

FROLESWORTH LODGE POINTING TEST

Judges: Nigel Cox and Stevie Allerton

By kind permission of Mr K & Mr M Wells

Date: 5th March 2016

Gradings:

Excellent

Questor Alder	GSP	Janice Hawkes
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Very Good

Sazmallin Isle of Skye	Br It	Paul McDonald
Allezweck Felicia	GSP	Denise Gatcliffe
Hawkwise Berkutchik	Brit	Will Tyler
Barleyarch Beetle at Tequesta	GSP	Dawn Elrington

Good

Witham Friary Tallahassee	GSP	Paul McDonald
Ninebanks the Swarm	HV	Stuart Webster
Quadet Dita at Whisperbrook	Wei	Peter Brooks

Judges Critique:

This Spring Pointing Test on Partridge took place at Frolesworth Lodge by kind permission of Mr Bill Tallis. My co-judge was Mr Nigel Cox. 8 Juniors and 7 Adult dogs were run, the Juniors being judged on their ability to point pheasant as well as partridge, the Adults on partridge only.

It was a very early start to the Spring season this year, owing to the weather conditions in the previous few weeks, leading to the oil-seed rape growing rapidly and the partridge starting to pair up and establish territory.

It was a bitterly cold day with a hard Northerly wind, although the sun did start to make an appearance by 10.00am and as the ground started to warm up we were rewarded with some good scenting conditions. We worked every dog into a head wind as far as possible, to give them every chance to show what they could do.

We were able to grade 8 dogs during the course of the test, which were given a verbal critique along with their awards at the end of the day.

Juniors:

Withamfriary Tallahassee, GSP bitch, handled by Paul McDonald.

First to run, her low head carriage gave an indication of where the scent was at that time in the morning. Indicating scent strongly, she came on point three times and worked on each time, when we eventually saw a partridge lift at the bottom of the field ahead, way in front of the dog. A steady biddable bitch, she cast off again and got into a decent pattern before coming on point to a single partridge that flushed on our approach. Pilot error had caused the dog to back cast a couple of times, but a steady competent performance earned her a grading of **Good**.

Sazmallin Isle of Skye, Bracco bitch, handled by Paul McDonald.

This bitch strayed off her beat during the first couple of minutes, in reaction to scent, and came on point. She held this for a long time until we got to her, and when asked to produce she flushed a hen pheasant very positively. Steady to the bird going away, we then brought her back onto the allotted beat and worked her on for the remainder of her 10 minutes. She quartered the ground and hunted with style, and was graded **Very Good**.

Ninebanks the Swarm, HV dog, handled by Stuart Webster.

This young dog lacked confidence away from his handler and constantly looked back for re-assurance at the start of his run, which took place in the rape at the side of a small copse. We felt the handler was giving the dog too much input and over-handled him a lot of the time. However, eventually the dog found that if he used his initiative and reacted to the scent he found, he could actually hunt and find game. He had a lovely find and staunch point on a hen pheasant, which he held well until asked to flush. He was steady to the bird going away. We felt that the dog had potential and were happy to give him a grading of **Good**.

Adults:

Sh Ch Allezweck Felicia, GSP bitch, handled by Denise Gatcliffe.

This bitch set off covering a wide front, quartering with style and at a good pace. She indicated scent and came on point briefly before resuming hunting. A snipe was seen to get up well ahead. Casting off again, she came on point out on the right of her beat, holding a single snipe this time until asked to flush. Working on, a single partridge lifted well ahead of the dog before she was in a position to have pointed it. Working on to the bottom of the field, she was eventually rewarded with a staunch point on a pair of partridge. A lovely, positive dog in her attitude to hunting, we awarded her a **Very Good**.

Questor Alder, GSP bitch, handled by Janice Hawkes.

This bitch demonstrated how it should be done, putting on a superb display of hunting and game finding. From the minute she was cast off she got the line of the wind exactly right and never once turned her back on the wind, always maintaining contact with what scent there was to find. The handler let the dog flow, with minimal interference. Whereas some dogs had a tendency to dwell on residual scent, it was pleasing to see this dog reacting, quickly ascertaining whether scent was “hot” or not, then resuming her quartering pattern at a wide, fast pace. Right at the end of her allotted time she was rewarded with a stylish point on a pair of partridge that she held nicely until asked to flush. A faultless performance that could not have been improved, it was a pleasure to watch. She was given an **Excellent** grading.

Quadet Dita at Whisperbrook, Wei bitch, handed by Pete Brooks.

This bitch produced steady work, demonstrating her very good nose and ability to find game. She quartered a reasonable distance from her handler, taking the line of the wind correctly. She had a find on partridge early on in her run, pointing across a slight dip towards a rise in the field. The handler walked her in to the point, but she became unsure of the location as she came down into the dip and lost the scent, resuming the point as she came up to the rise in the ground again. The bird lifted a good way ahead, probably in response to the handler’s profile appearing over the horizon. We reckoned she had taken the scent and pointed at 30 – 35 yards away. Working on, she quartered competently to complete her run and gain a grading of **Good**.

Hawkwise Berkutchik, Brittany dog, handled by Will Tyler.

It was difficult to believe this dog is 10 years old, as there was no indication of age or lack of soundness in his ability to quarter and hunt at pace! He worked out wide on either side of the handler, having some unproductive points at the start of his run but quickly resuming his hunting pattern, showing a lovely style and passion for the job in hand. Eventually his work was rewarded with a find and staunch point on a single partridge, producing it and remaining steady to the flush. We awarded him a **Very Good** grading.

Barleyarch Beetle at Tequesta, GSP bitch, handled by Dawn Elrington.

This was another good run, the dog setting off fast and wide, but always responsive to the handler. Very reactive to scent, she had a tendency to dwell on residual scent and needed reminding from her handler that she should move on. We noticed that she was running a very flat pattern and maybe didn’t make as much forward progress as would be ideal. Nevertheless, she had a good find and point on a single partridge, got a bit distracted by residual scent from the second bird of the pair that had previously vacated the area, then found and held point on a cock pheasant which she flushed very positively. We graded her **Very Good**.

Many thanks to the GSP Club for inviting us to judge at this most enjoyable test, and to all those involved in making the day a success at this excellent ground.

Stevie Allerton