

THE VERSATILE DOG

Lea Cogley

When I think of the German Shorthaired Pointer – or GSP the first adjective that springs to mind is versatile. This breed is athletic, medium sized, powerful, adaptable and extremely willing. It must be said 'though that not all GSPs are alike as, in each breed of dog, there are sterling individuals, then there are the soft ones, the difficult ones, the just plain naughty ones and the divine ones.

Throughout the course of GSP history in Australia, the breed has been eye catching in whatever field of endeavor in which they compete. In Victoria, Mr Jack Thompson, founding importer, wrote to devotees of the breed inviting a meeting and the breed Club was founded in 1965.

Since 1965, there have been many obedience titles awarded, from Novice to UD, all of which require three passes at three different trials under at least two judges to complete the title.

The Open Class requires a dog to be fit and

active and this is where the GSP shines as love of retrieving generally can be expected. Bopping and jumping come naturally to the Shorthair.

The UD or Utility Class is the master class of obedience, where the dog usually cannot be forced to comply. So much of the exercises are completed away from the handler and there are many opportunities for the dog to try variations on the game, much to their handler's disgust. Clowning and varying the exercises away from the standard can frequently be seen when the Shorthair becomes bored or too pattern trained.

The last individual exercise is the directed retrieve, where three white gloves are placed in a line, 6 metres apart and the dog and handler are 12 metres away. On the command to about turn and face the glove, the judge will designate only one glove, handlers indicates with a signal and tells the dog to retrieve. Seems easy? GSPs love this exercise as their retrieving instinct is usually strong. There is a choice of food refusal or speak on command but the glove exercise is favored by this retrieving breed.

The GSP is a hard dog to force through obedience, preferring to be motivated with toys, food, praise and reward. They thrive on positive reinforcement. I remember a particular obedience judge who laughingly used to say to me that my dog's name was not Luke but velvet face. They are a tactile breed who loves face polishing. It would be unusual to see a GSP doing obedience without panache. Making errors, with panache, causes lots of mirth in the obedience rings and it is hard to be cross when they muck up because they are so beguiling. I have often thought of them not as German, but as Irish leprechauns with a pizzazz and sparkle I have never found in any other breed. I am sure devotees of other breeds would argue with me but that's my opinion.

AMAZING INDIVIDUALS IN THE BREED.

Over the short time that the breed has been competing in all aspects of ANKC tests, an incredible amount of titles have been gained. If I were to list some individuals, I would be guilty of missing some, therefore without a complete list, and the list is very long, I am not going to attempt a roll call of super GSPs. The breed is studded with 'alphabet soup' dogs, for instance there are many dogs with a Show Championship, UD,

OC, ADM, JDM, Tracking Champion, ET, FT CH, RT CH, Dual Ch, Triple Ch, the list goes on.

In conclusion, this breed is highly trainable, loyal to a fault, willing to work, has a high degree of initiative, is born with a genetic blueprint of working ability and has a long and illustrious history of outstanding achievements in obedience trialing. They do not make good backyard dogs to be ignored or under exercised as they will develop games that may not be acceptable to the gardener in the family or please the lady of the house who does the washing.

Like every breed of dog, there is a dark side and a light side. Mistreated, fed poorly, raised incorrectly they can be a pain. I suggest basic obedience at a reasonable obedience club that will let you motivate your highly gifted dog, join your local breed club and learn more about GSPs, volunteer at local animal shelters, keep in touch with your local Council and read the Domestic Feral and Nuisance Animals Act (1994.) Attend council meetings whenever dog laws are being discussed, stay in touch with your local member of Parliament and we may still have this breed 100 years from now. I hope my grandchildren develop the same love of the German Shorthaired Pointer as I have; it has been quite a journey.

Ch Klugerhund Mein Asher

4/12/81 4/12/93



THE RECORD

BIS 16
R/U BIS 16
Specialty BIS 5
BIG 52
R/U BIG 39
Challenge Points 4300
Challenges 260
Royal Challenges 19
NSW Dog of the Year seven consecutive years,
Won under 48 International Judges

It was a pleasant surprise to be invited to write a short history about my old mate "Asher" and to revive all those wonderful moments we had together.

Ch Klugerhund Mein Asher was born at Werombi (NSW) on 4/12/81, sired by Charles O'Hanlon of Cheshire (imp UK) from Ch Giubnae Mi Masquerade. There were three in the litter. Ch Klugerhund Mein Anna & Ch Klugerhund Mein Astrid, both solid liver, Asher being liver white ticked.

Charles was by the well performed FT Ch Wishton Wish Samson (UK), from Helga P'Hanlon

of New Delhi (USA). Charlie was not used by any other breeders as it seems they failed to comprehend his worth to the breed.

Asher's first show was a NSW GSP Champ Show where he won Baby Puppy in Show and his sister opposite sex both having reasonable competition. At that stage we had no idea of the career that lay before him from his first up success.

His teenage years six months to fourteen months were pretty much a hit and miss affair, always asked "how old in the challenge line up"? and always the older dogs went up. We then decided to move him up to Australian bred and from that day on things began to happen.

Asher competed in Queensland – NSW – ACT – Victoria – Tasmania & South Australia and to his great credit had almost a 95% success rate. His show career spanned almost ten years and right up to the day he retired he held his shape, muscle tone and desire to compete and run around the ring.

At a show at Bulli Showground the judge asked us to do a full circle of the ring and before I could adjust the lead he was off, with me in full cry chasing him around the ring. At the conclusion of the lap he stopped and stood before the judge waiting for me to catch up.

Generally, a light tap under the jaw and a "Let's go son" was all that he needed and he would rear up on his hind legs and drive away like a racehorse coming out of the starting barrier.

Asher was never kenneled and together with Arthur (Klugerhund King Arthur) they roamed our property and enjoyed each night curling up on the rug in the family room whilst we watched TV.

The spring was a great time as both dogs would visit our dam, jump in and spend many an hour swimming around trying to catch the wood ducks.

Arthur was always at our back door and from eight weeks of age Asher decided he best take

this young fellow under his wing, and so began a lifelong friendship.

Neither one ever forced the issue Arthur accepted Asher as leader and so it was for ten years.

One of Asher's last shows was the Victorian Champ Show under German Breed Warden Dr Albert Lemmen, with an entry of one hundred and forty eight.

On several occasions during the course of judging I was asked his age and each time I replied "nine and a half."

At the conclusion when handing me the rosette for Best in Show Dr Lemmen stated that for a nine and a half years old dog he was an exceptional animal.

Some of Asher's records will never be surpassed, including over 4300 Challenge Points (won under the old system) as well as nineteen Royal Challenges, seven of which were earned in Sydney and four in Melbourne.

His great love of showing is evident from his longevity – a supreme showdog, not a growl even evident – house dog extraordinaire and still remembered by many a dog fancier from within and outside of the breed & Group.

To have bred, owned and exhibited such an animal is a privilege indeed and we have been fortunate to have been involved with three special dogs over our thirty odd years spent with GSPs.

I hope one day you may be privileged to own such a dog and experience the joys of winning Best in Show and have such wonderful memories that last a lifetime.

It seems only yesterday we stood outside the ring waiting to go in - the excitement would rise and the old fellow would look up and give that glint in the eye and we were off.

Many thanks to National DOG/RingLEADER for the opportunity to set down a few words about Australia's alltime No1 German Shorthaired Pointer.

John Maxwell

Bob Tyndall

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