

# A Rabbit Hunters Dream of Owning A Bird Dog

(How it All Began)

I grew up like most boys in North West Ohio; I had a collection of Lego's, Tonka Trucks, and Match Box cars. I also had a love for football and the great outdoors. Like many, I was introduced to the outdoors at a young age by my father. I can still remember my first firearm, a 22 caliber single shot riffle, I was only eight years old and I could only touch it if I had previously obtained permission. There was nothing more that I liked to do than go shooting with my father. Back then I spent most of my time just wishing my father would invite me hunting. Finally when I was 12, one evening when dad picked me up from midget football practice he told me that I had to keep a secret as he took me to a Hunters Safety Course. He quickly followed up by telling me that I had to promise to pass the course, because he didn't know if he could fool mom twice. Every night that week dad and I slipped off directly after football practice to complete the course and learn all that was necessary to get an Ohio Hunting License.

With a hunting license in hand I became a bonified "rabbit hunter". My family never was blessed with an abundant amount of money, so hunting and fishing provided the something extra that was needed when my father was unable to work in the winter. Year after year my father and I would work with beagles and train them to hunt rabbits. We would chase rabbits through the briars, ditches, and fencerows all across the county. Often times we would stumble across a bird hunter who was working his dog in a filed of golden switch grass or CRP. I was always so jealous of bird hunters. They never had to wade through the nastiest of briars, and their dogs stood so silent and proud at attention when on point, similar to a private in the military when a general was walking by. Me on the other hand, I was trekking through pricks, and tangles even an ex-marine would shy from while following a howling beagle. I begged my father time and time again to get permission to have my very own bird dog, but my dad like many others was set in his ways and he would shrug me off saying "We have beagles, we hunt rabbits, that's what we do."

As high school ended and college began I found myself still working and running beagles. By this time I was developing a real dislike for rabbit, and still to this day I can not stand to eat rabbit no matter how it is cooked or prepared. I guess I just got my fill of rabbit in the years past. When I graduated college I quickly started working as an engineer at a local automotive plant. There I met a few guys who I quickly became friends with, and they offered to let me tag along on a bird hunt at a local preserve. After that hunt I was hooked, on pointing dogs and bird hunting. Directly following that outing I once again pled my case with my father, and his direct words were "If you bring a bird dog home you better have a place of your own, because neither of you will be staying here."

Roughly nine months later I bought my first house, and my first German Shorthaired Pointer within three months. After purchasing my pointer I realized I needed to learn how to train my new best friend. I made it a point to read everything I could find on the topic on line, in magazines, and in books. I also watched DVD's, talked to friends, and even joined a training club. I also decided to join my local

chapter of Pheasants Forever in an attempt to network and meet new people with dogs and to get permission to hunt on more land. A year passed and a motion was made to make me the new chapter president, and I still hold the position today.

After training a few months I had my new puppy ready to take him hunting. I did not have to worry about being the guy who is screaming at his dog the entire hunt to get his dog to hunt with him. I knew I didn't want to be that guy. However, I did want to be the guy with a dead broke, steady to wing and shot bird dog, just like the ones you see on television. Pup and I hunted our first year together and learned a lot about one another. As time passed I worked with local trainers to learn tricks and tips while testing my dogs in North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association, (NAVHDA) and AKC Hunt Tests. Once I began testing my dogs I knew that I had worked and earned my very own steady to wing and shot bird dog.

After the first year with my German Shorthaired Pointer I was totally consumed by the breed with their ability to learn quickly and do anything I asked of them. Throughout the years I have had many bird dogs, and I trained them all myself. With my success and love for the breed I decided to start my own German Shorthaired Pointer kennel. I then decided to take my kennel to the World Wide Web with the help from a friend and some self teaching I have had my page up for a couple of years now. Today my kennel, Buckeye Shorthairs ([www.buckeyeshorthairs.com](http://www.buckeyeshorthairs.com)), offers Stud Services, Puppies and started dogs for sale, Pointing Dog Training, Guided Hunts and new this year we are offering training supplies and clothing in our On Line Store. We carry Dan's Hunting Gear (Briar Proof Clothing), M doggies Remote Bird launchers, Hand made Amish Leads and Leashes, as well as Ultra Advantage dog Food. I am focused on keeping my kennel a small family owned kennel with a keen eye on making my dogs and lineage as "perfect" as I can. I am continually working toward one goal, and that is to be the best that my dogs and I possibly can be.

From beagles to bird dogs, that was my dream, and I think I have successfully done it. I have put a considerable amount of time and effort into my kennel and training plans. I have trained many pointing dogs varying in breeds, and as stated above I own and operate my own German Shorthaired Pointer kennel. Now that you know a little about me, please join me in future issues as I discuss tips and antics of bird hunting, dog training, and all other things related. Until next time, remain safe and kind to your neighbor, and maybe I'll see you in the fields of Ohio.