

# FC Warrener's Blackbird "Cinders"

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Cinders was a littermate of Gypsy and Porter. I sold her as a pup to Dean Reinke. Vicky eventually repurchased Cinders from Dean. There were four pups in the litter. Three were trialed and championed; Gypsy, Cinders and Porter. They were extremely uniform, temperamentally and structurally. In my experience, this is a far cry from the norm with cocker litters. A well planned breeding can often run the gamut regarding size and temperament variants.

At that time, there were not any established lines of cockers in the United States, unlike springers which have been well established for the better part of a century. This is not really surprising since every single dog competing in field trials is at most a few generations removed from England. I doubt there are really any established Cocker lines as I write this in 2012.

It is indeed a startling fact that during the thirty year hiatus between the last cocker trial in 1963 and the resurrected Fort Collins trial in 1993, the stewardship offered by the show dominated parent club had been so lackluster that not one single American hunting English Cocker remained to contribute to the modern era trials. A complete and total bailout was required from the dog's advocates in the United Kingdom. Interesting enough, the new "imported" cockers are again under the control of the show oriented US parent club. In the words of the 1980s rock group The Smiths, *"Meet the new boss, same as the old boss!"*

I remember the first head of game we shot over Cinders, my friend Jack Cheatham (the owner of Ruby Rubster Warrener) and I were out for a stroll on a grey West Virginia afternoon. We were walking on a south facing bank amongst some magnificent old oak trees, working the young Cinders alone. She lacked the impetus of competition from an older experienced dog but she gamely poked her head into a small clump of honey suckle and out bolted a rabbit. Her head lifted in time to see the rabbit away. Jack bowled it over in a single shot. I sent her immediately for the marked retrieve. Initially, she was confused standing over the retrieve, smelling it, and then licking this strange creature. With a little cajoling, she picked up the rabbit and delivered it to hand. During her successful trial career, Jack and I reminisced over that first retrieve many times.

I never recall Cinders barking or making any noise what so ever, the same could be said of her mother and siblings. This is an appealing trait, especially from a dog that spent her later years in an urban environment in Los Angeles. She was bred once by Dean and Cathy Reinke producing two good field champions, Zoe and Splash.



I have pondered many times if I were to pick one litter that I felt defined what I wanted to typify cockers, it might be this litter. What a coincidence that it happens to be my first. They were not the most driven. However they had a really good stamp, had great, level headed, stable temperaments. And most importantly were a delight to work with and live around.

Late in her field trial career, she developed a habit that I found curious. When she either trapped or retrieved a live bird, she would stabilize it and puncture its head with

her canine tooth before retrieving the bird to hand. I have seen raccoons kill in this manner, including a sow with young who were infiltrating my pheasant pen a few years ago. She would nip the young bird's head, without killing them, but rendering them paralyzed for her young to finish off. In my experience, canines generally kill by crushing the ribcage. Cinders would not harm the rib cage or body what so ever, simply nip the head.

Cinders had an eye removed late in life because of a retro bulbous abscess, but she still carried herself elegantly. She is the great grand dam of the 2011 Cocker National Champion Quinn, and will go down as a really good one for me.