

# Gundog Club of S.A. Inc.

## Retrieving Ability Tests for Gundogs and Retrieving Trial For Gundogs

Since Retrieving Ability Tests replaced Gundog Working Tests in 2010 there has only been one "open to all Gundog breeds" test held in South Australia, and that drew just 3 entrants in Open class. In contrast, these tests have become very popular interstate, especially in Victoria. Retrieving Ability Tests for Gundogs (RATGs) give owners the opportunity to demonstrate that their Gundog has basic obedience and basic retrieving skills whilst working to gain recognised titles. They provide a stepping stone to encourage Gundog owners who are involved in obedience to progress into retrieving.

In an attempt to increase awareness of RATGs the Gundog Club held introductory training sessions in association with their obedience classes throughout March and the Retrieving & Field Trial Advisory Committee conducted a well attended session at SACA Park on 25th April. Then, in a break from the usual format of their Retrieving Trial, the Gundog Club conducted Novice and Open RATG tests in conjunction with a Novice Retrieving Trial on Sunday 6th May at Willunga. The fact that the tests drew 17 entries was very encouraging. There were 4 qualifiers in Novice class and 2 in Open.

Lynne Webster, Trial Manager

## Novice Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs

The first Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs (not restricted to Breed) was held on a beautiful Sunday at Willunga. Of the 14 dogs that entered the Novice Trial we had 12 starters. It was great to see so many new faces giving the Retrieving Ability Test a go, which I believe was due to the very successfully Training day held a week or so prior. Several dogs did fantastic Heel work and others understood what Training was needed to improve in this area. Unfortunately 1 dog failed to successfully complete the Heel exercises. We then moved on to the Retrieving Exercises. The first Retrieve was setup in a way that the dogs could clearly see the full flight of the Dummies and the landing area up a slight rise. Several dogs were so keen when they saw the dummy that they went to fetch the dummy before being sent by the handlers. Of the 11 dogs to start Exercise 3 only 7 dogs completed the exercise. Exercise 4 was a little more difficult being downhill from the control point and landing amongst thin cover. There was some slight undulations that put several dogs off, but most dogs kept hunting until they had gone far enough back to find the dummy. Only 1 dog failed to complete the exercise. Congratulations to all competitors that finished the Trial, 4 of which gained Qualifying passes. I would like to Thank everybody for entering under me for my first Judging appointment. A special thank you to Lynne, Jessie and the Gundog Club of SA for inviting me to Judge. I thoroughly enjoyed the day and only hope that the next RATG to be held in SA is not too far away.

Lynette Schmidt, Judge

## Results - Novice RATG

1st **Driftway Perfect Holiday**, Labrador Retriever Bitch, Julie Kradolfer - 82 pts

2nd **Ch Ghostwind Master Piece CD ET**, Weimaraner Dog, Jessie Hughes - 78 pts

3rd **Ch Ghostwind Music Man (AI) ET CD**, Weimaraner Dog, Paul & Loretta Daly - 77 pts

4th **Bournbeau Beguiled By The Moon DWS FS**, Golden Retriever Bitch, Margaret Bourn - 76 pts

## Novice Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs place getters



### Open Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs

There were three dogs entered in the class, one of which had only been with the handler for a short time, while the other two were both experienced teams.

The first exercise, 30 metres heel with three turns, was successfully completed by all three dogs, but the lack of time together by one team became evident on the second exercise where the dog was very unsteady in the stay and did not stop during the recall. As RATG trials are new, and there were only 3 Open dogs, the non-qualifying dog was allowed to continue in the remaining exercises.

The first of the retrieves was a 50 metre Walk-Up. All the dogs handled this very well and were steady when the dummy was launched. Of the two qualifying dogs, one over shot the mark by about 30-40 metres and then came back with a successful retrieve. The dog is an experienced retrieving dog and was probably not expecting such a short retrieve, but unfortunately on the day this happened and it was probably the biggest difference between the two dogs that qualified.

The final exercise was a double mark, with the second mark in water. Very good retrieves over the 70 Metre land retrieve from all of the dogs that demonstrated their keenness and willingness to work.

The water retrieve turned out to be a little easier than intended, the test dummy landed 7-10 metres out in the dam, but the actual retrieve dummies fell a little short and drifted close to the bank so that both of the qualifying dogs were able to retrieve the dummy from the bank, only needing to get their legs wet.

The non-qualifying dog however decided that water was for swimming in and took off from the bank hitting the water about 3 metres out. After swimming in a big circle, she collected the dummy on the way back and successfully delivered it to the handler.

## Open Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs (cont'd)

Thank you to the organisers of the Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs, Jessie Hughes and Lynne Webster, who have put in a lot of time and effort to prepare the RATG. Their efforts were worthwhile, as the event ran very well with no problems. The event finished on schedule so that

the following Retrieving Trial could start on time. The property owners made their paddocks available to us and even moved some cattle to give us more room, so we should send a big thankyou to them. Thanks also to Graeme Allen for bringing the equipment used and for his support in the running of the test.

Hopefully we will see many more RATG events scheduled so that more gundogs can experience the fun of retrieving. The degree of difficulty is less that would be expected in a Retrieving trial, the terrain does not have to be bush country but can be any ground, water is not compulsory; we used it to day because it was there. A RATG event could run successfully with a show at SACA Park so that Gundog breed shows could also demonstrate the natural ability of the gundog, the total enjoyment that the gundog has when hunting, and allow the gundog to be seen in its true environment.

Keith Millington, Judge

### Results - Open RATG

1st **Winterset Mist and Shadow RRD**, Golden Retriever Bitch, Graeme Allen - 92 pts

2nd **Galestorm Time Tracker RRD**, Labrador Retriever Bitch, Ben Kradolfer - 88 pts

3rd **Reveirter Makybediva RRD**, Labrador Retriever Bitch, K & N Eltringham (handler Lynette Schmidt) –NQ



## Novice Retrieving Trial for Gundogs

Only a relatively small field of 6 dogs entered the Novice Stake. The weather was good and because of the openness of the property All sighted marks were easily seen by both dog and handler.

The first run was a short mark of about 40 meters thrown into an open area amongst some thick spear grass. Only 4 of the field of 6 completed this retrieve and the rest got very lost. I was a bit disappointed that some dogs were just not used to running into some heavy cover.

The Second Run, an 70-80m mark thrown from the side of the dam out behind some tall grass/reeds on a small gully. The dogs saw the mark from under a tree and the terrain was quite flat and grassy to the fall. 2 more dogs were eliminated on this run.

The Third run, again a 40-50m mark involved a 15m swim across a corner of the dam. The Bird landed in some light cover at the base of a line of bracken fern. Both remaining dogs completed this retrieve.

1<sup>st</sup> **Driftway Perfect Holiday**, Labrador Retriever Bitch, Julie Kradolfer 144 pts

2<sup>nd</sup> **Bournbeau Beguiled By The Moon DWS FS**, Golden Retriever Bitch, Margaret Bourn 123 pts

It was only the second trial for the season and I expect that the younger/ newer dogs will gain valuable experience from the early trials and start to show much better form as the season progresses.

I would like to Thank Jessie Hughes and Lynne Webster for their work in putting this trial together. It was put on in conjunction with Novice and Open RATG tests and they seemed to work very well together.

Graeme Allen, Judge



Photos  
Lynne Webster