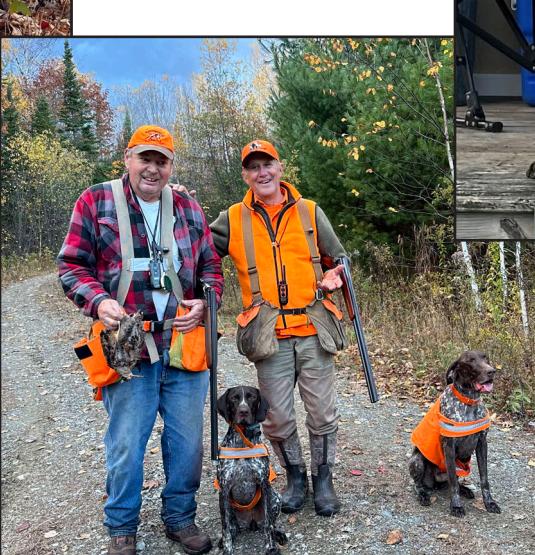




# YANKEES GO HUNTING !

## 2025



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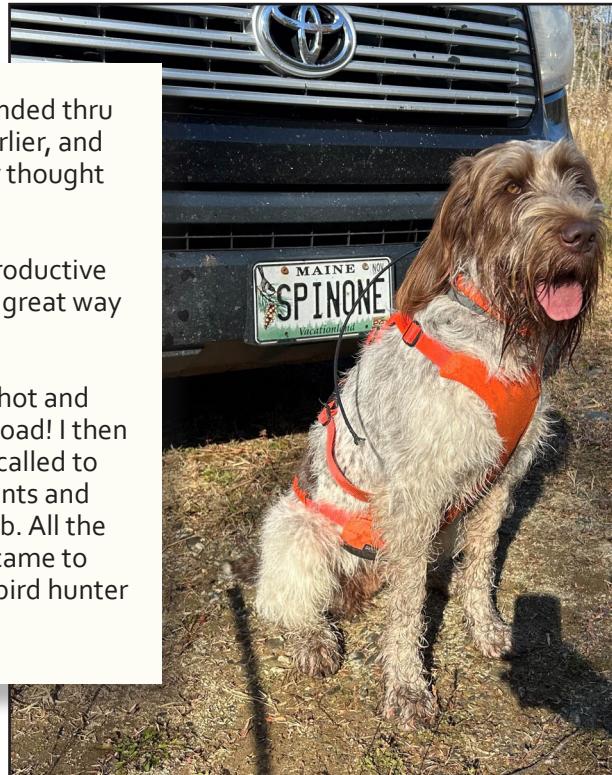
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## Adam Morrison and Jovie

The pure happiness was quite apparent as Jovie bounded thru the cover, first busting the grouse we had flushed earlier, and then chasing the couple woodcock she bumped. Her thought bubble read "WOO HOO"!

After 2 years of hunting with her, this was the first productive cover for Stella Del Nords Livin' On A Prayer. What a great way to start '25!

This hunt started with 2 woodcock points, and one shot and miss. Then the grouse flush. She went into bird overload! I then decided to treat this like a training session. She was called to heel and settled in to work together.. A couple of points and steady to flush later, I knew she was focused on her job. All the training we did thru Yankee and Northeast Spinone came to fruition with a successful bird season for this novice bird hunter and a jovial Spinone.



## Justin Dodge and Argo

We had a great weekend in Rockwood with some Yankee crew. Some special memories were made! Argo pointed and retrieved his first woodcock!!! He pointed just off to my left, Nate and I were both able to watch it happen and get right into position!

The bird was 8+/-feet in front of him. About the time I spotted it, it flew and we both fired and down it went. Argo was off to the races and with a little coaxing he brought it a few steps away and dropped it. Unfortunately Nate and I both hit it and there was not much left other than wings and a head.

Immediately after that, Tippet's collar goes off 30 yards to our right. She's on point! Argo circles around and slams a back. That was so cool! We put that doodle in the bag as well. It was a special moment. PJ, Nate, and I all got our limit Saturday. All dogs had birds shot over em. An afternoon we won't forget!!!





## Nick Racioppi and Brooke

The month of October for Nick Racioppi and sons, Steve and Nick, started with a successful trip to the Salmon River in NY and ended with a successful hunt on woodcock for Nick and Brooke!



## Dani Murphy and Asha, Cinder, Ember

"I shot my limit of woodcock today... one over each dog!!! I've been trying so hard to do that! I kept a wing from each."

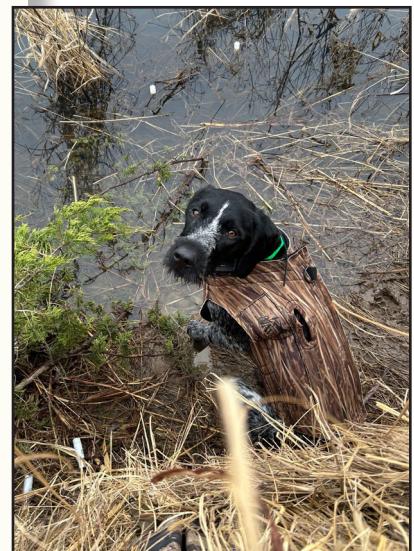


## Matt Lorello with Dylan and Bob

Fifty-four birds yesterday. Mostly woodcock. 6-7 grouse. The way you described your cover, Nancy, was what we were in and at times didn't know if we were going to get out! ... Onto the black and white dogs. Bob is holding her points forever. Couldn't find her for a while yesterday--like 10 minutes. Had been pointing a grouse that entire time. Another time I had to wait 7 mins for the others to get over to me to shoot the bird--I already had my limit of WC. Didn't move a muscle that entire time! She did a great job and I think she is going to be a good grouse dog when the numbers are back up. Retrieving? She will deliver to foot, not quite to hand yet.

Dylan is a rock star waiting to go on stage. I found her on point (sitting actually) one time looking up an alder tree. Yup, there's a red phase grouse sitting 5ft above her, not a leaf in sight. It was perfect old dog stuff! Another highlight for The Dillywhacker: She's on point, WC, I flush the bird, miss on the first shot. Second shot was a long Hail Mary--dumped it on the other side of a stream. It's only taking 11yrs, many miles, lots of help, and a lot of time to get that WC.

Then Bob got her debut on Kansas ducks. Still needs work finishing the retrieve, but she amazed us all with her steadiness in the blind. Big future with a mouthful of waterfowl for that dog!



# BESIDES BIRDS...



Charles Ellithorpe



Amanda Dyer with daughter Annabelle and mom Mona Dyer



Nick Racioppi with sons Steve and Nick



Ben Hatch



Dani Murphy with Cinder (tracker) and Doug Morin (hunter)



Annabelle Dodge

## Brian Pike and Josie with Jason Hawes and Hank

Today was youth deer hunting day, but where Jason Hawes and I went, it was puppy bird hunting day. For us, it was a dedicated day for Josie and Henry to get bird contacts and some valuable lessons only wild birds can provide. Josie and Henry are 7 month old German Short-haired Pointer litter mates from Merrymeeting Kennels.

We started the day in cover that Jason had found through researching satellite photos and more. It was a huge area that was thick with aspen, birch, maple, alders and some fir/spruce mixed in as well. Cover, food and water indicated that this would be a good spot for birds, both grouse and woodcock.

The puppies started off wanting to play with each other, but as we started into the woods, that changed quickly as each started to make out bird scent on the ground. The trees and ground were still wet from an overnight rain shower. We found lots of grouse droppings and woodcock splash (also droppings, but not as solid), but had trouble finding birds. The dogs did manage to bump a couple of woodcock, but we had expected more from this area. I think the wetness impacted where the birds were located. The pups did a great job searching, and working with us, checking in frequently to see which way we wanted to hunt. Lots of times you could tell they smelled where birds had been, and they tried tracking them. We just didn't see many.

We checked out some other bird covers that Jason had researched. Unfortunately, when we could see them, they didn't seem as good as through the satellite view. There was very little cover for the birds, so we didn't think it would be a great spot. While heading to the next spot we wanted to check, we pulled over when we saw a grouse fly into the woods. From the road, it didn't look good with bulldozed gravel and trees making getting into the woods difficult. When I found a spot to walk in, it looked like ideal bird habitat. We parked the trucks and got the pups out.

We hadn't walked 10 yards into the woods, and I saw a woodcock walking along the forest floor heading to our left. The pups were over to my right. Josie came over and I could tell she was making bird scent, then she started to track the woodcock. Henry came by and picked up the track a little further along than Josie, and quickly got close to the bird. He locked up on point and Josie stopped and honored his point. Henry jumped at where he thought the bird was, but the bird had already moved on from that point and was 5 feet to Henry's right hand side. That bird flushed and both dogs were steady and didn't chase.

We started to make our way over to where that bird landed when another woodcock came flying in and landed about 10 feet away from Jason and me. We called

our pups around and they quickly started to get 'birdy'.

Henry locked up on point, and Josie either pointed as well, or backed Henry up again. This time, both dogs were steady and we stepped up to flush the bird. It went up, and I was able to drop it with one shot through the thick trees.

We sent the dogs to find the bird, and Josie locked up on point. She hasn't had much experience with retrieving game yet, so her instinct was to point it. When I got close, she picked up the bird and started to come toward me. Then she decided she wasn't ready to give up her prize, so she moved off to my right side about 15 feet. She was still deciding what to do with the bird when I hit vibrate on her collar. She put the bird down, and let me pick it up. It was a mature female woodcock.

We worked through the woods in the area, which had about 40-50 acres of nice cover that we wouldn't have known about if we hadn't been able to step off the road and check it out. When we were done there, it was time for us to head back south due to prior commitments for later that afternoon. We had put up 5 woodcock, and the dogs had some invaluable training.

They have each had great hunting seasons, and are well on their way to being super hunting dogs, like their parents.



## Tom O'Rourke and Hazelnut

### Learning the Point: A New Chapter with Hazelnut

After twenty-five years as a game warden, I thought I had a pretty solid understanding of the relationships that form in the woods and fields. I spent countless hours watching bird hunters and other hunters work their way across the landscape, studying the way they moved with the land and with their dogs. As a warden, I often stood off to the side and simply observed—how a dog's tail would begin to quiver before the point, how a hunter would read that tiny shift and adjust their pace, how the partnership between dog and handler seemed almost instinctive. I respected that bond deeply, but it wasn't until I brought home Hazelnut, my Vizsla puppy—a fiery little Hungarian pointer with more heart than size—that I started to understand what goes into creating it.

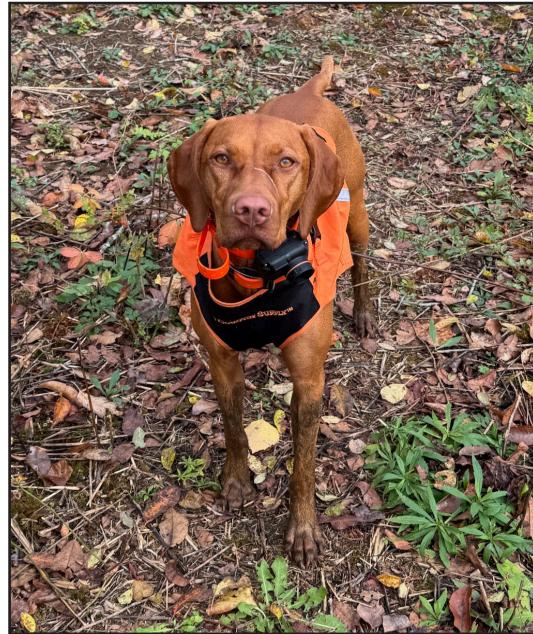
There is a world of difference between observing a seasoned bird dog and handler from the outside and stepping into that role yourself as a newcomer. Hazelnut is teaching me just as much as I'm teaching her. Some days, if I'm honest, she's doing more of the teaching. And that's the part I never fully appreciated during all those years of watching others from the sidelines. Once those two worlds collide—the experienced woodsman who spent years witnessing great dog–handler teams and the rookie handler trying to understand his own pup—something almost magical happens. You begin to merge into a team of one.

It doesn't matter whether we harvest a bird, although that's certainly a reward at the end of a good day. My real passion lies in the relationship itself, that incredible connection between a person and their bird dog that so many hunters dream about. Awards and ribbons are nice, and they certainly reflect hard work, but at this stage of my life I find myself craving something much simpler: a clean, confident point... Hazelnut steady to wing and shot... and

that quiet, almost sacred moment where you know you and your dog are exactly where you're meant to be.

Every day with Hazelnut reminds me that this bond isn't built quickly or by accident. It's shaped through time spent together, through training sessions where timing matters more than volume, through the small corrections and the moments where you simply let the dog figure things out.

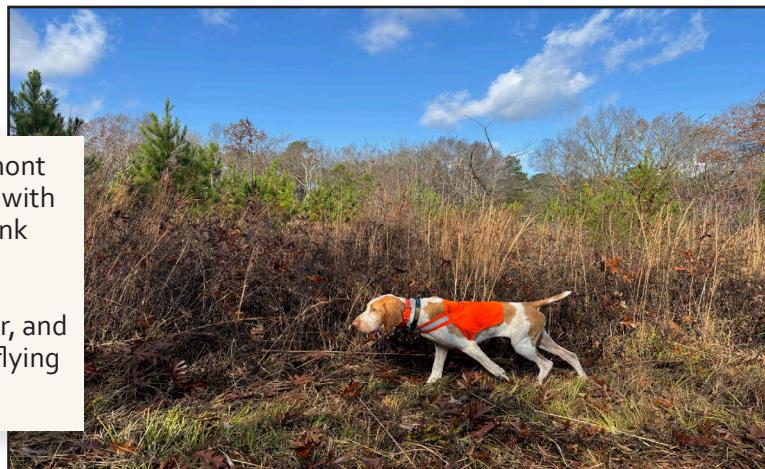
It's early mornings, muddy boots, patient repetition, and celebrating the tiny victories that lead to the big ones. It's realizing that your dog isn't just learning a skill—she's learning you. And you're learning her right back. I may be a novice handler, but I'm a willing one, and Hazelnut has given me a new kind of purpose. Retirement was supposed to quiet my life, but instead it handed me a new adventure, one where a young Vizsla leads me into a world I once only observed from the outside. Now I'm living it—one point, one lesson, and one joyful partnership at a time.



### Nancy Anisfield and Pilot

River, Prairie, Pilot and I had some terrific Vermont and Maine hunts -- plenty of woodcock to play with and the highlight being Pilot's first grouse. Thank you, Amanda Dyer for the great shot!

Then Pi joined her pals Etta, Wren, Odin, Cinder, and Ember for some southern nose-tickling, zippy flying Alabama quail. Happy dogs all around.



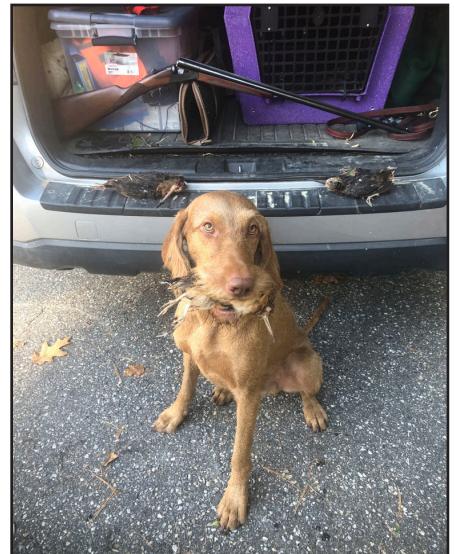
## Rob Borden and Hogan



First southern Maine grouse in a while & Hogan's first grouse retrieved to hand.



"I'm not sure how I feel about the taste of these woodcock Dad".



It was a great woodcock season!

### Pure Joy

Anyone who owns a versatile hunting dog experiences pure joy when you witness the complete process of your dog on point followed by a bird falling from the sky and seeing your dog retrieve that bird to you. The magic of that moment becomes heightened when you have an opportunity to help a young hunter achieve that experience behind your dog. ...

At 13, Reid is already an experienced hunter who has learned many hunting lessons with his family especially when he spends time with his uncle, Israel. Israel helped me get permission to hunt his brother's property. Reid has already had success hunting deer, turkeys, ducks, and rabbit. Last year, we didn't make it happen with a woodcock behind my dogs.

With the season winding down and missed opportunities on a recent hunt, Reid and I met on a Monday for an afternoon hunt. Reid gave me a gift of a wood burned woodcock that he had made in school. It was such a pleasant surprise. I was even more determined than ever to help set Reid up to connect with a woodcock behind Willow or Fern, my wonderful Brittanys. To my surprise, in less than five minutes, Willow was on point with Fern backing her mom. Willow was facing away from us, so I positioned Reid in an opening that allowed him to have more room to swing his gun before I flushed the bird. As I approached the other side of Willow to flush the bird, it took off. With one gunshot, my ears heard the most wonderful words, "DEAD BIRD!" Without hesitation, Willow was off for the retrieve and Reid had successfully put a woodcock in his game bag.

## Dan Riley and Fern

I am not sure whose face hurt more from smiling but I can tell you that my heart was full knowing I was able to give someone the same joy I have experienced hunting behind my dogs. Willow's daughter Fern has learned so much this season after missing last hunting season from a broken shoulder. They both hunted well for the little time we had left before the end of legal light.

As we were working the cover going back to the truck being aware of our time to hunt was coming to an end, Fern's beeper sounded off 80 yards away. We both moved with focus through the brush to see where Fern was on point. As I headed to flush the bird veering to her right, up went the bird. Reid was situated on the road if the bird flew in his direction, so he witnessed me shooing the bird as it fell to the sky and Fern staying steady to shot and fall. I sent Fern for the retrieve who gladly picked it up and dropped at my feet.



## Betty Blackman with Donie Blackman and Remillie Norsworthy



Copper Penny pointed a grouse (partridge) in woodcock cover. She held point, yeah! No chasing! I didn't see it, Remillie did. It flew. Then Reka pointed woodcock twice over to Mars Hill cover. Rem shot, thought she hit the bird. We put Bentley and Reka out to search didn't find anything, so she must have missed by a tail feather. Donie was with Bentley when he went on point, Donie didn't get there in time, the partridge flushed. Didn't get the shot. We see two birds up in a tree, Donie shoots the first bird, I missed the second one, and so does he. Bentley finds the bird, retrieves the partridge happily to Donie.

I let Rem use my 20 gauge, as she isn't hitting with her 28 gauge. She has a clear shot of a bird over Zinga but she didn't have the safety completely off. She said, "I had the bird dead to rights." Oops!

I'm walking with Copper Penny, she is working really well quartering back and forth. Then she came to a stop beside me. Just as she does...a partridge went up not a foot and half from my feet! Scared me and Copper! Copper jumped about 3ft in the air. Ran after it! Oops bad dog!

I'm walking with Copper; she is in the woods. She bumps a woodcock. She chases after it right down the middle of a tote road we are walking, Couldn't take the shot! Then a few minutes later Copper is on the other side of the tote road. She bumps a partridge this time. It flies behind a spruce tree. It's gone. No shot.

Donie, Remillie and I are in my 4-wheeler. Rem gets out with Reka. Reka goes into the thick woods. She bumps a woodcock. It flies past Remillie. Takes a hard right, flies towards me as I'm trying to get out of the passenger side of the wheeler. Then it takes a left, flies away! I swear woodcock have radar!.

We had a rabbit show up in front of our camp. I shot it. I got Copper to retrieve it. Then I made rabbit fricassee. It was so good!



## Marsha Bennett and Steve Bennett with Tillie and Jagen



## Donnie Lucas with Henna's Ziggy and Waylon

### Farewell to Henna and Welcoming Waylon: A Breeding Journey

#### A Heartfelt Goodbye to Henna

Sad times have fallen upon us as we said goodbye to Mamma Hens, also known as Sir Gruntalot, Gramma G, and Henna Doutzen (Dootz). Henna leaves behind a legacy of 22 puppies, who have gone on to accomplish wonderful things. We are deeply grateful for everything she gave us: for being our best girl, for her exceptional skills as a hunting dog, and for the memories, especially the unforgettable moment when everything "clicked" in her training. Our gratitude extends to Henna for blessing us with Ziggy, and in turn, Ziggy's babies – Hank (Shiloh), Mysta Sir Waylon (who remains with us), and Willie. Saying goodbye was difficult, but we knew it was the right decision. We miss and love Henna dearly.

#### The Breeding Journey Continues

Those who have followed our breeding journey know our hope was to welcome a cheerful, happy-go-lucky female pup like Ziggy. Our previous litters had been large, but we were in for a surprise this time. Ziggy's labor was a challenge, resulting in an emergency c-section at 4 a.m. We will never forget the moment the vet knocked on our truck window at dawn, announcing the arrival of three beautiful, large pups—all male. After raising a strong, stubborn, independent male (Keggie, Mr. Ribs), we always joked that we would not raise another male. Yet, having

a smaller litter allowed us to develop a close bond with these three boys. One particular pup captured our attention with his watchful nature, and he immediately bonded with Donnie. His energetic tail and affectionate, happy personality reminded us so much of Ziggy.

Ultimately, we chose to welcome this pup into our family. He enjoyed time with his mother and grandmother, demonstrating intelligence, mindfulness, and love. The passing of Henna came swiftly and unexpectedly, but Waylon has been a bright presence for us and his mother. We are proud to introduce Mysta Waylon (in honor of Kegga, with a reggae twist), also known as Sir Waylon. Though we mourn Henna, we are comforted knowing she lives on through Ziggy and Waylon.

#### Waylon's First Experience at Bird Camp

Waylon's first adventure at bird camp in 2025 (at 12 weeks old) was filled with excitement. He represents the next generation, carrying forward the tradition begun by his grandmother Henna a decade ago. Waylon excelled in his first drag with a woodcock and quickly mastered the routines of bird camp life. He enjoys spending time with Momma Ziggy, aunts Avery and Bella, and uncle Ripp. The interactions have been wonderful, and Waylon has proven himself to be a fast learner. He delights in the company of Tim, Bernie, and Dave during breaks between hunts. Waylon joins the hunts daily, showing no fear of gunfire. His natural talents are remarkable and a joy to witness.

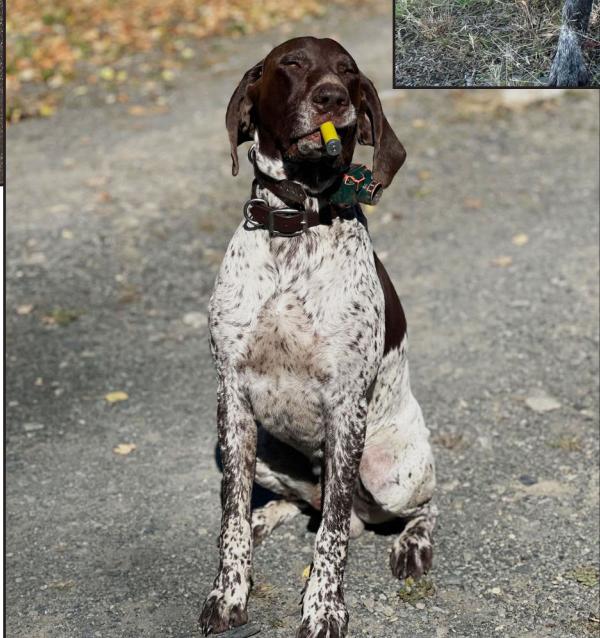


Waylon and his woodcock, Jarrett Sevigny (JJ) with Donny and Ziggy, Dave Hatch with Ziggy.



The day goes on, and there's a fullness in it. The warmth of good companions, the steady, not-too-perfect dog work, the high excitement of the search, the pleasant lull between the points.

- from "A Letter to My Cousin" by David H. Henderson



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