Foxhound Conformation Clinic

Crawley and Horsham Morpeth '05 KAREN MYERS PHOTOS

Heythrop Gangster '00

Blue Ridge Grizzle '06

Results on Page 12

Rank these dog hounds in your order of preference, then turn to page 12 to see how our expert, ***Linda Armbrust, MFH*** *of the Blue Ridge Hunt (VA), judges them in the English Ring.*

PRIOR TO 1973 THE BLUE RIDGE HUNT had mostly Crossbred hounds, but with the mastership of English-born Judy Greenhalgh and her English huntsman, Christopher Howells, they moved slowly towards an all-English pack. The fact that they had at the time only twenty-five couple in kennel and bred only two bitches a year had a great deal to do with their decision, as it was easier to predict what you would get in a litter. Judy imported hounds from many packs in the United Kingdom including the Bicester, South Shropshire, Ledbury, Exmoor, and the North Cotswold.

I became a Joint-Master in 2000, and because of my masterships in England and my fondness for the English hound, I continued to breed them. I believe they suit our country, and I love their biddability as well as their desire to please and to hunt. It helped that our new huntsman, Dennis Downing, was English and preferred them as well. He brought two lovely hounds with him when he came from the Mooreland Hunt (AL)—Croome Glider '95 and Mooreland Gossip '98—both of which we used in our breeding program. Glider went back to Blencathra Glider '76, a fell hound known for his low-scenting ability.

I wanted to breed intelligent, athletic and good-looking hounds of a level type. That was my first challenge: to obtain a level pack My second challenge was the availability of English stallion hounds. As you are aware, there is a scarcity of English packs in North America with great distances in between. Not as in England, where you had the availability of all the best within several hours of driving. Our kennels in Virginia are much closer to packs with English huntsmen than those with English hounds!

My objective was to continue to import good dogs, to go to hound shows to see what was available, and hopefully to breed something that we could use in our own kennel at a later date. In doing this I still had to make sure that the bloodlines "nicked-in" with the bitches and to plan for an out-cross. We have a lot of hounds who go back to Berkeley David '81, Berkeley Freshman '84, Cotswold Glencoyne '84, and Exmoor Daresbury '87, all of whom were outstanding hounds. A number of hounds go back to Old Dominion Gorgeous '97 (American), and many include the well-known Duke of Beaufort's Ranger '90, Daystar '91 and Mostyn '92, which hounds I had the pleasure to hunt behind. All of these are wonderful bloodlines and a firm foundation from which to work and plan. I feel that it is important to select a stallion hound from a pack with a good reputation and where the breeding has depth. This is why continuity in masterships and breeding programs is so important.

I am very fortunate to have some excellent mentors, both in England and here: Martin Scott, ex-MFH, VWH; Nigel Peel, MFH, North Cotswold; Daphne and Marty Wood, MFHs, Live Oak (FL); and so many others who have given me help and advice. I have learned that hunting people are generous, and if you ask, they are willing to help and share their knowledge.

In 2004, I received an outstanding hound from Mr. Peel which he had bred: Mid-Devon Grocer '00 (Heythrop Busby '96 – North Cotswold Grapefruit '95). Grocer was Grand Champion of Bryn Mawr 2004 and won the Stallion Hound with Get at Virginia in 2006. He has produced four great litters for us and put a lot of quality into the pack.