

All I Want is a Plan Ole' "Huntin Dawg"

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By
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Yesterday I called back an inquirer about a pup. After talking awhile about pedigrees and accomplishments of the sire and dam the gentleman says: "Well I don't want no field trial dog. I just want a plan ole' huntin dawg."

Well I don't believe him - heck he doesn't even believe himself. Nobody wants just a plan old hunting dog. Everyone wants that special dog, a dog of a lifetime - a bell ringing, proud running, never say die, bird making son-of-a-gun. The one that fears nothing, retrieves everything, and rides in the front seat because he has earned the right.

We all deserve that dog - yet we live only so long - a dog that everyone wants to hunt over - yet we will only have a few dogs in our life time - a dog to use as a sire or have pups from - yet we work so hard - the one Dad loves and uncle Jim can't keep his hands off - a "gundog" and it didn't happen by accident.

When I hear "... don't want no field trial dog" it implies there is something inherently broken or sinister in a titled or tested dog and that is just plan hogwash. It has even become fashionable to denigrate proven bloodlines in the outdoor press. In reality, what the person is saying is they are intimidated by pedigrees and trial titles and the solution is to deflate the value of competitive evaluation. This justifies breeders producing mediocre performers because it is intended, and exempts the dog owners because an average dog is expected.

In reality, puppies from parents that score or trial well and are themselves from generations of similar dogs are the easiest dogs to train and the most likely to achieve greatness just by being taken home, hunted, and loved. They are loyal, intelligent, physically right, and mentally sound. No professional will put up with a shirker, a fighter, or a bird eater. Any major physical or mental deficiency breaks the chain and these dogs do not reproduce and the fault is not perpetuated.

The reason Bob's dog down the street is a bragging dog with little or no training is because Bob's dog is the offspring of dogs that were sorted through by the testers and trialers. People willing to spend their retirements, miss their vacations, give up their evenings, and have their hearts broken by failures and almost. They do it for the breed, they do it for the dogs and ultimately they do it for the men and women who cannot imagine living a lifetime without a "gundog".

So if you truly want just a "plan ole' huntin dawg" go to the city pound and pick out one that was discarded for blinking, fighting, lacking in point, desire, cooperation, or any of a myriad of inherited problems. By doing so you will save the life of man's best friend and the dog will have no problems living up to your expectations.

If on the other hand you want that dog of a lifetime. Research pedigrees, ask lots of questions, read or seek out the advice of experience. Attend NAVHDA or AKC hunt tests, UKC or NASTR field trials and see different breeds and different bloodlines of similar breeds run against each other. Then pick a dog of a breed and from a bloodline you can be proud of, brag about, a dog your friends and family will all talk about - a "gundog".