

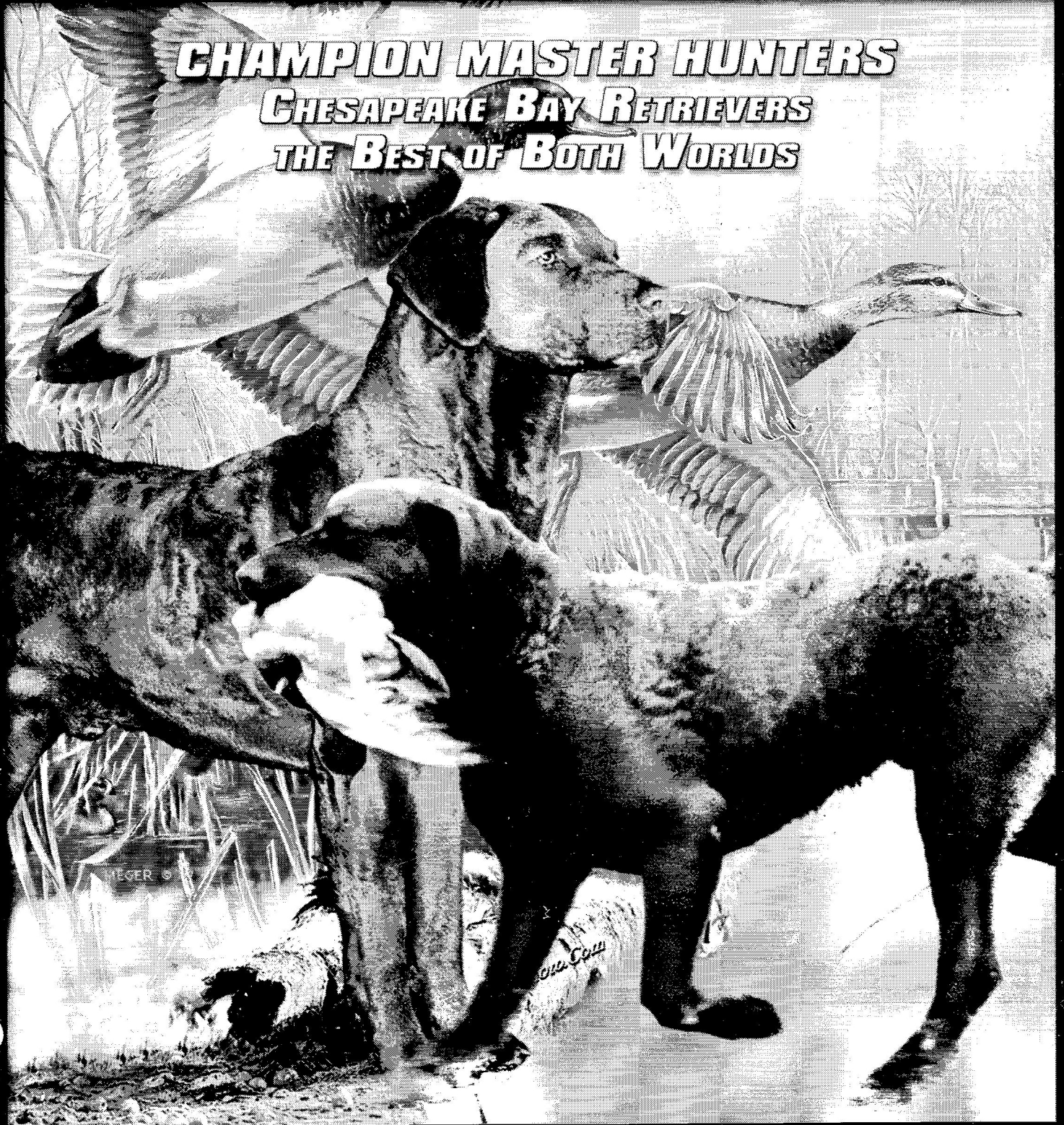
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CHAMPION MASTER HUNTERS CHESAPEAKE BAY RETRIEVERS THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS



CHESAPEAKE BAY RETRIEVER CHAMPION / MASTER HUNTERS

By Alan Luthy

By no means can every Chesapeake become a Champion or a Master Hunter. However, with the right dog one can earn both titles. The most expeditious (and probably the cheapest) way to get both titles is to use professional handlers and trainers, but it will be much more satisfying if you do it yourself. That requires networking with local enthusiasts in each discipline, attending classes and seminars taught by experts, studying books and videotapes, devoting much of your free time for several years, and spending literally thousands of dollars in entries and travel expenses. Go for it!

Chances are your Chesapeake will be competitive in one sport before it is ready to compete seriously in the other one. It is possible though to train to campaign a Chesapeake concurrently in field and hunt test events. My wife and I have done this on a number of occasions, but it isn't easy. Training and running a dog at the Master level requires a significant commitment of time just about every day. Showing a CBR doesn't require nearly the same time commitment, but doing both at the same time can be overwhelming. Hunt tests and shows typically occur during the same times of the year in much of the country. That can put you out on the road weekend after weekend, to the point of exhaustion. It really helps to have a spouse that is just as crazy about dog pursuits as you are, or at least one who is very forgiving of your hobby.

Obviously, there is always the possibility that the dog will suffer a field training injury that could adversely affect its movement in the show ring or even end the dog's show career. This might well convince you to try to complete a dog's championship before getting serious about field work. That approach certainly sacrifices part of the dog's field career. More importantly, it is best to establish a pattern of sound habits early on in a field dog. This is much easier to do when sound and consistent training begins at a young age. A compromise may be to focus primarily on obedience, handling drills, and water retrieves with a young show prospect, thereby avoiding the more severe orthopedic stresses entailed in running numerous marks on land until after the dog is well on the way to becoming a finished champion.

The swimming entailed in retriever training seems to help the appearance of a CBR's coat. However, the physical conditioning inherent in training for higher-level fieldwork does not really work in your favor in the show ring. Dog show

CH KATMAI CHUGACH SPLENDOR MH*** "Katmai"

(CH Krogstadt's Edgewater Flyer
JH x Megster of Watertown) Born:
12-23-1996, Owned, treasured,
and loved by Michael C. Vogel

Master Hunter August 1999
CH August 2002

Katmai is my first dog and the fourth Chessie bitch ever to be CH/MH/QAA. She was originally obtained to be my hunting dog. When she was 1 year old, somebody took me to a hunt test. Little did I know the chain of events that would be set off by that event. I started to train her and being a complete novice, did not know what I was doing. Books and people helped, but we still made lots of mistakes. On top of that, Alaskan winters are not very conducive to dog training. Despite the major adversity of having a novice trainer and weather, Katmai advanced, she got her SH at age 2, her MH at age 3 and became Qualified All Age at age 3. Becoming QAA was quite an accomplishment for the first time she saw a white coat was when she was 3! She achieved her show title when she was 6 years, and did very well that year in the ring, obtaining Best of Breed twice. There is absolutely no comparison between the amount of work and training required for the show title versus a MH. The MH requires far more work, talent, aptitude, and tractability on the dog's part. Teaching a Chessie to handle, especially at the MH and field trial level, does not come easy. Handling has to override their strong natural instincts, and this was quite the challenge for us but with a lot of time, perseverance, and yes, some electricity, we overcame. Eventually, Katmai became an excellent handling dog and could run a very good blind. Katmai is a fabulous hunting dog and has hunted every season since she was 9 months old. She has hunted ducks, geese, pheasants, chukar, quail, grouse, and partridge. Her specialty is finding the wounded duck, but is a proficient upland bird hunter as well.

There are quite a number of people who influenced Katmai's and my life and I wish to express deep appreciation to all of them. Of special note are Marge Bakken, Betsy McCracken, Ron Stanek, Jill Gawry's and Lynda Barbor-Wiltse. I have indeed been very blessed and am grateful to have such a wonderful animal.

Michael C. Vogel

