

First Rooster for “Jake”

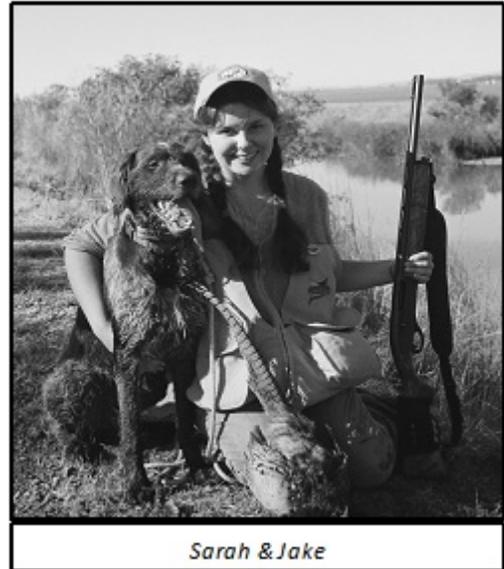
by Sarah Riensche

On a crisp fall morning at the Club, I watched my puppy, “Jake”, quartering through the bunchgrass field ahead of me. The young German Wirehair Pointer devoured the wide open space in long casts, searching for that intoxicating scent of a Pheasant. Whenever Jake showed symptoms of dashing off into the horizon, I blew two sharp blasts on my whistle, and he would turn gracefully to re-work the ground he had just hastily combed over. Jake was growing up, and that made me proud. I was watching my first fully trained bird dog do what bird dogs are born to do.

We made our way towards an area of the field bordered on two sides by water channels. Often, a

rooster will hide in the wild rosebushes, tulle stalks, and tangled grass along the banks, making this a favorite place to hunt. Many birds had come out of this place and into our pouches with our family’s older pointer, in seasons past. Soon, Jake caught a scent of something in the tangled grass. With his nose outstretched, his torso frozen in time, and tail directly in the air, he had zeroed in on a running bird that had suddenly stopped. Knowing that the king of Upland Gamebirds has a chronic case of “won’t sit - itis”, I quickly caught up with Jake on the ditch bank. The unexpected explosion of a rooster and a sudden burst of color into the air scared the living daylights out of me for a second. Upon flushing, Mr. Rooster uttered his arrogant parting cackle that sounded like a taunt. The brilliant feathers rose into the air with the rooster’s oaths, and I brought my gun up.

Looking down the barrel at a fleeing rooster head and neck region, I fired. The Rooster folded and fell. “Fetch, Jake!” - I called, and off goes the pup, retrieving up a stone - dead Pheasant. Pride swelled into his chest and punctuated with every prancing step back to me. He paraded in front of me with his prize, the multi - colored rooster. Bright sunlight glinted off the Pheasant’s feathers like burnished gold. After I paid due reverence to the fallen bird’s splendor, Jake presented the bird to me. I took it from him and placed it in my blaze - orange vest. With our first bird in the bag, Jake gleefully headed out to find another.



Sarah & Jake

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