

Spartanburg Amateur Field Trial Club

2011 Kilgore Classics

By TOM DAVIES AND KARYN PAGE-DAVIES

OVER the past twenty years or so I have written scores of reports for *The AMERICAN FIELD*. I have covered everything from the weekend walking trials to major shooting dog championships. I have put thousands of miles on my favorite old saddle. I have pulled horses from South Carolina to grounds from Florida to Michigan and many points in between to compete or judge or (my favorite) report. This is the toughest report I've ever had to prepare.

The Spartanburg Amateur Field Trial Club has held trials on the Sam Page Farm since the late 1970s over several different configurations of thirty-minute courses. Karyn and I moved up here from Charleston in 1986 and trained our own dogs on the abundant wild birds on the farm and neighboring property. In 1993 we were asked to work out an hour configuration in order to run the South Carolina Amateur Shooting Dog Classic.

That got done, and in the intervening years the hour course was improved on year by year. In 1999 that classic evolved into the Kilgore Classics (one-hour Open and Amateur Stakes) when a one-hour placement became a requirement for the National Open Shooting Dog Championship, eventually becoming a Top Shooting Dog Points trial in 2001. The combined stakes have had as many as 106 total entries.

Over the years it has been our pleasure and a great privilege to host the finest shooting dogs and most prominent handlers, both open and amateur, from Canada to Florida and all points in between east of the Mississippi, on our grounds. Hall-of-Famers have handled their charges here and we have seen dogs come up from their Derby days to eventually be enshrined in the Hall.

I would also add that of all the braces I have witnessed the most exciting one I ever saw ran on this course. It was a classic pointer/setter duel with six perfect independent finds carded by each dog. Their amazing races ate up the four and a half mile regular course by 55, neck and neck. It required an extra half-mile drag race down the runway on neighboring property to sort out the eventual winner.

The original 1,200 acres comprising the Longview Plantation have been in the Kilgore family for over 160 years. It has been divided somewhat over time by the Kilgore heirs. The 430 acres on which the course is laid out passed to the

Sam Page family through maternal ties to the Kilgores, his wife, Adeline Kilgore Page. With the passing of the patriarch, Sam Page, in 2002, the inevitable division of the property among his heirs has come to pass in the last year. The future of field trials over these grounds is now, sadly, compromised.

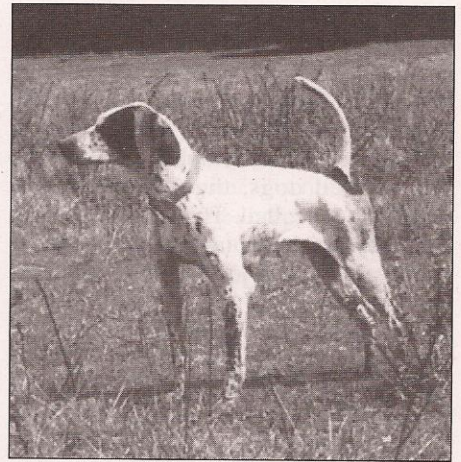
On the first half of the course there were once open farm fields bordered by hardwood edges. There was enough room and good hedgerows between fields to make the sweeping turns and good swings that permitted the best use of all the available ground and have a course that flowed naturally from end to end.

Now, in the last week, those fields and the great river bottom have been scarred with deep cuts of the forester's plow, chevron-like and edge to edge. They are now planted in pine seedlings. That in anticipation of some short term advantage and some future profit, we suppose; profit that will come well beyond the years of many of us who have enjoyed the beauty of the land and the great sport and fellowship of the trials here.

There look to be very few places left to plant even a few food plots to hold released birds on the first half. The monoculture of planted pines bodes ill for any possible recovery of the scarce population of the wild birds that were abundant here just a few years ago. Even the horse path is disrupted in places and future navigation of that half of the course is questionable. For Karyn and me, at least, it is a sad situation.



BREAKSTONE
Second in the Amateur Shooting Dog Stake



HASTY'S HOT PEPPER
First in the Amateur Shooting Dog Stake

To add to the sad situation, we had hoped to have at least one more good trial over these grounds this year. We had hoped to have those good friends and great dogs from both near and far places gather again for the annual celebration of the sport. And we were prepared for it.

Every field on the farm had been laid down with the bush hog prior to the invasion of the foresters. From the customary briar patches to the usually intolerable thick spots, the place had been manicured. It was all open fields interspersed with food plots of grain sorghum to hold the birds; beautiful. Strong flying birds were reserved, judges accounted for, and the myriad other necessary arrangements were made to cover most any contingency. Ever throw a party and no one came?

We waited for the calls as the evening of the drawing approached. Certainly some of the professionals would wait 'til the last minute. That's a ritual we always endure.

Some of the amateurs from farther away had called in; stalwart supporters of our trial from Maryland and North Carolina and a couple of locals. Surely the rest would follow suit.

But some confusion over the wording of the ad in *The FIELD* conflicted with the advertised running order. One would think that seasoned veterans of trials would know the trial runs in the order advertised or that some editor at *The FIELD* would correct misleading copy. A few amateurs called and were told that the Open stakes would run first so that most of the Amateur would run close to or over the next weekend. But few entries ensued, especially from local amateur handlers.

On the evening of the drawing there were only sixteen dogs entered in the Open Shooting Dog. Fifteen of them

were entered by one handler. There were six dogs entered in the Open Derby. Twenty-one dogs were entered in the Amateur Shooting Dog; two of which would be scratched. After consulting with the two professional handlers who had entered dogs, the Open Shooting Dog was cancelled. This was not a contingency we had planned for. Judging assignments had to be altered and the start date moved to the next Friday morning, January 7. The classics we had enjoyed over the years and had run for a week or more were reduced to a small weekend trial. It was sad indeed.

The parking lot field next to the clubhouse would not fill up with trailers and staked-out horses and strings of good dogs on chain gangs. The clubhouse would not fill up with old friends to discuss the events of the day or break bread or tell those great lies stories about the game in other places and time past. And worse, we don't know if it can happen again on these good grounds we have cared for over the best of our years in the fellowship of the sport.

However the future goes, we would like to extend our thanks to those who did show up for the trial. Disappointment aside, we did have an event. Yours truly got to judge some Derbies, which is always enjoyable, and a few good friends showed up. Thanks to Tom Oswald for judging everything and to J. C. Turner for judging the Amateur Shooting Dog. Purina also gets kudos for sponsoring the event this year as they have done in the past. We appreciate their continued support of trials at all levels. Thanks also to everyone who participated and congratulations to the winners.

I would also like to say thanks to Mike Tracy for thinking of this old man and his taste for Pennsylvania's best beverages; Luke Eisenhart for his part in the process. I missed you guys this year. Oh, and thanks to Tom Brigman, Jr. for delivering the goods. I do appreciate the effort.

From the female side of the farm, I too would like to thank everyone for the great memories and good times that were had on these grounds; the folks we played and competed with and against; those who have gone to the Big Trial and those still with us; Thelmer Page, Bert Robinson, Lloyd Tumblin, Marvin Reid, George and Martha Lee, Ed Turner, the "infamous" Skip Brown (from whom I won my first bird dog), Maurice Lindley, Mike Wrenn, John Ray and Mary Kimbrell and George, Jim Scott, Cary and Brenda Ballentine, Billy McCathern, J. C. Turner, Tommy Brigman, all the great judges we've hosted and all the beautiful dogs and performances that I have witnessed and reported. I could go on and on and still not name or remember everyone who helped make these special memories.

A thank you to my friends who love nature, knew nothing about field trials but would come and spend hours helping put out birds, prepare the meals, and play hostess when I was running my dogs. We do enjoy sharing our southern hospitality. You know this life is the best, but things change. My whistle now hangs on the writing desk drawer.

The 2011 Kilgore Classics Open Derby had 6 entries. The winner was Piney Grove Bandit, owned by father and son, Don Garris, Jr. and Don the III; handled by J. C. Turner. Second place

was Lilac, owned and handled by Tom Brigman.

Third place was Avatar Guada, also owned and handled by Tom Brigman.

The Kilgore Classics Amateur Shooting Dog started 21 dogs.

First place went to Rick Hulse's pointer female Hasty's Hot Pepper. Rick handled her around the course in fine fashion.

Second place was the handsome red setter Breakstone, owned and handled by Roger Boser. Third place was garnered by Grandwins Dream Keeper (my Tom always wants to call her, "Greens Keeper", he has poor hearing you know), owned and handled by Tom Brigman.

My hope is that the sporting dog trials and legacy will never die. We should record all of this history because, as the title of Deno Trakas' local history book suggests, Memory is Not Eternal. As Tom and I end our reports, Happy Trials from Kilgore, S. C.

Kilgore, S. C., January 2

**Judges: Tom Davies and Tom Oswald
OPEN DERBY — 5 Pointers and 1 Setter**

- 1st—PINEY GROVE BANDIT, 1612990, pointer male, by White Power—Stoney Run's Jill. Don Garris, Jr. & Don Garris III, owners; J. C. Turner, handler.
2d—LILAC, 1621912, setter female, by R B's Snap—Phoebe. Thomas Brigman, owner and handler.
3d—AVATAR GUADA, 1617032, pointer male, by Erin's Special Force—Erin's Little Jewel. Thomas Brigman, owner and handler.

**Judges: Tom Oswald and J. C. Turner
AMATEUR SHOOTING DOG
[One-Hour Heats] — 16 Pointers, 3 Setters
and 2 Irish Setters**

- 1st—HASTY'S HOT PEPPER, 1563284, pointer female, by Turbo—High Rocks Annie. Rick Hulse, owner and handler.
2d—BREAKSTONE, 1582163, Irish setter male, by Sharpton—Chantilly. Roger W. Boser, owner and handler.
3d—GRANDWINS DREAM KEEPER, 1575120, pointer female, by Santos Blue Note—Rae of Sun. Thomas Brigman, owner and handler.

I B BOSTON HAS DIED

IB BOSTON, pointer female owned by Torben Hansen of Reno, Nev., passed away at my kennel in Kingston, Ark., on December 27, 2010.

Torben acquired "Pricey" from me as a year-old dog. I had kept her for future breeding as a puppy and sold the rest of the litter.

Torben called me and was looking for a classy older pup and our conversations turned to Pricey. I had been able to get a littermate to her,



**I B BOSTON WITH OWNER
TORBEN HANSEN**

I B Indy, back from the man I sold her to as a puppy and that situation allowed for Pricey to have a shot at the trial world.

A year-old pup with no training meant that Torben had his work cut out for him. He asked me what she knew. I told him she didn't know her name, whoa, or here, but would point a cat or a cap. I sent him a couple of photos and he said that he needed to take a look at her.

She went to the right place as Torben was able to develop her, despite her hardheadedness, into a

four-time champion with three runner-up titles.

She also won the National Chukar Futurity in the spring of 2006.

Pricey had 25 placements in all with her last championship win occurring at the Pacific Northwest Open Shooting Dog in the fall of 2010.

Torben sent her to me early in December after an injury caused her retirement. My plans were to raise pups out of her as she was just shy of hitting her seventh birthday.

I was shocked to find her dead in her kennel.

Down the road, if I am able to call Torben and tell him that I have a litter of pups that are all built like Pricey, I will know my work as a breeder is done.

CRAIG THOMPSON