

# There is only One!!

by Mike Grimes

*Mike Grimes is a new Founding Life Member of the DKGNA. Mike lives in Harlem, GA. Mike is married, has two children, and four grandchildren. Mike is the General Manager of the Testing Division for Aubrey Silvey Enterprises a company that constructs and test power substations.*



Mike with Jäger (Ivan) following a successful blood track at the VGP

There is only one - first DK. My journey into the Deutsch Kurzhaar World began more than a decade ago as I began exploring the possibility of having a dog that could “do it all”. I’ve had and been around hunting dogs my entire life. My father had beagles and I remember looking forward to every Saturday of hunting season to go chase rabbits. Through my high school years, I was introduced to the Bobwhite and I was intrigued by the pointers and setters I was privileged to hunt behind. My first birddog was a Drop (English Pointer/English Setter mix) immediately after high school. Everything he (Charlie) could do was self-learned or completely instinctive. Through the late 70s and early 80s, quail become more and more difficult to find so my attention went back to the Beagle and years of hunting the seemingly endless supply of rabbits while

occasionally trekking along with friends in search of quail. Walking all day and finding a single covey was considered a successful day. My beagles and birddogs were special to me in their own way but by old school standards they had to remain working dogs and could not be considered pets in any way.

Other than hunting, their entire life was to be spent in a dog pen with our main interaction being feeding time. Eventually, even rabbit hunting opportunities waned so I gave my last beagle pack to friends who were retired and had time to hunt them much more than I did.

Several years passed and we always had yard dogs for pets but how I longed to have a “hunting dog” once again. Through that period, I focused on Deer and Turkey hunting, those things I could do without a dog, so I thought. My son was in college and purchased a lab puppy. She is a sweetheart and was an incredible duck dog. As the internal longings for a hunting dog of my own burned hotter and hotter, I considered the possibilities of getting a lab. I thought it would be great to have a retriever for ducks and doves as well as a good pet. Almost miraculously, we began seeing and hearing

bobwhite quail on property we deer hunted. I began to wonder if indeed the quail might make a comeback and if that were the case, perhaps I should consider a pointer or setter. Decisions, Decisions. That's when it happened..... My son has a friend whose father was guiding at the time in Kansas. He suggested I look into a creature called a *Deutsch Kurzhaar*. I remember struggling with the pronunciation and even remembering the name. "What the heck is that" I asked.

My research led me to the NADKC website where I spent nearly a year reading about the German testing requirements and gazing at those beautiful pictures of staunch points, retrieves and tracking. I knew that was the dog for me, (us). My wife always supported me on things like this so in this case she said go for it if that was what I wanted. I think my first inquiry was to Kings Crossing, Jörg and Paula Kaltenegger. Upon learning of Kings Crossing location, that same friend in Kansas said he was only a couple hours from there and would gladly go visit them to see what kind of kennel they ran. The report came back of a very professional kennel and in speaking with them, assured me this is world class. After my inquiry but before a down payment would be accepted, I learned I was now the one being investigated. I answered a number of questions regarding how I would care for and train a new pup. How often I would hunt the dog. Whether or not I would participate in the testing program. What kind of space was available for the dog to grow up in? I guess I passed the questioning, because Kings Crossing accepted my deposit. We eagerly awaited the arrival of the pups. The weeks slowly passed and then the big news came of the whelping. Amazingly, the first picture we saw had the pup with the single patch on his left side. As it turned out, we had picked that pup who turned out to be Ivan (Jäger). I believe he was pre-destined by God to be ours. Now the weeks really went slower but after 10 weeks we finally had him home. I scheduled a week off to be with him 24/7 for a bonding period. Bond, we did. We slept on the floor in a sleeping bag together and from that point on, we have been inseparable.



Jager retrieving his first wild rooster in Iowa

That first year we tested in NAVHDA and the Spring Derby, passing both with prize 1. We traveled to Iowa pheasant hunting with close friends. I watched in horror as he ran uncontrollably up a ditch, we had highly anticipated hunting. Roosters and hens scattered only to intensify my embarrassment. During the three-day hunt, Jager managed to find and point several hens but no roosters until the very last walk we did. In the waning moments of our hunt my close friend Dan Bailey shot and killed his first pointed wild rooster.

We tested the following fall in the Solms and passed with a prize 2. This time, I realized I must take the training more serious. Training for the Tests is vital to having a superb hunting dog. After attending a training day in Alabama, I was mentored by some great guys who through patience, showed me many things I was doing wrong. We trained hard for the next VGP, successfully passing with 307 points and a prize 1.

Countless hunts have occurred since that wonderful day Jäger came into our lives. More pheasants, ruffed grouse, woodcock, prairie chickens, bobwhite quail, ducks, doves and deer have been harvested over Jager than I have kept count of. He has proven himself as an accomplished and steady hunter, always communicating to me with his eyes as if to say, *“right over there about 12 feet off my right shoulder”*. He is far more than a hunting dog, He’s my friend and companion.

We now have two more DKs, both females and once again, I am astonished at their abilities. We love our dogs like family, but I am reminded “I’ll only have one - First DK.”