

North OF THE Border



by Jennifer Abramson

Kyon Golden Retrievers

Up until now, I would say the majority of breeders I have interviewed have been using American lines or American dogs. I am sure some of you are wondering where are all the cream "English-type" dogs are that our Canadian breeders are sometimes known for by our colleagues to the south.

This month, we delve deeply into this side of Canadian breeding during an interview with Karin Klouman of Kyon Goldens.

Known and admired among Golden fanciers around the world, Karin has both imported and bred some very influential dogs in her 35 years in the fancy.

Kyon Goldens

Karin Klouman got her start in Goldens in her home country of Norway in 1970. She was 16 years old at the time and had managed to save enough money to buy her first dog. Although her parents would have liked another terrier, Karin had final say in the matter.

"I had studied all the breeds carefully and knew I wanted a calm, trainable dog. For years I had been the official dog-walker in our neighborhood, and had trained and walked German Shepherds, Boxers, Terriers, Labradors and a few mixed breeds. I was drawn to the Golden Retriever because of its apparent trainability and gentle manner, and was also taken by the beauty of the few Goldens I had already met..."

Karin's first Golden was mostly of the old Drexholme lines from England. Athletic and well put together, "Pamilla" was an ideal first Golden.

"By looking at her I trained my eye to see those things that matter most in structure. She had lovely angulation front and rear, and a rock-solid topline. Otherwise, she was rather plain in head and her coat was rather short and dark."

By reading books and studying other Goldens, Karin decided that although she was not quite perfect, she was imminently breedable, so she went about choosing a stud and came up with Nor Ch. Camrose Voravey, bred by Joan Tudor.

"He was a handsome cream dog with a beautiful head and plenty of coat and strong bone...just what I was looking for to complement Pamilla, who had a slighter build and a more

'fieldish' appearance."

The six resulting puppies all went to pet homes and all lived to be almost 17 years old. She had accidentally stumbled upon an exceptionally long-lived line. This was also a fortuitous combination for it marked the beginning of her friendship with "Voravey's" owner, Grete-Sofie Mjaerum of Mjaerumhogda fame, a relationship that would result in the eventual arrival of the great Can Ch. Mjaerumhogda's Kyon Flying Surprise CDX, OS ("Shea") to our shore and into Karin's heart.

"To visit Grete's kennel was always a great treat...the consistency of type and structure in her dogs over the years has been amazing. Of my favorites were Nor Ch. Gitles Natasha, her import Nor Ch. Noravon Lucius and her home-bred Nor Ch. Mjaerumhogda's Crusader. Rarely have I known a person with such a good eye for a dog as Grete has, and from her I learned how important it is to judge the whole dog...to not look at the individual parts and to appreciate the full picture."

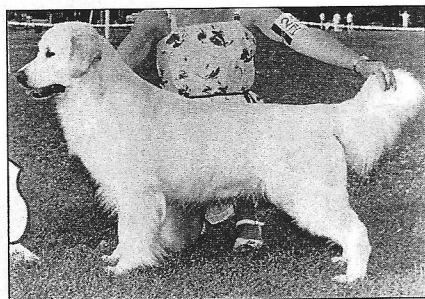
"Shea" was imported from Norway at 10 weeks old and was all Karin had ever hoped for, and he became the best dog she had ever owned. She had waited two years for him, as she had asked for a particular pedigree...a son by the stunning Nor Ch. Noravon Lucius with a bitch line related to the first dog she had bred to in Norway, Nor Ch. Camrose Voravey.

"He had that special magic that makes a dog just shine. He was not perfect, maybe a little long and a bit weak in head, but he was so beautiful! Truly and surely breathtaking! He was wonderfully angulated and he could *move*. To own such a dog was a great privilege and he became the heart of my hearts."

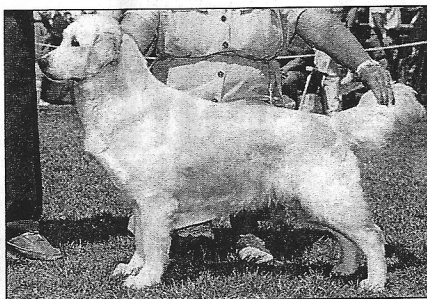
Top Golden in Canada back in 1985, with 10 all-breed BIS to his credit, Shea lived to be almost 15 years old and made a tremendous impact on the breed in Canada during his lifetime. A marvelous producer, Shea consistently stamped his puppies who together over the years amassed over 100 titles in all aspects of the sport, and some even became guide dogs for the blind. Jennifer McCauley's Ch. Chrys Haefen The Norseman and Judy Taylor's Ch. Saddleback Oberon O

(continued on page 142)

North of the Border, *continued*



Can Ch. Mjaerumhogda's Kyon Flying Surprise CDX, OS



Can Ch. Kyon's Hokus Pokus CD, OD



Can Ch. Saddleback Rechargeable Randall, OS

Shea are two examples of some of his exceptional get, as well as Jane Lunow's Am-Can Ch. Cameo Countenance Of Courage.

Shea became the foundation for Karin's "newer" line, as she sadly discontinued the one that came down from Pamilla due to a higher incidence of cataracts than she was prepared to deal with. As well, they seemed to also possess a more intense personality and higher drive than the average pet owner would want to deal with.

She built on several of his most outstanding daughters, Can Ch. Kyon's Footlose 'n Fancy Free CD, Can Ch. Kyon's Lucy In The Skye, Can Ch. Kyon's Miss Shalimar, Can Ch. Timshel's Kyon Windy CD, and Can Ch. Hollymere Shea's Fancy At Kyon... all of whom have made a significant impact on the Kyon breeding program and the breed in general.

Two bitches that made a particular impact on Karin's program were purchased in the early eighties. One was Saddleback Chrys-Haefen Megan, OD, who despite her many faults was an outstanding producer and the cornerstone of Karin's breeding program. Although her front was not particularly good, she had lots of bone, wonderful angulation, and a beautiful, strong head. She passed on at age 14 1/2.

The other was Chrys-Haefen Lucky Lady, OD, who managed to produce 15 titled offspring in only four litters, always bred to Shea.

"'Lucky' herself was a rather reserved dog, but her offspring were wonderfully outgoing, bright and eager workers. She lived to be well over 15 years old and many of her offspring made it well past 16 years."

Both these lovely girls came to Karin through her dear friend, and handler, and another of Canada's foremost Golden breeders, Jennifer McCauley of Chrys-Haefen.

"Jennifer herself has made a tremendous impact on the Golden Retriever breed through her breeding program and the many great dogs it has produced. It was with great relief that I spotted her in the show ring with 'Junior,' Can Ch. Nanno Chrys Haefen Son Of Skye, OS, back in 1977. I had

up until that time been quite dismayed with what I had seen of the class dogs entered at that particular show, as none of them looked even remotely like the Golden Retrievers I knew from Norway. When Jennifer walked into the ring with this particularly stunning dog, I was utterly delighted!"

They have been close friends from that day on, and their breeding programs are very closely intertwined. Karin does mention that this doesn't mean that they totally agree on all things, but they do respect each other's opinions and decisions. In fact, it is not uncommon for Jennifer and she to grade a litter of puppies together and can pick out the one the other will end up choosing.

"We might not agree, but we know why we each pick the way we do."

Of the males that Karin has produced, she first mentions the lovely Am-Can Ch. Kyon For Valour And Victory (Am-Can Ch. Bachelor Of Rye CD, WC ex Ch. Kyon's Footlose 'n Fancy Free CD). "Tango" was top Golden in Canada in 1989 and 1990, and the National Specialty winner in 1990, and was an incredible presence in the show ring. She also is particularly proud of Can Ch. Kyon's Super Trooper, OS (Am-Can Ch. Goldtreve Campaigner ex Saddleback Chrys Haefen Meagan, OD), who sired many champions and working dogs on both sides of the border. He was a quiet, laid-back dog that passed on his temperament, along with his superior angulation and wonderful type.

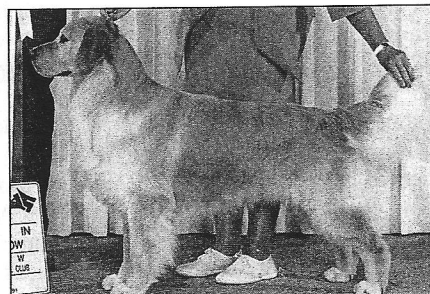
Two other significant sires are the two old "house" dogs, Can Ch. Kyon's Rock N Roll, OS (Am Ch. Synergold Gal-yarde Classic ex Can Ch. Kyon Footlose 'n Fancy Free), who is now 13 and in excellent health, and one of Canada's best-known veterans, Can Ch. Sherhaven Sheaman At Kyon CD, OS, BISS, who won the Specialty from the Veteran class a couple of years back and was a frequent winner of Stud Dog classes at Specialties.

There have also been many imports from Scandinavia over the years, several of which were outstanding, while some had to be withdrawn from stud...

(continued on page 144)



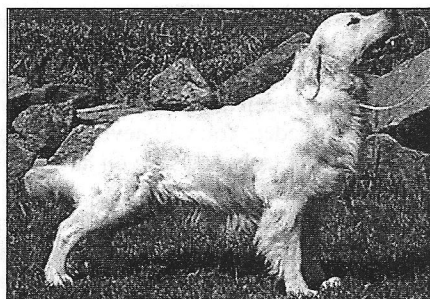
Can Ch. Demist Santorini



Can Ch. Kyon's For Valour And Victory, SDHF



Can Ch. Sherhaven's Sheaman At Kyon CD, OS, BISS



Can Ch. Dewmist Davenport

"Two such great dogs were Can Ch. Mjaerumhogda's Top Score, a truly wonderful dog of tremendous potential who unfortunately consistently produced bad hip results in his offspring, and Can Ch. Mjaerumhogda's Zedrich, a stunning dog who we had such high hopes for, but who was diagnosed with PRA at five years. It was quite a blow to us to have to give up on these two dogs in particular, but being a breeder also means having to make those tough decisions. Both Toffer and Zedrich are living out their senior years as happy family pets."

Currently, Kyon is home to two lovely imports from Sweden. Can Ch. Dewmist Santorini and Can Ch. Dewmist Davenport are continuing the Kyon tradition of offering exciting new blood to the North American Golden Retriever gene pool.

"We count ourselves lucky to have been able to establish this connection with Dewmist, as the kennel has a tremendous impact on the top-winning dogs in Scandinavia over the past three decades. Henric Fryckstrand has become a close personal friend and is a person we admire for his excellent eye for a good dog and his completely ethical outlook."

In her breeding program, Karin places a great emphasis on longevity, as she has come to expect that a Golden should live well into its teens.

"I have watched with concern how many of the newer lines, especially certain American ones, tend to die at a very early age. I wonder whether this can be connected to how fast these dogs mature. Our own dogs seem to remain puppies for quite a while. Rarely do we have a puppy that is mature enough to be shown to its championship."

Temperament is also of prime concern, and since Karin lives in such a lively household (seven children and four grandchildren), you can see why an easygoing, gentle manner is a must. No quarter is given to high-strung, nervous or aggressive dogs, as most of the dogs Kyon produces go to homes with young children. A biddable nature and a strong retrieving desire are also a must, and she will not keep a puppy that does not show an obvious desire to retrieve by six or seven weeks of age. There are Kyon dogs that go to hunting homes, but Karin does not sell to competitive field trial homes as her dogs do not have the high drive that is required to be successful.

In terms of structure and type, Karin remains dedicated to producing a sound, very "English" Golden Retriever.

"I want to like the head first of all. I look for good planes, a well-defined stop, dark, almond-shaped eyes and a soft expression. Next I search for overall balance and movement. If all these things fall into place, then I can look further and



Can Ch. Kyon's Footloose 'n Fancy Free, OD



Saddleback Chrys-Haefen Meagan, OD

select my show prospects and dogs of breeding potential. I want a well-angulated dog with an exceptionally good front. I look for good bone, correct coat, and a strong, dead-level topline. Quite often my Golden Retrievers are very light in color, the majority being various shades of cream to very light gold. However, color is not anything I would consider when choosing a puppy. Some of my better dogs have been quite a rich gold, while others have been cream."

Many of Karin's dogs do very well in Canada, where the judges are used to seeing the type and recognize that the English Golden can be just as competitive in the ring as the more flashy, heavily coated American dogs. That said, Kyon dogs generally do not do well south of the border. They are just too "different."

"A rather amusing example was Shea. Ten all-breed Best in Shows behind him and in his prime he went to the U.S. with a high-profile handler. After weeks of showing, the best he could do was a fourth in an Open class of six!!! I consider Shea to be the best dog I have ever owned or bred, so when he could not compete in the States I realized that it is best not to pursue the U.S. titles."

That said, she does add that there are certain breeder-judges who do appreciate the type, and she does like to show under them at Specialties. There has also been a handful of old-time kennels in the U.S. that Karin has admired. Some individual dogs that she mentions are Am-Can Ch. Malagold Storm Warning, FC-NAFC Topbrass Cotton, Am-Can Ch. Trowsnest Whirlwind UD WC, Am-Can Ch. Rush Hill's Haagen-Dazs and Am Ch. Synergold Galyarde Classic.

"Malagold, Pebwin, Trowsnest and Topbrass are all examples of breeding programs that have stayed consistent in type and structure, generally producing sound, athletic dogs."

One U.S. breeder Karin makes particular mention of is the late Jane Lunow and her Cameo Golden Retrievers.

"We became close friends in the 1990s, and although Jane was a relative newcomer to the breed, she had a vision and a passion which was truly amazing. Her enthusiasm was infectious and I always considered myself lucky to have had Jane in my life."

In Canada, Can Ch. Nanno Chrys Haefen Son Of Skye, Can Ch. Styal Squire Of Nortonwood (an English import owned by Judy Taylor of Skylon Golden Retrievers who had a tremendous impact on the breed in Canada), Can Ch. Shaynedoro Judge And Jury, OS, owned and bred by Carole Brechbill

(continued on page 146)

(whom Shea had the misfortune of having to compete against!), Am-Can Ch. Bachelor Of Rye WC and Am-Can Ch. Stoneleath Larkspur all have impressed Karin both through their presence and their production record. The Saddleback dogs of Leah and Bill Walls have also been very significant.

In England, Joan Tudor's Camrose dogs and their contribution to the breed in England and abroad have always impressed her, particularly Eng Ch. Camrose Cabus Christopher and his son Eng Ch. Camrose Fabius Tarquin. Hazel Hinks and her Styal dogs, a shining example being Eng Ch. Styal Scott Of Glengilde, were also mentioned, and no list would be complete without Eng Ch. Nortonwood Faunus!

When asked how she felt about the breed as a whole today, she feels that it is in pretty good shape, with sound temperament and fairly reasonable structure overall. That said, she is particularly dismayed with the general lack of SUPERIOR quality in the show ring. Poor heads, gay tails and profuse, open coats are some of the concerns she mentions, but the thing she finds so incredibly faulty is the "absurd lack of balance" that is so prevalent today.

"It is indeed incorrect to have these overangulated rears combined with such very straight front assemblies. Something just has to give when dogs are put together like this...and it is usually the topline that goes. I cannot stand a terrible topline, and there are far too many dogs in the ring that have a sloping one or are swaybacked, or even worse, roachbacked! If it is not noticeable on the stack, then you can sure see it on the move, and it is not a pretty sight!"

Karin likes to see a strong side gait with a long and effortless stride.

"Reach and drive should be balanced and effortless. There is far too much of the choppy short stride in the ring today. Front assemblies are today pretty much a disgrace. We have far too many short upper arms and upright shoulders, coupled with gaps at the elbow and no forechest. ARGH! Why are these dogs being kept for breeding? Why are they being shown? We have a sporting dog, a hunting dog, a working dog...such an animal MUST have a well-structured, well-angulated front! It's essential!

"I think as serious breeders we need to pay particular attention to these common faults, a poor head, combined with lack of balance (caused by a bad front perhaps), a terrible topline, a gay tail and an open, profuse coat. All these things and on a dog that cannot move. It is not a pretty thing to see and unfortunately it is not a rarity in the ring these days."

As for health, Karin feels that overall most conscientious breeders strive to produce long-lived, sound animals.

"As a rule, I think the breed is better off today than it was a few decades ago. Hip dysplasia remains the number one concern, but I think we have done lots to improve upon the gene pool in that respect. I am a bit alarmed at the many Golden retrievers that die from cancer at such an early age, but I think breeders are well aware of this problem and are striving to overcome it."

And for novices striving to become conscientious breeders, Karin advises that you study, read, go to shows and field events...as many as possible. Once you have decided on the "type" of Golden you like, then find a longtime breeder to hook up with that you particularly admire.

"At this point it would help if you had a clear idea in your

head as to what would be an ideal FEMALE to start out with. Again look in the yearbooks and dog magazines. If I were starting out I would carry a picture of Nor-Swe Ch. Dewmist Cordinabella, and I would keep this picture in my mind when I approach my chosen breeder. You will never get a true copy of the dog you adore, but it truly helps if you have an ideal to strive for."

She adds that you should be prepared to co-own your foundation female, and recommends that you do not attempt to choose the puppy yourself, but ask the breeder for guidance.

"Emphasize that you want to start out with a well-structured dog of superior quality and balance. Do look for depth of quality (titles) and depth of clearances in the pedigree as well, but be aware that just because a dog has numerous titles and every clearance in the book does not necessarily mean it will be a good producer."

Ask questions, don't listen to gossip. If you have concerns then ask the owner or breeder of that dog for the straight goods.

"It helps to choose a breeder to mentor you that talks openly and frankly about his/her dogs - including the genetic problems you may run into. If you meet a person that denies ever having any problems, then run. That person is either lying or has not bred sufficiently yet to have experienced any problems. I want to emphasize that you must choose somebody to work with who has been around for quite a while and has produced quite a few litters. It is not helpful if a person has been in the breed for 20 years but in that time has only had three litters."

Karin ends with a statement about taking responsibility for what you produce and being honest with yourself and your puppy people...

"Tell people about your problems, share your experiences and mistakes. We are all of us in this together...we need to pull together as well. We may not agree on many things (which makes life interesting), but we should all have the breed's welfare at heart. It is my opinion that the vast majority of us truly do, and that is why we have such a truly wonderful breed."

Thanks, Karin, for sharing your experiences and knowledge with us!