

## Fritz, German Shorthair Pointer

by Rick Hopkins, Georgia



Fritz is out of a litter I bred seven years ago; he was my son Tom's pick. After Fritz took a few trips downtown on his own, Tom realized that intercity Atlanta was not the place for Fritz. He was 11 months old when I got the call: "Dad, Fritz needs to live with you." It was time for the training to begin, and a few months later, the taming of the wild child was complete. Field trial season started when Fritz was a year and a half old; he took a second in his first NSTRA trial and never looked back. After two and a half seasons, he was a 3X NSTRA Champ, placing runner-up in a regional championship and second runner-up out of 196 dogs in the National Dog of the Year Championship. It was obvious that Fritz was a special dog, and it was time to try something different.

Friends said we should run in some AKC trials, so I entered him in his first stake, which was a week after his last NSTRA trial. He took a first in both trials, and the AKC trial was a retrieving stake. The week between trials was used to explain that he had to be a steadier dog. He said he was okay with that.

A little over two months later, Fritz was a Field Champion – wow! What should we do now? Master Hunter was the first thing that came to mind, and Fritz said he was up for that, so we gave it a try. While at a hunt test, Lara and Jimmy Spears said he should finish in the show ring. Lara asked if she could lead him to see how he would move in the ring. Fritz looked like a wild stallion on a lead for the first time, jumping and spinning. When I put him on a lead, it was to take him to the starting line at a field trial, so he was a little excited. Lara snatched his lead a couple of times, and after a short time had him leading like a gentleman. So while I was finishing his MH, Lara was completing his show champion.

Once again, we found ourselves asking, "What next?" While we were giving it some thought, I was told about a water test put on by the German Shorthair Pointer Club of America. Why not? It was a one-day pass-or-fail test. Fritz had never seen a duck, so it sounded great. I entered him in Novice Retrieving Dog and Retrieving

Dog, he passed both, and we headed for home.

After seeing Fritz's love for ducks, the "What next?" question came easy. I checked with NAVHDA to see when they were holding their tests, and the last one in this area for the season was being held in two months. It was time for Fritz and I to rethink his training. He was six years old, some would say it was a little late in life to begin a new career. We decided to take on the challenge. Fritz scored a 194 and received a Utility Prize II. The Prize II brought to mind those famous words spoken by General MacArthur: "I shall return."

Soon after that, I was talking to my friend Chuck Parietti, who owned Fritz's sire, DC/AFC (Odyssey) Sam Saint Max MH. Chuck offered to put an Amateur Field Champion on Fritz. Since I train dogs for a living, I could not compete in amateur trials, so it all made sense. It had been a while since Fritz competed in field trials, but he said, *No problem*. I dropped Fritz off at Chuck and Judy's place in Missouri, and Chuck immediately took him to Oklahoma to hunt wild birds.

Taking Fritz bird hunting is like taking a child to Disney World. Fritz and I had been hunting wild birds in North Dakota, Texas, and Montana since he was a year and a half, so right away the bond between Fritz and Chuck was strong. Well, a month and a half later, he was an AFC; he ran six weekends and took four first placements. It just so happened that the National Amateur Field Trial was being held a couple weeks later. This time, Chuck said, "Why not?" Chuck and Fritz finished runner-up, and, to say the least, we were thrilled. I thanked Chuck and Judy for showing Fritz a good time, and we headed home to Georgia.

All in all, Fritz's full name is: DC/AFC/3XNSTRA CH Gambles Odyssey Fritz MH, RD, VCX, UT PR II. Quite the alphabet soup!

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