

OPEN FIELD TRIAL – LAUDER

Judges: John Naylor & Chris Gray

by kind permission of Mr A Wilson Young and Eskdale Shooting Services. Sponsored by Rodger Skinner Ltd, Dog Food.

Date:

7th November 2013

Weather conditions:

The day started cold and clear and remained dry, whilst it was reasonably warm in the middle of the day the cold started to bite again in the afternoon particularly on the exposed hillside where the wind was a gusting South Westerly.

Type of ground, quality and species of game:

The terrain varied from steep sided heather and bracken clad valleys to thicket staged broadleaved woodland and lastly open hill with white grass and beds of rashes and bracken. Whilst we did see/hear a number of grouse they were generally higher up than our allotted ground and it was predominately pheasants and a smattering of woodcock that figured on the day. Whilst game was not easy to come by, there was certainly enough to test the dogs and most dogs had several opportunities to show off their abilities.

General standard of work and handling:

The steep sided valleys coupled with variable winds and heavy bracken made the ground challenging for our handlers who generally made a good job of it. Scent appeared to vary throughout the day but did not appear to be particularly bad at any time. The better dogs on the day adapted instantly to changes in wind direction and handlers benefited enormously by simply trusting their dogs.

Results:

1 st	Not Awarded		
2 nd	FT Ch Stubblemere Black Magic	GSP	Mick Canham
3 rd	Wamilanghaar Gemini of Caldera	GLP	Steve Kimberley
4 th	Not Awarded		
CoM	Questor A'Choire Ghlais	GSP	Eileen Winser
	Sutchest Rosa	GSP	Jim Bird

Judges Critique:

Stubblemere Black Magic

This dog's first run commenced in a steep sided valley bottom. There was abundant game holding cover in the form of bracken beds interspersed with rushes. Wind was light and variable but predominately head on. The dog got into scent directly in some rushes adjacent to a small pond, a positive draw ended in a solid point and a cock pheasant was produced on command. The bird was brought down but was a runner. Unfortunately the dog failed on the retrieve, as did the second dog down and the picking up dog was called in to continue the search. The dogs run continued and she was rewarded again with a second find and did some good work flushing the bird, on command, at some distance from the handler. This bird was shot and retrieved with little fuss from either handler or dog.

The dog was brought in for a retrieve as 'second dog down' at the start of her second run.

A winged pheasant had been seen to run into a steep bracken bank at about 50m distance from the handler in a back/cheek wind. Whilst the dog initially drew in the wrong direction this proved to be from the scent of a hare, to which the dog was steady and after this distraction was dealt with she got down to business. She located the live bird in the bracken and after a determined effort captured the bird and brought it tenderly to hand. The dog's run continued after this back up the bracken clad gully and was rewarded with a further point on a rabbit. The rabbit flushed with some difficulty but was missed.

The water test was completed competently.

All told this was a commendable performance from an experienced dog on difficult ground.

Wamilanghaar Gemini of Caldera

The wind was highly variable in this dogs first run, varying in an instant from a light head wind to a full back wind all in an extremely steep bracken and heather clad gully. The dog's ground treatment had a steady pace but was impeccable throughout, constantly adapting to the changing conditions. After some time the dog indicated there was game ahead and drew forward out of sight of handler and judge, a flush of three pheasants ensued but none were shot. The dog indicated again making a point and draw but there was no production. Turning around we made to go back down the gully and two birds flushed and were shot from ground yet to be covered by the dog. Both birds fell at some distance one directly downstream, the other across and above us on a very steep heathery bank. The dog was brought down and given the marks for both retrieves, which were completed in a competent manner with a minimal degree of handling.

The second run started in a flat bottomed steep sided gully again with a good covering of bracken and rashes, the wind varied from head to cheek wind throughout the run. The dog started at reasonable pace and hunted well over what was at times difficult terrain with heavy bracken. Ground treatment was again good checking out all likely cover, eventually we climbed out of the gully into some white grass and then we had a firm indication of birds moving ahead, the dog drew on to a solid point before moving forward on command along a rashie drain and producing a pair of cock pheasants flushing some way ahead. Both birds went away unshot. The dog was hunted on but despite odd birds rising wild in front (one of which was shot) he did not get another favourable situation. The dog was not required to make the retrieve. The water test was completed without difficulty.

This was a nice dog, obedient with good style and a pace commensurate to the terrain encountered, he was in contact with a number of birds which unfortunately seemed determined to run but if we had seen just one clean point and production he could easily have earned a higher place.

Questor of Corrie Ghlais

This dog's first run commenced with an attempt at a retrieve on a bird which was seen to fall on the previous dog's run. Despite a thorough search of the area by dog and judges the bird was not found and the picking up dog was instructed to continue the search. The dog was run on into a head/cheek wind through a young birch plantation with thick stands of willow herb which obscured much of the dog's work. What we could see was that the dog hunted with pace and verve though at times did appear a little disconnected from the handler. Two woodcock and a pheasant flushed wild from the extremities of the beat but the nature of the ground made it impossible to determine where the dog was. After some searching we came across the dog in a solid point but despite a determined follow up from the dog we could not catch up to whatever had brought the dog to point in the first place.

The dog was hunted on and was eventually rewarded with a further point and fine production of a large cock pheasant. The bird was shot but appeared to come down as a runner and the dog was sent without delay. She made a smart recovery of the bird and was then picked up.

Her second run was in a flat bottomed valley with thick rushes, white grass and bracken into a head wind. Again the dog hunted with pace and style with high head carriage but despite her busy efforts she had a blank run. The water test was completed adequately.

Suchest Rosa

This dog's first run commenced on a steep and slippery clear fell site with some heather and adjacent bracken and brash for cover. The high bracken often obscured the dog from view and no game was encountered in this initial area. We then progressed to a young birch plantation with heather, white grass and clumps of willow herb. There was a positive head wind and the area was much better to appreciate the dogs hunting which was energetic and covered a good front despite the steep terrain.

After some time the dog indicated game ahead and came to a 'loose' point in a clump of willow herb, the subsequent flush on command, whilst adequate, was somewhat disconnected to the actual bird which was subsequently missed.

Her second run was in a steep sided bracken filled gully with a variable cheek wind. A rabbit was flushed from the extremity of the beat and was subsequently shot, it could be seen to be dead and was left for the moment as the dog appeared to be getting into bird scent. This did not lead to anything so the dog was brought back and completed a 50m blind retrieve across the gully on the rabbit this ended the dogs second run.

The water test was completed in an exemplary fashion.

On behalf of everyone involved we would like to thank the keeper who adapted to our needs admirably at what was his first HPR Field Trial, our host Mr. Wilson Young for providing such wonderful ground and of course the guns, and particularly, the chief steward for their essential contribution on the day.

From a personal perspective I would like to thank my co-judge John for his patience in putting up with me and the club for the invitation to judge in the first place.

Chris Gray