

FT CFT Warrener's Yellowhammer MH

"Sydney"

July 28, 2000 ~ December 23, 2013

In the summer of 2000, we eagerly anticipated the breeding that would produce Sydney. Her dam, Liz (Gwynnfield Misty), was a talented but eccentric, unpredictable bitch that had been whelped within sight of the Rappahannock River near the eastern shore of Virginia. Syd's grandparents; Ritchie (Parkbreck Chevron), Bran (Maesydderwen Griffin), Brit (FC Nancarrow Rosy Mantle), and Katie (Nancarrow Golden Glow), had been picked up in England on my trips home in 1991 and 1992. I had worked extensively with them all, including her sire FC Griffin's Pride Rocky, as good a dog as I have ever seen.

Reading pedigrees without knowing the dogs behind them is akin to looking at the cover photo for a novel. It can be enticing, but that's about it. However, when one is lucky to have intimate knowledge of each individual named, their strengths, weaknesses, and idiosyncrasies, only then does the pedigree come alive in my mind's eye. The breeding that produced Syd was undertaken with a working knowledge of the generations that preceded her. It was a special time for Glencoe Kennels and our Warrener's prefix, one where we were evolving and expanding our knowledge.

Vicky and I sent Syd off as a pup to Tracy Sanders of Bismarck North Dakota to socialize her in a city environment. Tracey did a fine job, but when I reacquainted with Syd the following spring, I wasn't immediately struck by her. She came across as insecure and quirky. Unlike Springers, who as often as not need time to gain confidence, most cockers I have handled have been extroverts from day one with a larger than life attitude. Syd took a little time to warm to her new environment, but in short order she showed an uncanny knack for finding birds.

My memories of her are not so much from hunting or field trialing but of her dalliances on our daily walks. She was such a unique individual. Each morning, we load all our dogs and take them up to the surrounding hills overlooking the North Dakota prairie to walk with them. The springers generally hang close, waiting for a tennis ball to be pulled from a pocket. The cockers are more adventurous.

The first sharp-tail grouse Syd flushed would change her forever. Normally the pack runs at will and for all their joy and speed, they don't go far off. But from the moment Syd's crate opened, she'd burst forth, without a backwards glance to head for the hills. She developed an uncanny ability to locate birds! As the walk continued, the dogs' began to mill closer at heel, but Syd might be a speck on the horizon, most often located by the protesting cackle from a flushing grouse. This behavior endured throughout her life, and while she adjusted her range during training, hunting or in competition, she regarded the morning walk as hers alone. She had a gift of joining me and the rest of the dogs precisely as we were ready to depart, not a second sooner.

I would not normally consider breeding a 10 year old bitch, but without reservation I bred her. She ran and hunted grouse for hours every morning so her stamina was unbelievable. Syd whelped seven healthy pups, two of them, NFC Warrener's Chucks-Wills-Widow MH and NFC Warrener's Whippoorwill both became Cocker National Champions. Another pup out of that litter, FC Warrener's Common Nighthawk MHA took a third place in a National.

Sydney placed second in her first Open Stake on September 11, 2001 in New York and championed before the end of that year. Eventually she won 13 Field Trials in the United States and 4 Field Trials in Canada against big fields of Springer Spaniels taking her last placement (2<sup>nd</sup>) when she was 10. In total she would amass 124 lifetime points.

I've never ran a better dog in competition. But, unreservedly my most memorable moments of her didn't involve a gun, judges, or a quest for blue ribbons. Our discretionary witnesses were the birds and wildlife of the North Dakota prairie. I'm honored to have shared her with them.