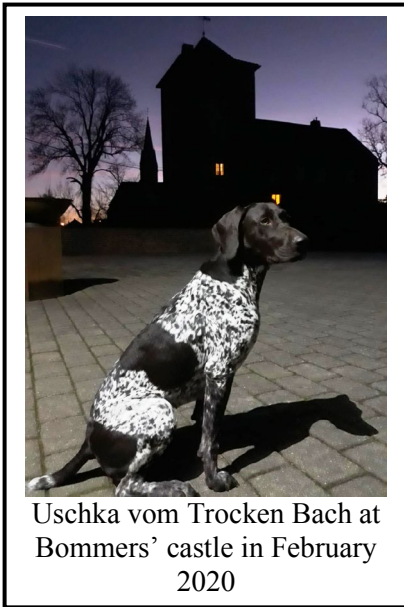


Old Men Dream Dreams

Our Journey to the Kleemann

by Gil Dueck

At the 2020 Dr. Kleemann Prüfung there will be not less than five dogs owned by members of the DKGNA. In each of the next three newsletters one of the dogs and their owners will be featured.



I grew up on a small dairy farm 60 miles East of Vancouver B.C. My earliest memories of hunting were with my father in the fields around our farm for ducks and pheasants. Our dog was a springer-collie cross that loved to flush pheasants but was hard mouthed and a reluctant retriever.

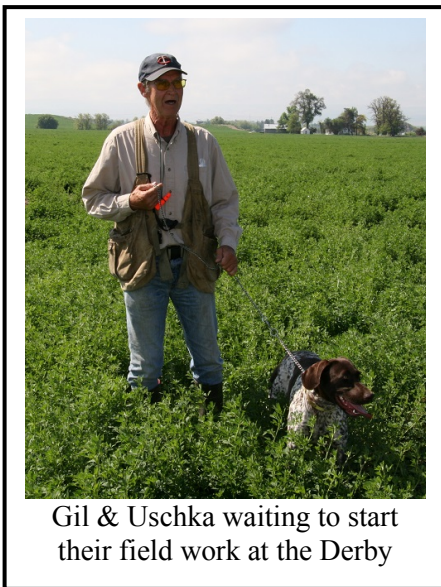
In 1980 I decided to leave teaching and join the expanding family dairy farm. As a farmer I could find a few hours each day to hunt ducks and geese. Pheasants had by then disappeared mostly due to a loss of habitat. I stopped competing in retriever field trials as they became more and more technical and were a poor reflection of my hunting needs. In 2000 I acquired another Golden and this time competed in hunt tests. At this time, I met Barry Kolodychuk who was instrumental in our success (Master

Hunter Cert). My farm business was now more established, and this gave me time to hunt upland birds in the Canadian prairies. Here I connected with another dog trainer friend. After hunting together, he commented, 'Stop trying to overly manage your flushing dog. Alberta is big country. If you want to find birds your dog must be allowed to range far and wide. **"Go big or go home"**. I soon had a wide ranging Golden and I did a lot of running whenever I saw him get on a bird. Being somewhat younger I enjoyed the challenge. As 60 approached I found it more difficult to keep up and after several falls from badger holes and uneven ground while running. I worried about injury, especially after breaking a gun stock while falling. Maybe a pointer should be part of my future.

I had always taken a keen interest in breeding cattle and spent a great deal of time studying pedigrees as I searched for the best sires to enhance my herd for both type and milk production. I did some research as I firmed up my decision to buy a GSP. After talking to some dog people, I bought a shorthair with quite a few F.C. in his pedigree and a few German imports. The breeder talked enthusiastically about these, 'German imports'.

It wasn't until the boredom of a beach holiday to Mexico had me surfing the net and I happened upon the Deutsch Kurzhaar Verband site. While looking through the dogs and

puppies for sale area, I gradually came to understand the German system of testing. It impressed me that a dog had to qualify by meeting a standard for field work and conformation before a litter could be registered. I next noticed that some of the qualified sires were owned by North Americans. The closest one was in Walla Walla so I couldn't wait to see these German Imports. Further research led me to the Frank & Marianne's vom Trocken Bach site. I was impressed by the depth of pedigree on the females owned by this kennel. When purchasing brood stock for the dairy my first place to look for strength in a pedigree is on the bottom side, the theory being that you can always find good males - it only takes a few to cover a large number of females but strong performing lines of females are much harder to come by. I took the plunge and bought a DK, Kora vom Trocken Bach. Kora was a great DK for our first endeavor. We were able to receive a Prize 1 in the Derby. With Barry Kolodychuk as the leader we received a Prize 2 in the Solms, and VGP with 283 points. We had hope for a Prize 1 in the VGP but a hiccup in the search without the duck derailed that dream. The testing program has been a challenge especially the fur and blood tracking components, which neither one of us had never done. I would like to add that our success in completing the VGP would not have been possible without the help of Frank O'Leary and Jeff Martin. Their kind patience and explanations about training and evaluations of our progress helped us address weaknesses and helped us understand the multi-faceted test which at times seemed overwhelming to a first-time participant.



Gil & Uschka waiting to start their field work at the Derby

In the spring of 2018, right before the Derby, I purchased Uschka vom Trocken Bach (Maggie KS vom Trocken Bach – “V1” Female at 2018 Kleemann x Uno KS vom Mausberg – “V5” Male at 2014 Kleemann) from Frank & Marianne O'Leary. With me as the leader she received a Prize 1 in the Derby and Susan and I started dreaming of bigger things. When we purchased Uschka Frank had told us he had kept her as a potential breeding female. He felt that with her pedigree and ability in the field she was good enough to aim towards the Kleemann down the road.

We realize that a deep pedigree and high scoring parents is not a guarantee of success, but experience in the dairy business and general observation made us extremely

hopeful that we have increased the odds for success

During the winter of 2018 Frank encourage us to continue Uschka's education in Germany with hopes of making it to the Kleemann. We offered vom Trocken Bach a half ownership in Uschka and control of her testing and breeding if he thought she was good enough to continue her education in Germany with the goal being the Kleemann. Frank accepted my offer without hesitation and Uschka was on her way to Germany to continue her education with Stefan Middeke.

The 2019 testing season exceeded our expectations. In August, Uschka was the “V1” female at the Weser-Ems Zuchtschau with 32 females in the class. We had hoped Uschka would receive a “V” but to be the V1 Female was very special.

The fall was equally rewarding for Uschka and Susan and myself. She received a Prize 1 in the AZP and at the VGP, in late October, she received a Prize 1 with 316 Points. Now she had passed the major tests necessary to enter the Kleemann. All that was left was the VBR and HN tests which was done during the winter. A special thanks needs to go to Stefan Middeke for his successful efforts in Uschka’s education.



Susan & Gil prior to their trip to Germany in February 2020

As we look forward to traveling to Germany in the fall to attend the Kleemann, the most prestigest test in the DKV, Susan & I are honor and excited to have our dog, Uschka vom Trocken Bach, qualify to participate in the 2020 Kleemann Prüfung. When our first DK, Kora, successfully completed her education through the VGP and had a Fw: “V” we had started to think and dream of someday owning, developing, and competing in Germany and even someday reaching the Kleemann Prüfung. I hear that Germany is a lovely place in the autumn and we will be there!

As we get older, we realize - “we are too old to plant a small tree”. We also adhere to a policy of, “we won’t breed a litter if we can buy a better puppy from another breeder”. When we were in the cattle business there was another saying—life is too short to start with a poor one”. It takes too long a time to get a superior line of animals by merely breeding great sires to ordinary females. Therefore, we are fortunate to be able to benefit from the efforts of Frank and Marianne and vom Trocken Bach who have the special females and have access to superior sires.

PS - The ultimate dream would be to lead my own bred dog in a future Kleemann. Unfortunately, planting that small tree at age 70 may be bit ambitious. But we can still dream.

Bible-Joel 2:28 – “your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions”

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