

DeSoto

October 2017

Exploring the South



Grand Junction's
Bird Dog
Museum

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Spotlighting the Sporting Dog

By Ann N. Yungmeyer | Photography courtesy of the Bird Dog Museum

The enduring canine-to-human bond has long been depicted in literature and film. Likewise, the keen devotion of man to his dog is beautifully portrayed in The National Bird Dog Museum.



Antique bird hunting wagon with wood dog crates used to carry dogs to the field.



German Shorthaired Pointers visit their wing in the museum.

In the heart of bird dog country, a small group of sporting dog enthusiasts established the Bird Dog Foundation, Inc., to preserve the field trial and hunting traditions of West Tennessee and other parts of the world. In 1991, the group opened the National Bird Dog Museum in Grand Junction, Tennessee, an hour's drive east of Memphis.

With a growing collection of artwork, photography and memorabilia, the museum is a destination for dog lovers and bird hunters as well as curiosity seekers. Representing more than 40 breeds of sporting dogs used in hunting and field trial competition, the museum mainly features pointers, retrievers, setters and spaniels – breeds that possess remarkable instincts in water, scampering through the woods, and nosing thick brushy meadows.

Do you know the distinctive traits of Irish Setters versus Gordon Setters, or English Cocker Spaniels versus Springer Spaniels? Museum visitors can learn about the characteristics and training of the dogs, and the birds they hunt. Dedicated galleries focus on specific breeds, such as the National Retriever Museum that shows the different kinds of retrievers and from where they originate – including the Golden Retriever from England, Labrador from Newfoundland, and Chesapeake Bay Retriever from the east coast of the U.S.

The multi-winged museum complex also features Field Trial Hall of Fame galleries and a Wildlife Heritage Center, a resource for education added in 1996. The center's taxidermy exhibit is a favorite for visitors, with a collection of various types of waterfowl, owls, bobcats, otters, coyote and other wildlife.

Preserving History

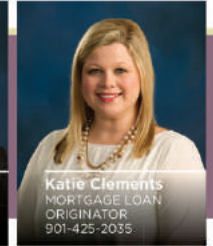
West Tennessee's proximity to the Mississippi flyway has long attracted waterfowl hunters, putting the area on the map in the late 19th century as home to the ongoing National Field Trial Championships held at the historic Ames Plantation. The National Bird Dog Museum highlights the area's rich sporting dog heritage, shedding light on more than 100 years of bird dog life.

The museum's Field Trial Hall of Fame recognizes accomplished dogs and people who have contributed significantly to the sport. Many artwork pieces and

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