 2020 IS DREAMLAND'S GAME CHANGER



A mix of Chinese, Brazilian and American Chow Chow bloodlines, "Thor" has a playful, easygoing nature.

The friendly, outgoing temperament of a 4-year-old red rough male named "Thor" took him to the top as the No. 1 Chow Chow all systems in 2019 and 2020. Bred by Dreamland Chow Chow breeders Michael and Linda Brantley of Lubbock, Texas, and Ayran Hong Chow Chow breeder Paulo Clerice of Araraquara, Brazil, MBIS/MBISS GCHG Dreamland's Game Changer has a Chinese sire and Brazilian dam whose pedigree includes American-bred Dreamland dogs. Thor has earned three Bests in Show and three Reserve Bests in Show as well as 10 Bests in Specialty Show. He placed fourth in the Non-Sporting Group at the 2020 Westminster Kennel Club show. "As a puppy, Thor was always in everyone's face wanting to play, which is atypical behavior for the strong-willed, independent breed," says Michael Brantley, the handler. "That gregarious energy carried into show rings where he made you look at him." Honored as the 2013 AKC Non-Sporting Breeders of the Year, the Brantleys have bred Chows since 1988, producing more than 200 champions including 30 Best in Show winners. Owned by Michael Brantley and Cliff Chandler of Lubbock Texas, Thor is Chandler's first show dog after many years owning pet Chows. The powerful male is fed *Purina Pro Plan Adult Complete Essentials Shredded Blend Chicken & Rice Formula*.

## TWO-TIME WINNER OF WEIMARANER NATIONAL FIELD CHAMPIONSHIP IS MALE NAMED 'CAGE'

A powerful, forward-running 6 ½-year-old male called "Cage" pointed three quail in an intense one-hour stake to win the Weimaraner Club of America (WCA) 2020 National Field Championship. A two-time National Field Champion, having also won in 2019, 2XNFC FC Saga's Major Cage was handled by pro Diane Vater of Grand Marais, Michigan, and scouted by her husband, Chuck Cooper. The talented male polished off his performance in the callbacks with a stylish retrieve of a pheasant. "Cage finished steady and strong," says Vater, the WCA 2017 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient and winner of 13 WCA National Field Championships. "He is very good at his job. He was strong from the beginning, picking up points at 8 months old as a derby while still learning to be steady to wing and shot." Bred and owned by Jeffrey and Mary Brown of Purcellville, Virginia, Cage was sired by NFC NAFC DC AFC Snake Breaks Saga V Reiteralm CD MH RDX SDX VX2 FROM HOF out of Waybac's Skylar Saga. The Browns owned the sire, who won the WCA 1999 National Field Championship and the WCA 2002 National Amateur Field Championship handled by Mary Brown. Cage is fueled by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula*.



A top-performing bird dog with keen pointing and retrieving instincts, "Cage" won the 2020 Weimaraner National Field Championship in Ardmore, Oklahoma.

## ENGLISH COCKER SPANIEL NAMED 'TULLY' WINS 2020 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP



A 6-year-old golden English Cocker Spaniel named “Tully” followed in her sire’s footsteps to win the 2020 National Cocker Championship. NFC-FC-CFC Warrener’s Tullinadaly was handled by owner Vicky L. Thomas of Bismarck, North Dakota, and Pasadena, California, and was bred by James Fairclough of Sussex County, New Jersey, from a litter sired by NFC-FC Warrener’s Whip-Poor-Will. Tully joins her sire, “Troy,” who won in 2014, and a long line of talented cockers from Thomas and her partner Paul McGagh’s Glencoe Farm and Kennels in Bismarck. A professional trainer, McGagh has handled nine national champions, eight in the U.S. and one in Canada. “Tully is the first cocker Paul and I have owned to win a National in the U.S.,” Thomas says. “I knew Tully had a good trial going — she had three bird contacts in all five series — and she made the most of those opportunities.” Thomas has been involved with cockers since 1984 when she imported her first dog from England. She was instrumental in the re-emergence of the sport of field cockers, having chaired the first National Cocker Championship in 1998, was named the AKC Breeder of the Year for Spaniels in 2015, and was inducted into the English Cocker Spaniel Field Trial Hall of Fame in 2018. Tully is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula.

A talented spaniel, “Tully” excelled to win the 2020 National Cocker Championship in Bismarck, North Dakota.

## KIARRY AMERICAN FOXHOUND NAMED 'BANJO' IS NO. 1 ALL SYSTEMS

A carbon copy of Kiarry American Foxhounds before him, “Banjo” depicts the essence of the fox-hunting pack breed that originated in colonial America. BIS GCH Kiarry My Grass Is Blue, a 3 ½-year-old tricolor male, is the No. 1 American Foxhound all systems and No. 8 Hound in 2020 despite limited showing. Breeder-owner-handler Lisa Miller of Mechanicsville, Maryland, says, “An American Foxhound should have the athleticism of a Thoroughbred and be able to run for hours through fields of cover and rough terrain. Banjo stays fit running in exercise paddocks and alongside the golf cart when we travel.” The top-winning American Foxhound in breed history is MBIS/MBISS GCHS Kiarry’s Pandora’s Box, named “Jewel,” a distant cousin to Banjo, who won 68 Bests in Show and surpassed the record of 25 Bests in Show set by her grandsire, CH Kiarry’s Reflections of the Sun. Representing Miller’s fifth generation, Banjo has a soft expression and pleading eyes and is a moderate hound with a perfect topline having a slight rise over the loin. Co-breeders are Laura King, Robin Novack and Alex Romero, all of Milan, Illinois. Banjo is co-owned by Ellen Charles of Washington, D.C. The handsome hound is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula.

A Best in Show winning American Foxhound, “Banjo” depicts the essence of the highly athletic breed.



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# ‘BUGGS’ AND ‘BOBBIE LOU’ ARE THE PURINA OUTSTANDING COONHOUND AWARD WINNERS

Two females, one a Redbone Coonhound and the other an English, are the respective winners of the 2019 Purina Outstanding Nite Hunt and Bench Show Coonhound Awards. Clinching top honors in October 2020 at the Purina National Championship, these hounds stood out in the yearlong program to qualify out of their regions and advance to win the overall Awards.

An independent 5-year-old tracking and treeing Redbone Coonhound named “Buggs” outshined the competition to win the Purina Outstanding Nite Hunt Coonhound Award. GR NITE CH/PKC Platinum CH ‘PR’ Mosquito Creek’s Danno’s Buggs was handled by Jack Bingham, of Montour, Iowa, who co-owns her with his son, Jacob Bingham, and Rodger Shabel of Decatur, Alabama.

Four hounds out of 65 starters made the cut for the Final Cast at the National, with Buggs leading the way as the first hound to tree a raccoon. Perfect conditions prevailed with a mild 50-degree evening and a full moon lighting the way. As the one and a half hour cast was nearing completion, Buggs was tied for the lead having treed three raccoons. In the

final minutes, she was scored again to win the Purina National Nite Hunt Championship.



GR NITE CH/PKC Platinum CH ‘PR’ Mosquito Creek’s Danno’s Buggs is the Purina Outstanding Nite Hunt Coonhound.

Buggs gave Bingham his first overall Purina Nite Hunt Award, though in 2016 he was co-owner of the top Redbone Nite Hunt winner, GR NITE CH/PKC Silver CH ‘PR’ Jenneweins Heads Creek Moonshine. A nite hunt competitor since 2007, Bingham grew up hunting with coonhounds. He got Buggs from breeder Kasey Dooly of Blue Run Kennels in Minden, Louisiana, as a started hound who was owned and trained by Mark Willett of New Haven, Kentucky. She is the first Redbone in Professional Kennel Club history to earn a Platinum Champion title

“Buggs is a quick strike dog, and she runs and trees mostly with a chop mouth,” Bingham says. “It would not have been possible to have won this Purina Award without family support, especially from my wife, Millie, and without co-owner Rodger

Shabel, who helped promote Buggs.”

A natural show dog with an easygoing temperament and solid conformation, “Bobbie Lou” aced the Purina Outstanding Bench Show Award. In 2018, she was the Purina English Best of Breed Bench Show winner. Owned by handler Michael Seets of Stonefort, Illinois, and bred by Terry Murry of Sesser, Illinois, GR CH HOF ‘PR’ Bear Branch Bobbie Lou, a 7-year-old tricolor English Coonhound, became Seets’ seventh overall Purina Award winner. Sadly, the beloved female unexpectedly passed away in December 2020.

“Bobbie Lou was special, one of the most outstanding moving dogs I’ve ever handled,” Seets says. “She was noticeable because she moved effortlessly and was a pretty dog. She never had a care in the world and always gave 110 percent.” In 2019, Bobbie Lou was the Overall Winter Classic Bench Show winner, the English Female Breed winner at the UKC World, a repeat win from 2017, and the Vicki Hill Memorial All English Bench Show winner, a repeat win from 2018, qualifying her for and then winning the Purina National Show Championship, a career highlight.

These coonhound winners were fueled by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula*. ■



The Purina Outstanding Bench Show Award was won by GR CH HOF ‘PR’ Bear Branch Bobbie Lou.

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## Breed Snapshot

### BELGIAN LAEKENOIS: A RARE BREED

The oldest of the Belgian Shepherd breeds, the Belgian Laekenois (pronounced Lak-in-wah) originated in the late 1800s as all-purpose farm dogs and guardians of fields of flax. Known as the constable's companion, named for the Royal Castle of Laeken, and distinguished by his rough, tousled coat in shades of red or fawn to grayish tones, the Laekenois is the rarest of the Belgian breeds. The Laekenois shares attributes with the other Belgian Shepherd breeds, the Malinois, Tervuren and Sheepdog.

After serving as a messenger in World War I and World War II, the Laekenois dwindled severely in numbers until loyal breeders worked to restore the breed. An energetic, strong and agile dog, the Belgian Laekenois moves smoothly, free and easy as though never to tire. He has an elegant appearance set off by a proud carriage of his head and neck. Naturally alert and inquisitive, the Laekenois is watchful and reserved yet has a sense of humor.

Newly recognized by the American Kennel Club, the Belgian Laekenois became eligible to compete in the Herding Group on July 1, 2020. This athletic dog thrives when working, making him well-suited to dog sports. Males are 24 to 26 inches tall at the withers, and females are 22 to 24 inches tall. Endeared by all who know the breed, the Laekenois stands out for his devotion, keen awareness, calm temperament, and working ability.

Source: *The Complete Dog Book*, Official Publication of the American Kennel Club, and the American Belgian Laekenois Association

Right: CH De Rafale Rêve Du Début CGC VHM TKE is a 1-year-old female Belgian Laekenois owned by Kathryn Doomy, Donald L. Hyatt II, and Margaret Hyatt Currier.



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