

McCall gazine

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Cedarwood Gun Dogs
PUDELPOINTERS

2007 McCall Amateur

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What's In A Name?

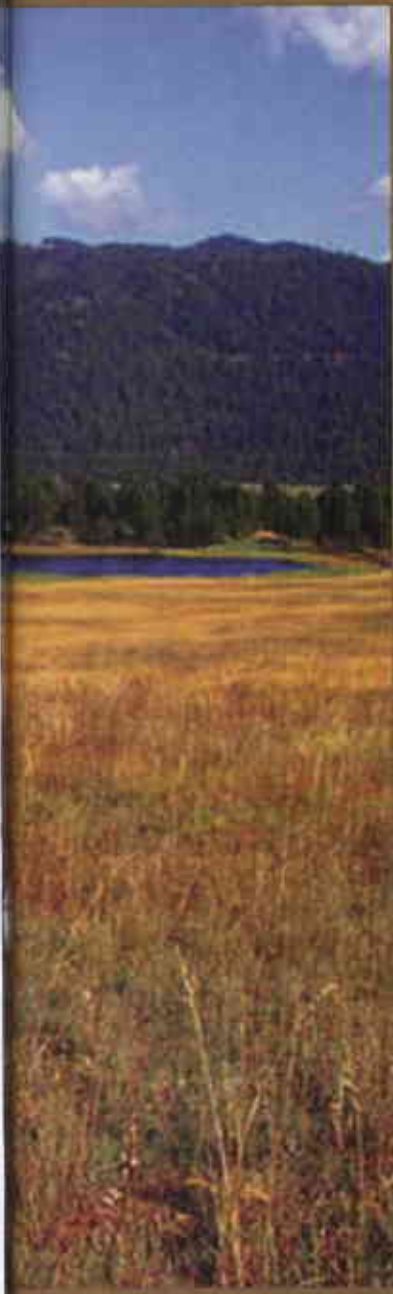
Cedarwood Gun Dogs is the largest breeder of Pudelpointers in the world



Photo: Cedarwood Gun Dogs

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By Doug Copsey



Bob Farris has an easy smile that makes you think he has a secret. In fact, he has 32 of them. One of them, Kona, sits still as a statue, watching intently as Farris searches the backyard of his west Boise home for a tennis ball. Kona is a Pudelpointer, a very special breed of hunting dog – a cross between the German hunting Poodle and the English Pointer. Her sparkling yellow eyes follow every move her master makes, but even when Farris goes inside to search for the ball, Kona doesn't so much as twitch her short, chocolate-colored coat. Only when Farris finally finds the ball and shows it to Kona does the dog tense up, eager for action.

He throws the ball across the yard into the swimming pool and Kona explodes like an Olympic sprinter out of the starting blocks. She charges across the lawn, launching herself a good 15 feet across the pool, splashing down just inches short of the opposite wall.

"She's learned," said Farris with a grin. "The first time we did that she hit the far wall. Now she knows better."

Farris is the owner/operator of Cedarwood Gun Dogs, the largest breeder of Pudelpointers in the world. His is a rare occupation. There are only nine Pudelpointer breeders in the U.S., and most of those only raise one litter of six to eight puppies a

year. He raises at least six litters. After 15 years, he's achieved a status akin to King of the Pudelpointers. Look at the Web sites of most other breeders and you'll see most of their breeding stock is descended from Cedarwood breeding stock. In addition to his Boise operation, he has six kennels in McCall, where he spends all summer and fall each year training his dogs.

"The world headquarters of the Pudelpointer nation reside in McCall," said Farris with a chuckle. "I train here because it's not so hot in the summer, there's no cheat grass, and there are all kinds of ponds and water."



*Left page top: Coopr mugs for the camera.
Left page bottom: Bob Farris defies the elements with trusted companion.
Right page top: Coopr poses with a friend.
Right page bottom: Tukr does the long jump for a bird.*



These are the days of designer dogs, but Farris is quick to point out that unlike the Labradoodles, Goldendoodles and other new cross-breeds being developed, the Pudelpointer has a long and storied history.

In the late 1800s a German Baron by the name of Von Zedlitz started with 90 pointers and seven poodles, and set out to breed the best bird dog possible. While some say he used the Standard Poodle, many others, including Farris, believe the breed's forebearers were actually Barbets, descendants of the rare Wasser Pudel (water poodle), a shaggy dog, now extinct, that looked somewhat like a Golden Retriever. Either way, the Pudelpointer inherited the intelligence, human attachment, obedience to owner, love of water and natural retrieving abilities demonstrated by Poodles in the 1800s.

Farris is also adamant that no Pudelpointer should ever be registered

with the American Kennel Club. Not because of the AKC itself, but because that organization focuses so much on the show ring, and the dogs become bred not for their performance in the field, but for their performance in the show ring. Many breeders believe that has been the downfall of a lot of hunting breeds.

"Everybody's critical when it comes to their breed of dog," explained Farris. "I'm no different. This breed is sincerely one of the nicest breeds of dog a family could own. They're every bit as good as a German Shorthair to hunt pheasants and chukars, and they're just as good as a Labrador to hunt ducks and geese. There just isn't another breed that equals all those things in one little package. And they're unbelievably affectionate with people. There are so many pluses that you wonder why everybody doesn't have one."

But just being a Pudelpointer doesn't qualify a dog to become breeding



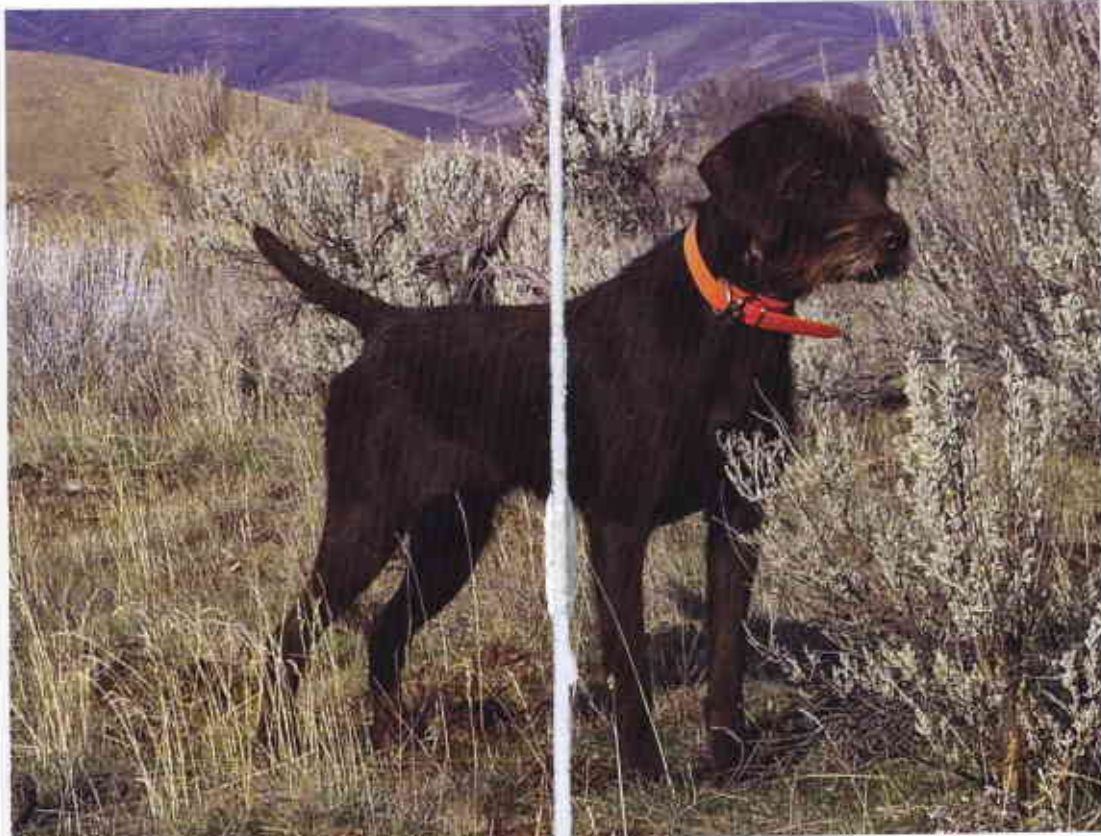
stock. The dogs must go through rigorous testing during the first two to three years of their lives and earn a specific credential – called a prize – before they’re considered an absolutely finished gun dog, valued at between \$5,000 and \$10,000. That’s why there are so few breeders, because the time and effort required to accomplish that, with one dog, much less several, is not something the average dog fancier is willing, or able, to put in.

Pudelpointers have been the number one versatile breed for the past 30 years, as certified by The North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association. NAHVDA certification is the backbone of most Pudelpointer breeding programs, and is used as a measuring stick to determine whether or not a dog is good enough to be bred.

“It’s like a field trial, but it’s not a competition,” Farris explained. “It’s a standard, and every dog is judged

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A Pudelpointer has been bred to possess all of the best qualities that a hunting dog needs, to be good at what he does.

against the standard. Three judges plant five birds in a field and the dog hunts for 30 minutes. Then they do water work and tracking work. The judges give them a final score, and those points become the permanent identification of each dog."

After putting all that work into a dog, Farris is understandably picky about who gets to own one of his unique dogs.

"Only avid hunters," said Farris, "not just to a guy that wants one. And I make sure that all of the avenues that I advertise are strictly where the top-end bird hunters look for dogs."

As much as any other reason, Pudelpointers are prized for their tremendous tracking ability. Several years ago, Farris wanted to infuse some new blood into his genetic line. He traveled to the Czech Republic and bought four-year-old Harry, the most titled dog of any breed ever in that country. He was even licensed to do blood tracking. Farris got a demonstration when he bought Harry,

and he tells the story with a zeal that shows it made a deep impression.

"They took a squirt bottle of blood and went off into the woods for a mile or so, leaving a drop every five or six steps, and at the end of the trail

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they left a big chunk of hide. Then they came back 24 hours later, when all the human scent was gone, and brought Harry up. They hung a strap about six to eight inches long, called a brindle, off his collar, then he took off and started tracking. It was really impressive. You could tell when he was



A Pudel pointer puppy takes time to smell the flowers.

on the track, and then you'd see him get lost and backtrack, and get back on it again. Then when he found the hide, it was naturally too big to pick up, so he flipped the brindle up into his mouth and brought it back to show he'd found the hide. Then they put the leash on him and he led us back to it. I

The easy smile belies an intense love of his work, and it's clear that, even after 15 years, Farris' relationship with his dogs continues to grow deeper every day.

show people over here this (skill) and they can't believe it. He's absolutely the most intelligent dog I've ever seen in my life. He would be invaluable in an elk camp."

Caring for 32 dogs would be a tough job for even the most avid breeder, so once he's taken them through the whole training process, Farris often farms them out to hunting friends and

relatives who care for them, hunt with them and enjoy their companionship. But he still owns the dogs, and keeps in close contact with this network of people to maintain his breeding stock. Harry is one such case.

"I have this very good friend, Hal, who's 84 years old," Farris noted. "He would come over every Friday and pick Harry up and take him to one of these pay-to-hunt places where they put out pheasants, and one day I just told Hal he ought to keep Harry. Hal's wife had a stroke some time back and he had to put her in a nursing home, so now Harry is the therapy dog for 150 people in the nursing home. He came from the Czech Republic where he lived in a dirt pen pretty much like a pig would live in. Dogs don't have much of a life over there. Now he lives with Hal where he's got a bed in every room of the house and rides in the front seat of a Lincoln Continental."

The easy smile belies an intense love of his work, and it's clear that, even after 15 years, Farris' relationship with his dogs continues to grow deeper every day. And that's no secret. **MM**

To learn more about the amazing Pudel pointer, log on to www.cedarwoodgundogs.com.