

SPINONE ISN'T THAT A NEW TYPE OF SPAGHETTI?

BY JOE KRAEMER

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Looking at the coat and size of both, that is not a stretch. Finally, another camp has the Spinone as an offshoot of a Griffon breeding program. This sits well with the Celtic theory. I tend to believe in the Griffon theory. Both dogs have similar thick hair and are slow moving in the field, though the Spinone is much larger.

At the turn of the century in the spaniel world, a litter could have both

Actually, the Italian Spinone is many times called the spaghetti dog or spaghetti pointer. The Spinone is one of two Italian bird dogs. The other Italian bird dog is the Spinone's cousin the Bracco Italiano. The Spinone gets its name from a thorny Italian bush called the Pino-ne which could only be hunted by thick skinned dogs. The best comparison I have to the Spinone is comparing it to a gentle colt. They are large, in fact one of the largest of bird dogs. They are very slow and easy going. And if you get tired in the field, you can always ride them back to the truck.

that the Celts settled they brought their dogs. It is felt the Celts created the lineage for the griffons of France, Hungary and Germany, the Wolfhounds of Ireland, possibly the German Wirehair and several lesser known breeds.

There is another camp that believes the Spinone is descended from the Russian Pointer. There is also talk of blood from the largest of all breeds: Irish Wolf Hound in the Spinone genes.



Photo by Jonathan Paranjothy the Spinone went through a similar fate.

cockers and springers in it. The cockers were the small pups and the springers the large pups. Perhaps

The Spinone is one of the old world dog breeds. The Spinone resembles both the German Wirehair and the Griffon. A REALLY big Griffon. In fact, it is also referred to as the Italian Griffon. There are many arguments about the origin of the Spinone. Some say its roots can be traced back to 100-300 A.D. during Roman times.

Others claim it may have descended from the Italian Segugio hound or the common ancestor to most bird dog breeds, the now extinct Spanish Pointer.

Another theory is that dog was a creation of the Celts of Great Britain. The Celts are known for their rough-coated dogs. In about 200 B.C. the Celts were crossing the English Channel and were trading on the river routes of northern Europe. Everywhere throughout Europe



Photo by Kevin McGrew, Duluth, MN

The Spinone is a versatile hunting dog. It therefore is tested where all versatile dogs are tested, in NAVHDA (North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association). The Spinone as with other versatile breeds is a capable upland and waterfowl pointer and retriever, another all purpose dog.

Though the Spinone is slow in speed, they are not slow in mind. They are very intelligent and take easily to obedience and field training. They are very social and family oriented dogs. They are known for the strong bond between hunter and dog. Though they are large they do not do well in a nonsocial kennel environment. So glue down the ashtrays and bring them in the house.

The breed standard calls for a dog 23-27" tall for males, females 22-26". They are about as tall as a Weimaraner. They should

weigh 71-82 lbs for males and 62-66 for females. The composition should be square from the side view. Their hair should be 1.5 - 2.5 inches in length. The hair should be straight hard and dense. The Spinone comes in four colors: pure white, white with orange markings, orange roan and brown roan. The tail is docked similar to



Photo by Kevin McGrew, Duluth, MN

a shorthair. The most desirable color is the brown that is in a monks habit. They should easily take to cold water and brambles. And retrieve to hand naturally.

They can be registered with the AKC as a Miscellaneous class. The breed has never caught on with large numbers. The devastation that happened in Italy during World War II definitely hurt the breed. But also breeds excelled in the U.S. because they won field trials. Field trials are won by dogs that work like sports cars covering massive acreages in little time. Brittanys, Pointers and Shorthairs excelled at field trials, the slow moving methodical Spinone didn't stand a chance.

Spinone are slow methodical hunters. As the scent strengthens they slowly move in on their game. This is unlike other breeds who will break full stride to lock up on point.

The nose of the Spinone is not designed for open country quail or partridge. It is better suited for pheasant, grouse and woodcock. They are close working dogs.

Having hound in its gene pool

they are also excellent trackers. This tracking ability was used during World War II. The German's all used a similar boot polish. The Spinone was used to track down Germans patrols by scenting their boots.

Spinone are not for everyone. If kept in the house, which this very social dog prefers, their large size can cause problems. Left

alone during extended times they can become destructive. If treated as a member of the family their antics can be matched only by an otter. Is your yard Spinone proofed? They are excellent at the big dig.

They also have beards which can make them messy around the house. And they are prone to ear infections.

Spinoni are very sensitive dogs. They need human contact. Being a large dog, they are slow to maturity, in fact it wouldn't hurt to leave a pup with the litter past seven weeks. One nice thing is the dogs are not known for their barking.

Their long hair does require a little maintenance. Though they groom themselves. The dead hair should be stripped (removed) weekly. Stripping is



Photo by Jonathan Paranjothy

www.Bird-Dog-News.com more important than brushing.

There are not a lot of Spinone in this country so they can be hard to find. Look for a registered litter with NAVHDA registrations. This will guarantee the parents will be tested and should give you a hip guarantee.

I have added few contact numbers that will help you find a dog. John Channon is president of the Spinone Club of America, Warsaw, VA 804-333-0309. Pat Fendley is president of the American Spinone

Club, Crestwood, KY, 502-241-9852. For a midwest contact, call Kevin McGrew, Duluth, MN 218-728-0059. Kevin also has a very good Spinone



Photo by Jonathan Paranjothy

internet web site. The web site address is www.css.edu/users/km-cgrew/spinone.html Another nice Spinone web site is located at www.cta.it:80/aziende/enci/razze/spinone/spin_en2.htm

So if you are slowing down, and aren't we all, and want an easy going dog to work behind you might think about giving the Spinone a try. Worse case you can always use them for neighborhood pony rides.



Photo by Kevin McGrew, Duluth, MN



Windy City's Kojack Spinone

Katelyn's Best Buddy

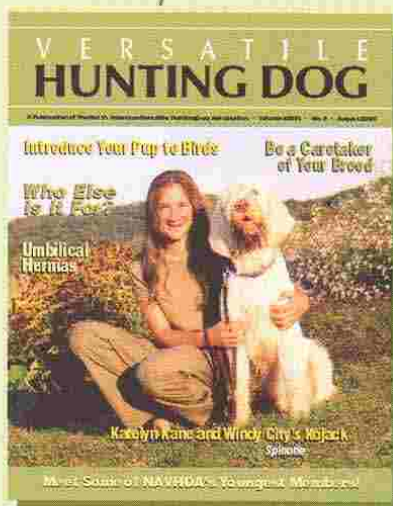
Our story about Kojack is more than a little complicated. My daughter, Katelyn, who is now 13, had been begging for a new puppy for more than two years, but I was hesitant – no, resistant to the thought of adding another dog to the zoo we already had going. With Duke, a Bouvier, Terra, a large mixed breed, and Sam, a Newfoundland, all living in one small house I just couldn't think about adding a puppy to the mix. I knew that I was on borrowed time, though. Duke was 17 years old, and Terra was 15. It wasn't long before the inevitable happened and we lost both to old age. The losses were hard on all of us, including Sam.

Kate has been very active in the Rock County 4-H dog obedience program for over five years, and was diligent about working with Sam. But Sam also has his troubles. Bad hips are common with Newfoundlands, and after his breeder saw his x-rays, he was slated to be put down. Fortunately, the vet felt that Sam could still be a great pet and decided to offer him to us as a rescue. Sam and Kate won the Rock County 4-H competition, and then achieved first place in the Novice Division of the Wisconsin State 4-H competition. Sam's desire to work for Kate remains strong, even now, but with his bad hips he just could not compete any longer.

The pressure from Kate and Diane, her mom, grew more intense. I was floundering for excuses not to get a puppy. Kate and Diane arranged lots of short trips that all seemed to include a stop at someone's home to look at this breed or that. Our commute to and from work was a deluge of the advantages of this dog breed compared to that type of dog, but I remained firm.

Then it happened. Kate started talking about wanting to try something new. She had been talking with Don, her 4-H instructor, and he suggested investigating the Italian spinone. Kate and Diane introduced the idea with the inducement of a new hunting opportunity. My weakness had been exploited. I love to hunt, but my job (ironically in the field of conservation) leaves little free time for enjoying the natural resources I have spent my life trying to conserve. Now I was being twisted into the scheme of getting a new puppy under the guise that this would afford me a new hunting opportunity, as well as involving my daughter who had never before expressed any interest in hunting. I was sucked deeper into this mire of dialogue as Kate described a logical progression of training her dog for both 4-H and the new challenge of fieldwork. I mulled it over in a glassy-eyed haze as visions of tramping through tall grass prairie on a crisp fall day floated through my mind. I snapped back to reality as Don stepped up after dog class one evening to ask me if Kate had run the idea of a spinone past me yet. His enthusiasm for the breed ended with a forlorn comment about the rarity of the breed in the states.

Shortly after that discussion, Diane and I spent our anniversary, as we always do, at the Kishwaukee Chapter Pheasants Forever Banquet. It has become our tradition to purchase our anniversary gift at the auction and this evening was no exception. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources Conservation Officers had donated a set of prints with a common print number to the auction. Our bid was successful, and we purchased the print we wanted. I didn't know the



person bidding against us, but he purchased the other two prints from the set. At the end of the evening, we picked up our print and visited with a few other folks when I noticed the word spinone on the shirt of the man we had been bidding against. I walked over and we started talking about the print. I soon directed our conversation to the word on his shirt. And this was my first introduction to Jonathan Paranjothy.

We took a tour of his kennel, Windy City Spinone, and arrangements were soon made to purchase a puppy. Kate began reading about versatile hunting dogs, starting with some books supplied by Jonathan. She immersed herself in the books and did some additional research on-line.

Jonathan stressed the importance that his dogs be hunted. Kate's interest grew, and soon we were out practicing with sporting clays and making arrangements for a hunter safety course. Kojack came as a bit of a surprise as some unusual circumstances developed; he was offered to us as a six-month-old instead of a new puppy. I think the arrangement has been bliss for all of us. Kojack has the perfect blend of personality, ambition, and hunting drive. Kate works with Kojack nearly every day. There are still lots of conflicts to balance between work and the various outdoor activities we enjoy, but I have crossed out of that glassy-eyed, foggy haze and stepped into the real thing.

Jonathan has become a good friend. He has an unselfish devotion to helping others gain success with their dogs. Everyone who purchases one of his dogs is offered the same opportunities to drop by and work their dogs at his place. Jonathan introduced us to NAVHDA and we joined the Wisconsin River Chapter. He constantly stresses the need to stay involved with the activities offered through this affiliation. Our whole family looks forward to reading the new issues of *Versatile Hunting Dog*.

Windy City's Kojack was quick to become Katelyn's best buddy. They are pictured here in a photo by Jean Reece following their participation in the NAVHDA Natural Ability test held on September 11, 2004 organized by the Wisconsin River Chapter.

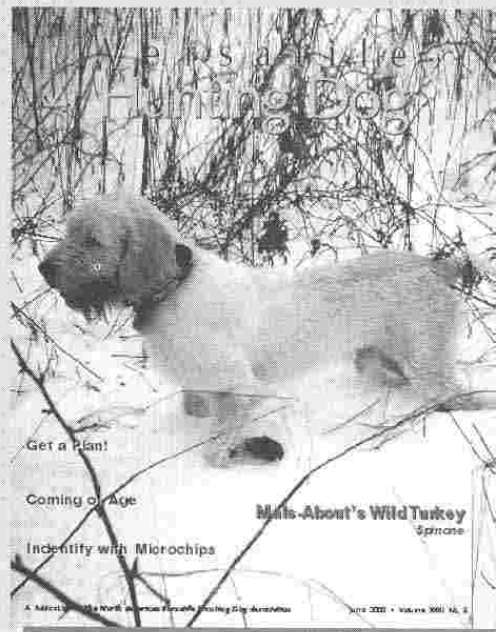
We had a great day, and as first-timers, I was immensely impressed with how well the event was organized and run. Everyone offered Kate encouragement and tips about how to work with Kojack. And Kojack, well he just did what his kind does, and received a Prize II with 92 points for his day's work.

Kojack is more than a welcome addition to our family; even Sam will join him in occasional playful banter. Kate and I are still beginners with lots of kinks to work out when it comes to bird hunting, and training a versatile hunting dog, but we've become closer and more engaged with each other as a result of this choice; and to me, every moment shared is a treasure.

Editor's Note: Since Katelyn's and Kojack's Natural Ability Test, they have garnered two titles in 4-H Obedience: First place in the Novice Obedience Class and Reserve Grand Champion in Off-Lead Heeling. This qualifies them for the Wisconsin State Fair where they will be competing in three different obedience classes. We wish them the best of luck in their latest challenge.



Mals-About's Wild Turkey Spinone



T-Bird is the youngest of my three Spinoni. He joined the family (Guido, Sophie and myself) in March of 1996. I got him from Ron Stanerson in Morengo, Iowa. Ron had run him in a Natural Ability test achieved a Prize III.

Ron is responsible for introducing me to NAVHDA as well as being my training and hunting partner. I was looking for a dog to train and run in the Utility test and Ron felt that we would make a good team. T-Bird not only became part of the family but exceeded all of my expectations, who together with Guido, my 10 year old, went on countless hunting trips - from grouse and woodcock hunting in the UP of Michigan with my buddy Jerry, waterfowl hunting in North Dakota with Don, my other NAVHDA training partner, to pheasant and quail hunting in Iowa and Illinois.

As you can see from the picture, we hunt in all weather conditions. This day happened to be a cold winter day after a four-inch snow fall. I was hunting with my co-workers, Dan and Mike, when T-Bird's beeper went off indicating he was on point. All three of us converged on the beeper and sure enough, he was on point. Since we all had guns and everybody knows that I am no threat to a flying pheasant, I decided to take a photo of him. As I approached the dog, the bird must have started to move. T-Bird, however, stayed in place, allowing me to take the picture. I was putting my camera away when I heard shots. I assumed the bird had flushed and I knew that it had to be dead, I looked down and T-Bird was still standing there. I yelled fetch and he was off to the races returning with the rooster in his mouth. I knew right then and there that all the genetics, training and testing had paid off.

It had taken me several Utility tests to prize with T-Bird, but when he got a 181 Prize II and a 186 Prize II within two weeks of each other I know he has it in him to get a Prize I, and so we keep training.

I want to thank everyone who has helped me along the way, especially my friends in the Hawkeye Chapter as well as Ed and the Illinois Chapter. From guiding kids in the youth hunt to hunting in freezing weather T-Bird is always willing to give 100%. He is truly my friend and partner.