



Boomer Writes the History Books!

**FC-AFC; Can FTCH-AFTCH, OTCH TNT's
Explosion UD, FDHF; Can WCX, OBHF, FDHF**

by Janice Gunn

"Boomer" has made history for our breed by being the first Golden Retriever to earn all four field trial championship titles – FC-AFC; Can FTCH-AFTCH.

This is a huge accomplishment for any field dog, and a first for a Golden. Boomer is also an accomplished competition obedience dog having earned his Canadian OTCH and American UD titles with multi High in Trials, and scores of 199. To date Boomer has accumulated 90 All-Age points (Am-Can combined).

He is a member of both the Field and Obedience Hall of Fame and a U.S. Amateur National Finalist. Every title Boomer achieved in Canada he has duplicated in the United States. We adore and appreciate this 10½-year-old Golden achiever.

In 1995 I was the proud owner of my first Golden Retriever, "Indy" who was two years old. Her pedigree was laced with talented competition obedience dogs, and she excelled at that. I did some WC field training with her and started to become hooked on the sport. She went on to become an OTCH-MH. During our journey I met my husband-to-be, John Gunn. I was enjoying the field work, and wanted a pedigree with more field power. John assured me that field trial dogs could also be great competition obedience dogs, so I started to study field pedigrees, and was watching Golden Retriever results in both the *GRNews* and *RFTN*.

I had my eye on the high point Derby Golden bitch, Mo's Fartogo Speedy Peach JH, WCX***, OD, owned by Jim & Kathy Pickering. I had nothing to lose, so I made a phone call to the Pickerings to see if they had plans to breed "Peach." A breeding with Peach and Wraith's Duncan MH***, OS had just taken place. They hadn't yet started to form a solid waiting list, but Kathy made it very clear that there was a huge amount of interest in this breeding. I was not surprised! Kathy suggested I put something in writing and send it to them. I know Jim will never forget the spectacular

resume that I made on John and myself. The amount of time I spent on the resume with the intent to make an impression on the Pickerings paid off, and we were put high on the list for a male puppy.

Boomer flew to us from Texas at seven weeks old. The day he was supposed to fly to Seattle, a nasty winter storm came in and closed the I-5 freeway. Fortunately, I was able to catch Jim before he headed to the airport, and we set up the flight for the next day. The storm had come and gone, and I headed off to Seattle. I was told that the plane had arrived, and the puppy was on his way to cargo. However, they somehow lost Boomer for over two hours! On the down side it caused me great stress and worry – on the plus side, it gave the cargo crew time to change my flat tire! I did not want to call the Pickering's until I had Boomer safe in my arms. I'm not sure a phone call stating, "They've lost the puppy," was going to comfort them! Finally they located Boomer safe and sound. I immediately got on the phone to Texas. Kathy answered, and said Jim was pulling his hair out wondering why I hadn't phoned yet. Raising the kids was far easier than this puppy stuff!

When I opened the crate and saw Boomer for the first time, it was a sight I will never forget. He was the most gorgeous, fluffy blonde puppy I had ever seen. I couldn't wait to get him home to meet John. When Boomer came strutting in the house, John lay down on the floor and Boomer walked all over him from head to toe. I wonder if that is why to this day, when Boomer cuddles, he walks on top of you, sits on top of you, and crushes his body against yours. His way of hugging is exhausting! John would give Boomer tons of puppy massages that he loved. If you ask Boomer if he wants a massage, he will immediately assume the position and wait for the magic hands to approach! Boomer is an affectionate boy, with a wonderful, easy-going temperament.



Top: The Gunns honeymooned down the Oregon Coast in 1996. John is pictured holding four-month-old baby Boomer.



Right: A handsome youngster; Boomer at one year of age.

When Boomer was four months old, John and I were married. For our honeymoon we packed up our six dogs and headed down the Oregon Coast.

The rain was relentless. I was not enjoying the strong winds and sideways rain, but all John would say was, "Isn't it just gorgeous! I love this weather!" So we would put on the rain gear, and hit the beach with the dogs. The good part was we had the beach completely to ourselves! The Oregon Coast led us to a field trial circuit in California, which was my first of many to follow.

AFC Holway Barty, OS
 NAFC, FC Topbrass Cotton, OS, FDHF
 CH. Sunstream Gypsy Of Topbrass, OD

Wraith's Duncan MH*, OS**

AFC Yankee's Smoke'n Red Devil, OS
 Emberain Lady Nell CD***, OD

Splashdown Emberain Aubrey UD, MH***, OD
FC-AFC; Can FTCH-AFTCH, OTCH TNT's Explosion UD, FDHF; Can WCX, FDHF, OBHF

Whelped: October 20, 1995; Breeders: Jim & Kathy Pickering

Owners: John & Janice Gunn, Abbotsford, BC, Canada

AFC Yankee's Smoke'n Red Devil, OS
 FC-AFC Windbreakers Mighty Mo, OS, FDHF
 FC Windbreakers Razzmatazz, OD

Mo's FarToGo Speedy Peach JH*, WCX, OD**

FC-AFC Tangelo's Side Kick, OS, FDHF
 HRCH Wasatch's Desert Jasmine MH, OD
 Windbreakers Desert Dust***, OD



Top: The team celebrates after becoming Finalists at the 2003 U.S. Amateur National, McCall, ID.

During the first few years of Boomer's life, both John and I were working full time. This meant training and trialing was accomplished when time allowed.

Our dogs have never been pro-trained or handled. Boomer had a good Derby career. We ran him when we could in between our careers. He had wins in both countries and was a powerful young dog.

When Boomer wasn't field training, I was working him in competition obedience. He excelled in that arena, earning his UD in both Canada and the U.S. He then started accumulating Am. OTCH points. I had just finished earning an Am. OTCH on Indy, and had used up my holiday time from work to attend obedience and field trials. My holiday allotment was exhausted, and I had three other dogs of ours I was training in obedience. Training four dogs was keeping me fit! I felt I had already reached some incredible obedience goals with Boomer. I decided to let him concentrate on field work, while I concentrated on bringing the other dogs along in obedience.

When Boomer was about three years old, John retired as a Fire Captain. Not long after, my own work place downsized and I became jobless. We put our resources

property and from puppyhood, Boomer has spent most of his free time swimming, splashing, and squealing with joy as he paddles about in the water. He also enjoys practicing his water launching, an ever important event. Boomer is happiest when he is in water. If we are hiking on a trail near water, we will walk down the trail, and Boomer will be swimming alongside us.

John and Boomer were now preparing for the All-Age stakes. He was consistently getting JAMs, but the placements were not there. His biggest failure was his water blinds. John knew he was a dog with enormous potential, so he made a decision that each and every morning he would take Boomer out and train water blinds. Morning after morning, all summer long, John would leave the house at 5:30 a.m. and go work water blinds. Thru this, Boomer became one of the most proficient, willing, and spectacular water blind dogs we have had the joy of owning. Now the placements started to happen, then the wins, then the titles, and now the great history makin' Golden we are so proud of.

Both John and I run Boomer, but more so John. My field highlights with Boomer were winning a 32-dog Derby, and an Amateur win in California. We also had numerous placements, but John has been an integral part of Boomer's field career. Boomer is a lot of fun to trial. He enjoys quietly communicating with us when he is on-line. When setting him up to run a triple for example, we'll say, "See that bird out there, and this one over here," etc., and Boomer will quietly mutter, "Yes, I see where they are." It's very special and quite unique!

My favorite series when running Boomer was the water blind. Whenever

Below: Boomer with GRCA challenge trophies won and presented at the 2004 National Specialty, Lost Hills, CA.

Below left: Did someone say "cookies?"

gave him a cast off a point, he would water launch off, it never mattered how cold the water was. It's a confident feeling knowing when you give that trial-saving cast, he would honor it.

As Boomer is now 10½ years old, we are no longer double-staking him. I have backed away, and John is running him in the Open. He needs one more point to qualify for the 2006 U.S. Amateur National. Boomer still enjoys training, and he loves running the trials. He is physically sound, his eyes and hearing are good, as is his attitude. He runs around the house like a two year old throwing his stuffed toys in the air on days he doesn't get to train.



We are very honored to still be trialing him, although we know retirement is around the corner. We will let Boomer tell us when he has had enough...to deny him what he loves to do most would be ludicrous. He will tell us when he is ready to retire, and we will respect his decision. ❖

