

“So what does it feel like?”



“So what does it feel like?” I was asked following the announcement that one of our puppies was named the 2008 National Best of Breed at the FBGDA National Specialty in Kansas. He is the son of the 2005 National Best of Breed; a dog that we were fortunate to acquire from Georgine Weber-Dierick in Belgium - NBOB GRCH TAN Beau de l’Hospitalier. This was a first for a dog produced in this country in our breed.

I distinctly remember sitting at the kitchen table back in 1998, talking to Chris about “getting back into hunting dogs.” When he was a small child (and even before he was born) we had American Brittany’s, Pudelpointer and a few other sundry hunting dogs, including Labrador and Irish Setter He had just got out of the Marine Corps and was looking forward to having a “normal” life again, which in his mind included hunting.

I told him that day that I was willing to do that, as long as he understood it was not something to be taken lightly. That it would probably take “at least ten years to get the kind of dogs we truly want.” Well, little did I realize the truth of that prophecy – until “Leo” [NBOB CH TAN TopperLyn Gallant Bodacious] received that title, just 5 months shy of TEN YEARS from when we got our first Epagneul Breton.

I cannot begin to describe the feeling. Roget’s Thesaurus could fill up pages with adjectives that don’t even scratch the surface. I still get “duck bumps” and tears in my eyes when I look at the pictures and realize – not that “WE DID IT” – but that “I think we’re finally on the right track.”

Breeding dogs is a daunting responsibility as what you do has an affect on the dogs, the breed and the people who buy them for generations. It involves both joy and heartache, and requires that sometimes you have to make the hardest decisions you can imagine and you sometimes wonder “is it worth it?”

But when something wonderful like this happens, you sit back, sigh, and say “Okay, I guess it IS worth it.” But that doesn’t mean that we can become complacent. It’s not the end – it is just the beginning. And I know sometimes we may still have to make some of those “hard decisions” – but now I have more confidence that by continuing to do that, and adhering strictly to our principles, we’ll be able to overcome some of those hurdles and in 3, 4, or 5 generations when a NEW TLK NBOB is crowned, I might be able to sit back, sigh, and say “I think we’re on the right track.”