

NOVICE FIELD TRIAL DI PARMA - *or 'lucky number 4'*



TEXT SVEN BOSSHARD

FOTO RENATA BUCHER & ANNA POZZI WWW.ZOOPHOTOS.IT

On Thursday evening after a very nice training day with my Italian friends I thought we could have good chances to win the upcoming Novice Field Trial on the mountain Capuccio near Parma/Italy, because Julia was running the whole day very well and was good on the whistle. When I arrived Saturday morning February 8th, the day of the trial, and had a look at the participation list, I thought probably it will be quite difficult. After the drawing, where we caught number 4 – it's my lucky number, but it also means, that we will have the last bird on a drive with 4 teams – I just hoped to pass the trial somehow.

Our judge was Andrea Cupini from Italy. The ground on that little mountain was wavy, with quite long distances. The drive began, 8 partridges were shot and they dropped in two areas, one left and one right. When the judge asked me to send my dog, I sent Julia to the area on the right, where she had to go over old falls, but after some nice hunting she had found her bird and

retrieved it properly to my hand. On the second turn there were two birds remaining, one on the left, which a Labrador had not found before, and one somewhere on the right. I decided to send Julia to the right. The bird was closer than we all estimated. So she was too far, but by bringing her closer she caught wind and found the bird.

After some other drives, we were called to our 2nd round, where birds were shot as single marks. We were in line with one Golden and two Labrador retrievers. Julia did a nice job on the mark, I had to whistle her back a little bit, but anyway she was faster than all the others.

So the judge called us to the last and final round, together with a Labrador retriever. He asked me not to handle and to let the dog do its job. So I did – Julia marked very well the bird falling in some bushes and was just on it after running a long distance. The Labrador did a nice job too, but was not so proper on the mark as Julia was.

I just could not believe it, but we had won the trial out of 12 dogs, with



the qualification of excellent and CAC (Certificat d'aptitude au Championnat)! We received a lot of compliments by the judge who accented Julia's excellent retriever qualities. I was very happy and with me all my Italian friends. As you can see on the picture of me and Julia posing together, I am very proud of my Flatcoat.

Julia - Almanza Poetry In Motion

Julia is living with us in Switzerland. 4 years ago we picked her up in Eskilstuna/Sweden, where she was bred in the kennel Almanza by Ragnhild Ulin and Sussie Karlström. Julia is a daughter of Ragnhild's famous Almanza Jigsaw Puzzle.

With Julia my dream of my first own Flatcoat came true. I knew that I wanted to work with her, but at the beginning it was not evident what kind of work. So we tried water and avalanche rescue training, but then after some retriever training lessons we knew our determination. I realized that there is nothing better than the work, for which the dog was bred originally, allowing him to show his natural abilities.

In 2011, after 1 year of training, Julia has won a novice workingtest in Switzerland. On our holiday trip through Sweden in summer 2012 she has obtained a 1st price on a B-Prov. Some other good results followed on workingtests and mock trials in intermediate class in Switzerland, Germany and Italy.

On our Sweden-trip we met Birgitta Stafflund in Moheda for a training. She motivated me to go on picking-ups and to trial with her. So we went to the UK in the following autumn to train with well-known gundog trainers like Mark and Jamie Bettinson from Wales and we enjoyed our first shooting day, which was very exciting for us both.

Julia worked very enthusiastically on live game, but I realized that we have to work on steadiness. So I used every opportunity to go on picking-ups and trainings with game. Because there is no such possibility in Switzerland, we had to go to France and Italy, driving some miles. This season we travelled a lot and again went to the UK, which was a very nice experience. We started to trial in France and Italy and won the Novice Field Trial in Parma mentioned before, a tribute to our hard work. But of course we enjoyed every single moment in training and on picking-up. It became our passion and we keep on...

It is not easy to compete with a Flatcoated retriever on today's high level. But it's the perfect breed for me, even if it is not the easiest way: It is challenging to train them, you can learn a lot yourself and I love their characteristic style. A Flatcoat needs its time – like a bottle of good wine!

By the way: Julia's life is quite boring during the day on a regular business week. Most of the time she is sleeping under my office desk. But in our free time we enjoy to be out in the field or to go on adventurous journeys together.

I remember a situation on a sunny training day on a nice Mediterranean wavy ground in Tuscany, when I sent Julia for a retrieve, someone said to me: "She looks like she would float over the field and never touch ground." - my fabulous Poetry In Motion!

Personal website of Julia:
www.poetryinmotion.ch

