The Big Sky Epagneul Breton Gun Dog Club pulled off another super trial at the famous Hyalite Kennel. As the fourth annual spring trial at the Hyalite Kennel began, all eyes were on the weather as the National Weather Service predicted everything from a winter blizzard to rain. In Montana the weather in the spring is about as predictable as weather. The local saying on the Bench is: “Keep your weather to yourself we have enough of our own” and true to the local saying we got plenty on the first day with winds gust of 40 mph, rain, sleet, hail and even a little snow, but like any good performance the show went on and it was a darn good one regardless of the weather.

The trail secretary was non-other than the proprietor of Copper Spur Kennels Glen Gunderson. The Club and participants owe Glen a load of thanks as he made sure all the entrance fees and associated paperwork were in order. It is a testament to his good management skills that it looked easy, but having worn his shoes, I know it not. Another character that needs mentioning at this spring trial is Ken Bruwelheide club president, field marshal and taxi cab driver who did an excellent job of taking care of arrangements in Montana pre and post trial as well as managing the day to day movement of dogs and handlers sacrificing his own preparedness as he ran dogs both days.

Trial gunners this year were Gary Berger, Keith Castleberry, Butch Nelson, and Pete and Nick Wax. Trial gunners are often an afterthought but no shot bird trial can be run without them and they are the work horses walking as many or more miles than the judges. And while on the topic of judges, ours this weekend were the Honorable Anne Johnson and Sherry Niesar. Second only to the Gunners in miles walked is the field trial photographer and ours was the beautiful Fatmi Anders.
Lastly, this event would have never occurred without the gracious and generous hospitality of Karen Paugh and Butch Nelson who this year, as in every previous year, opened their home and extended their special brand of hospitality to make this trial a success. It is hard to put enough emphases in the “Thank You” these two deserve as they turned over their yard, home and rental property to participants, cooked all the meals, transported and planted all the birds and provided advice and solace for the price of asking. There simply is no finer example of Montana hospitality than Butch and Karen.

I am sure that there are individuals not mentioned who added a significant piece to the puzzle that is the Hyalite Spring Field Trial and to him or her I beg forgiveness but it is time to address the results of the event.

SATURDAY APRIL 28TH 2012 RESULTS

Open Solo (Honorable Ann Johnson Adjudicating):

Our First Place dog was GrCHF CH Topperlyn Fontay Azure Bo “Azure” owned and handled by Glen Gunderson. Azure drew field 4 which begins as a gentle sloping hayfield that enters headfirst into the gale force wind and driven sleet. At about 300 yards the field curves around an old fence post and continues on equidistance between a hogback ridge to the north and a butte line to the south. Finding no birds at approximately the half way mark Azure threw caution to the wind, turned her power on and went in search of something to point. At 11.5 minutes easily 200 meters out she makes scent and another 75 meters into the wind she pins her first and only bird. The find is at the very southwest edge of her field on a bird that had obviously flown from the original release sight. Many intense minutes passed as the handler, gunners and judge made their way up the edge of the butte but Azure stood like a statue until sent for the retrieve which she scooped up and delivered softly to hand in the manner of a Grand Champion of the Field.

A Gunners Award was given to Helen Wax for her expert handling of CHF Zeus’ Ebony Leaps A Lot. This was Helen’s trial debut and Zeus handled well for her, found his bird at approximately 6 minutes, handled the sequence but on return from the retrieve became confused and refused to deliver. While Zeus was disqualified, Helen received the Gunners Award for the best handler of the day.

No Reserve or Pass-With-Honor Open dogs.

Open Running Order

1) GUN Vespers Belle Du Hunrunr, owned and handled by Sherry Niesar. Belle put on an energetic run for the gunners, found her bird and gave a nice point. She re-
received a call back but was not able to stay through fall.
1) GUN Utica Sky Montana “Blaise” handled by Gary Berger. Blaise had a good run but the wind was the victor and he did not find a bird.
2) GUN Ambra du Hyalite (Daisy) owned and handled by Ken Bruwelheide. Daisy ran through the field with power and purpose. She found her first bird at 4 minutes and between the wind and early season went a little early.
3) Topperlyn Fonzie owned and handled by Lynda Kieres. Fonzie made a very methodical run and a beautiful point but the nasty bobwhite pulled him just a second too soon.
4) CHF CH Topperlyn Fontay Azure Bo, owned and handled by Glen Gunderson (mentioned).
5) CHF Zeus’ Ebony Leaps A lot, Owned by Peter Wax and handled by Helen Wax (mentioned).
6) TR Topperlyn D’Artagnan “Dart” owned and handled by Lynda Kieres. Dart handled well for Lynda but it was not Dart’s day.
7) GUN Solo (Honorable Sherry Niesar Adjudicating):

Our First Place GUN dog is HUNT Tess Des Par-Dessus-Par owned and handled by Keith Castleberry. Tess drew field 4 in the afternoon and made the most of it. While small in stature she hunted like a big open dog and covered the ground with an energetic display of orange and white. Near the end of the field and with time dwindling, she stylishly pointed towards a bush nested tightly in a steep crease. As the gunners approached a pair of sharptail grouse rose issuing their characteristic put-put-put as they slowly made their way into the hard wind. Tess’ only recognition of the flight is slight shift to her head but her feet stayed firmly planted. As the gunners made their final approach the quail flushed up the hill requiring a delay in the shot but again Tess was up to the requirements and held until fall and then made a nice retrieve to hand.

We had three pass dogs this day. Our first pass dog was GUN Baron Maquis De L’Escarbot owned and handled by Jim Anders. Maquis drew field 1 and handled it in business-like manner with a staunch point at 12 minutes. He was a pretty picture on point but leaving a hair before the gun earned him a pass.

The second pass dog was Unite de Plum Creek “Foxy” owned and handled by Nick Wax. Foxy drew field 3 which began in a hayfield then climbed onto a drumlin that runs with the wind. Foxy found and pointed two Mr. Whites. The first bird was flushed back and over with no shot and she held through the entire sequence. The second bird was
shot and retrieved to hand but she left just a hair too early to be placed.

Our third pass was GUN Smith’s Falon Du Copper Spur owned and handled by Glen Gunderson. Falon’s run was so swift and powerful that it was hard to follow. Her first bird was high on the face of a wind-swept ridge. The bird went with the wind and was downed by some miracle and she made a nice retrieve. Her second bird was pointed on the flats in full view of the vehicle gallery. Again Fallon was staunch and retrieved well but leaving before the gun kept her out of placement.

**GUN Running Order**

1) Gun Baron Marquis de L’Escarbot owned and handled by Jim Anders (mentioned).

2) Falasise Francesca du Hyalite “Frankie” owned and handled by Keith Castleberry. Frankie had more style and grace than she knew what to do with. Keith had only 2 weeks to prepare this dog, but it was clear they communicated well in the field and were going to have much fun as a hunting team in the years to come. Frankie found a bob white on a nice cast but was too tempted by the sweet aromas of bird to stay on point for long flushing the bird. Frankie did earn a TAN during her run.

3) Ardennes Griffendorff du Hyalite owned by Larry Jent and handled by Butch. Griff as always is a pleasure to watch. He is a good-looking tri-color with lots of drive and energy and drive. This dog showed a lot of style but went with the bird when the gunner flushed it.

4) HUNT Unite de Plum Creek owned and handled by Nicholas Wax (mentioned).

5) Cassandra du Hyalite owned and handled by Ken Bruwelheide. Cassie is what any hunter would desire as she is light on her feet and hunts with a high head that gets higher on point. She found her first bird at the 4 minute mark, remained staunch, went after the flush and retrieved to hand. Her second bird was found quickly afterwards and the walking bobby was too much and off to the races she went. “Who would want anything less?”

6) HUNT Tess Par-Dessus-Par own and handled by Keith Castleberry (mentioned).

7) Fuzzy Peachpuff du Hyalite owned and handled by Butch Nelson. This fast orange and white dog performed an outstanding search but was not staunch for the gunners.

8) HUNT Jean-Luc du Pure Point owned and handled by Jim

**Awards on Sunday**
Anders. Jean-Luc’s run is remembered for the miserable weather rain and wind. He found his first bird about half way through the run but it was not shot. On release he found a second bird and not waiting for the gunner retrieved it.

9) GUN Smith’s Falon du Copper Spur owned and handled by Glen Gunderson (mentioned).

Extra Small “Tiny” owned by Brian King and handled by Butch Nelson. Tiny had a nice run finding her bird high in a patch of glacial lilies and yucca. Tiny who is always dependably staunch decided he wanted that bird more than anything else and proved even the most staunch pup can come a little unglued in a bird trial.

10) Alvin Gnat de Pataula owned and handled by Lorene Marchinek. This big brown and white Breton had a nice cast but was not staunch enough for a ribbon.

**TAN (Honorable Ann Johnson Adjudicating):**

1) Smith’s Zipper Tic (Zip) Owned by Pat Freeland had a nice run covering the field, locating and pointing the quail and showing no gun sensitivity - PASS.

2) Fiona De Canon Colline (Fi) handled by Anna Platt ran an intelligent search and pointed the bird with no gun sensitivity - PASS.

3) Topperlyn Galieleo de Montana (Leo). Leo had a nice run but did not point today.

**SUNDAY APRIL 29th 2012 RESULTS**

After the stormy Saturday, the clearing Montana sky on Sunday was a welcome sight. With a view of the recently snow christened Highwood Mountains we started the day.

**Open Solo (Honorable Sherry Niesar Adjudicating):**

Our first place dog on Sunday is GrCHF CH Topperlyn Fontay Azure Bo (Azure) owned and handled by Glen Gunderson. Scenting conditions being much improved from the previous day, Azure covered the field with wide casts pointing a quail near the end of her run. She was steady and gave a nice retrieve to Gunderson, earning first place in the Open Division.

Our pass dog in was NBOB, GrCHF, GrCH Topperlyn Gallant Bodacious (Leo). Leo handled his bird well but hung up a bit on the retrieve, earning a Pass.

**Open Running Order**
1) Topperlyn Fonzie handled by Lynda Kieres. Fonzie had a nice cast, found his bird, but was not steady through the flush.

2) NBOB, GrCHF, GrCH Topperlyn Gallant Bodacious owned by Anne Johnson and handled Glen Gunderson (mentioned).

3) CHF Zeus Ebony Leaps A owned and handled by Peter Wax. Zeus was the only dog this day to find three birds. First bird was shot followed with a nice retrieve. The second bird was a stop to flush on downwind cast and his third bird was lightly hit resulting in a long fall. Zeus was sent to retrieve but found no bird.

4) TR CH Topperlyn D’Artagnan “Dart” owned and handled by Lynda Kieres. At the beginning of Dart’s run he made wide casts, first to the south and then to the north up and down hills – beautiful to watch. After an intelligent northward swing, he returned to check in with Lynda with a half dozen porcupine quills in his nose. The clock was stopped to allow Dart and Lynda time to regroup. Quickly following the porcupine incident Dart made a very stylish point but the gunners could not locate the bird. On the reposition, the bird flushed and Dart followed.

5) CHF CH Topperlyn Fontay Azure Bo, owned and handled by Glen Gunderson (mentioned)

6) Utica Sky Montana “Blaise” owned and handled by Gary Berger. Rounding out the field was Blaise. This dog had a nice run but was undone by the lingering scent of wild sharptail grouse.

Lynda Kieres with Fonzie

Our first place dog was HUNT Jean-Luc du Pure Point owned and handled by Jim Anders. Jean-Luc had an Open class run, pointing, and retrieving two quail. While retrieving his second bobwhite, a rattlesnake made his presence known but it never sidetracked Jean-Luc. Jean Luc earned a 1st place in Gun Division.

Our pass dog was Unite de Plum Creek “Foxy” owned and handled by Nick Wax. Foxy found, pointed, held and retrieved to hand only one bird earning her a pass.

GUN Solo (Honorable Ann Johnson Adjudicating):

GUN Running Order
1) Extra Small “Tiny” owned by Brian King and handled by Butch Nelson. Tiny found a bird at about the 3 minute mark and held almost long enough but not quite.

2) Ardennes Griffendorff du Hyalite “Griff” owned by Larry Jent and handled by Butch Nelson. Griff was done in by circumstance. He found a bird in seconds after being release. The gunner made a miscalculation of the bird’s location and probably contributed to Griff breaking with flush. The bird

Ken Bruwelheide awaiting instructions from Judge Anne Johnson
was then missed twice and Griff was off to the races with Butch slowly following.

3) Cassandra du Hyalite “Cassie” owned and handled by Ken Bruwelheide. Cassie gave an effortless run and a beautiful find but was unable to hold staunch for a ribbon.

4) HUNT Jean-Luc du Pure Point owned and handled by Jim Anders (mentioned).

5) GUN Smith’s Falon du Copper Spur owned and handled by Glen Gunderson. Falon ran a fast course but was not staunch.

6) HUNT Unite de Plum Creek owned and Handled by Nicholas Wax (mentioned)

7) GUN Baron Maquis de L’Escarbot “Maquis” owned and handled by Jim Anders was the last dog of the day. His run was purposeful but the dog was not steady enough to collect a ribbon.

The trial was a test of weather, clothing, handlers, training and dogs. The grounds as always were exceptional but not anymore exceptional than our hosts, Karen Paugh and Butch Nelson. Old friendships were renewed and new friendships were made during the trial and social hours. If you have never attended this trial, put it on your calendar for next year. It is a treat for the eyes, with vistas only Montana can offer, sharptail grouse dancing, sandhill cranes setting up nests for their brood and the spring flowers that thrive in the harsh gumbo soils of the bench. Oh, and don’t forget to bring your dog!