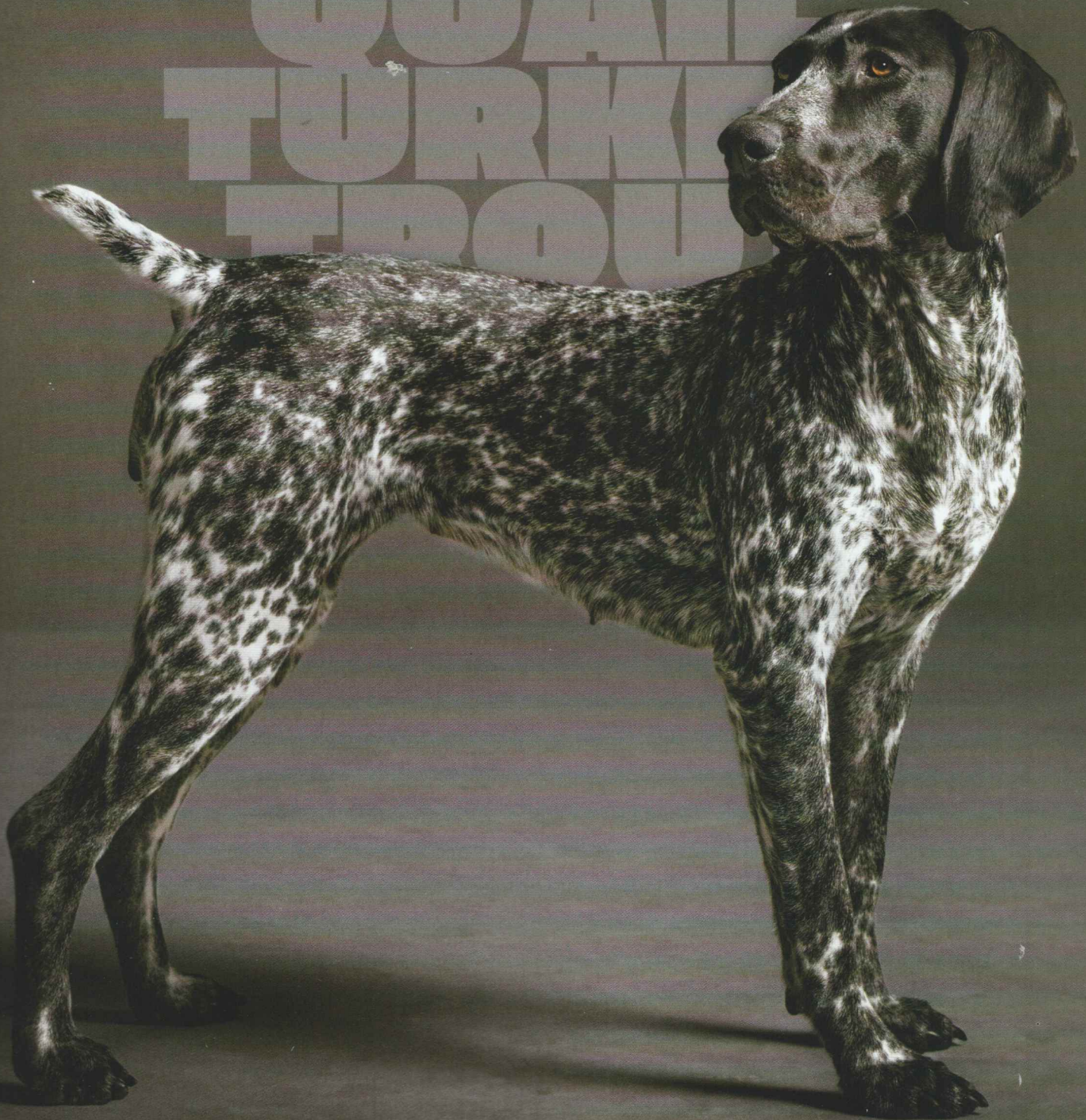


DOGS
GARDEN & GUN
DECOYS
QUAIL
TURNKEY
TROU

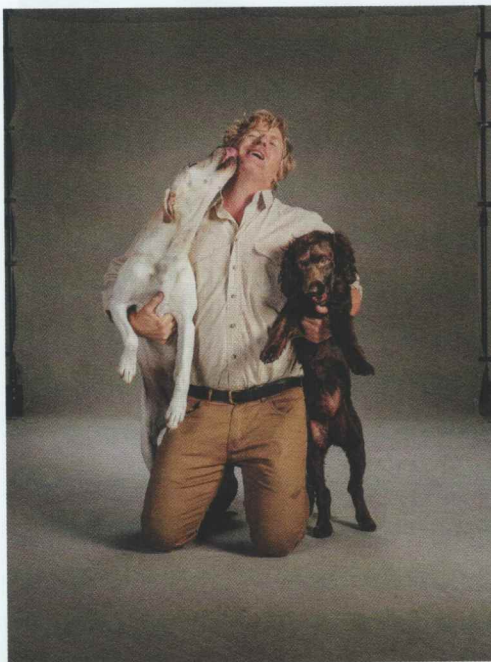
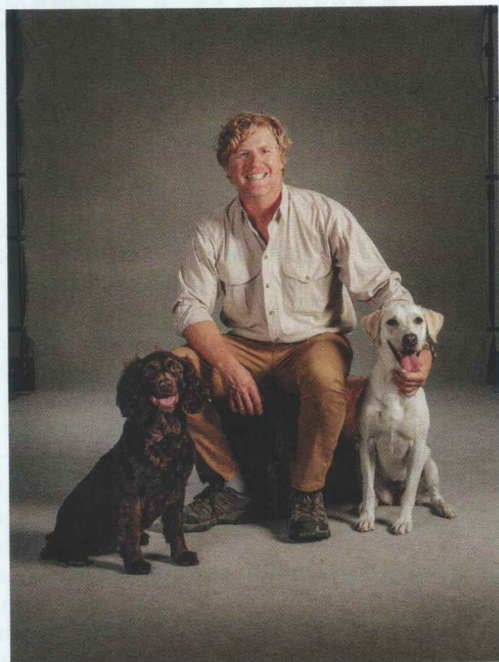
SOUL of the SOUTH
OCT. / NOV.
2020

BEST OF THE SPORTING SOUTH



GOOD DOG
Chesa, a one-year-old German shorthaired pointer.

■ Follow me on Instagram and Twitter @davedibenedetto



DiBenedetto, his Boykin spaniel (Pritchard), and his Lab (Story) mug for photographer Vincent J. Musi.

Ready for a Close-Up

INSIDE OUR COVER SHOOT, AND A FEW TRICKS FROM
A PHOTOGRAPHER WITH A NOSE FOR DOGS

According to Vincent J. Musi, a photographer who specializes in animal portraiture and has shot everything from a honeybee to an elephant for *National Geographic*, there are secrets to getting every animal to look its best. For a series of in-your-face portraits of big cats, for instance, an assistant held up raw beef on a stick to get just the right look from a lion at the Houston Zoo. But the snow leopard wasn't such an easy mark. "I discovered I had to sing to it," Musi says, "a cross between Frank Sinatra and Elvis Costello."

When it comes to photographing dogs (Musi's main focus these days), the bag of tricks is less complicated: squeaky balls, plush animals, and an oversize pack of bacon-flavored treats. His secret weapon, however, is his wife, Callie Shell. An accomplished photographer in her own right (her career has included work for *Time* and CNN as well as a stint as a White House photographer), she's known as the dog whisperer around the pair's Unleashed Studio in Charleston, South Carolina. If there was ever a set of bona fides for a duo to shoot the annual *G&G* dog cover, this was it.

The cover model herself resulted from a phone call with John Burrell of High Adventure Company, which

sends folks on sporting trips around the globe. That's when I heard about Chesapeake (Chesa for short), a year-old German shorthaired pointer belonging to Brent Altaffer, who helps manage the sporting grounds and guides quail hunters at Barnsley Resort outside of Atlanta. Not only is Chesa a beautiful, athletic GSP, she's one heck of a bird dog. This winter she'll be logging up to five days a week in the quail woods. And while Chesa loves being in the field, she's equally at home in Altaffer's bed. "She'll sleep all morning if you let her," he says.

I thought Chesa would be the perfect dog to lead off our sporting issue. After her session in front of Musi's lens, we had a little fun with my own pack, Pritchard (an eleven-year-old Boykin spaniel) and Story (a two-year-old Lab). Pritch was a sucker for the snacks, and Story was all tennis ball. But what I most enjoyed was watching Musi and Shell, two masters in action. If you enjoy snapping pics of your own pups, take a shot at doggy photographer fame in our annual Good Dog Photo Contest at gardenandgun.com/gooddog. Just be sure to bring the bacon treats!

DAVID DIBENEDETTO

Senior Vice President & Editor in Chief

Mail-Order Meat

A Kentucky source for top-quality beef

I love trips to my local butcher (especially for a teres major cut), but recently I received a box of American-raised Wagyu beef from Kentucky's Black Hawk Farms and put it to the test. We grilled the outside skirt steak and served it with a panzanella with local heirloom tomatoes, and the results had both our kids and our guests digging in for more. We also used the company's ground beef to make simple sliders in a cast-iron skillet, and the buttery flavor blew us away. A longtime supplier to restaurants, the farm has just recently started shipping its humanely raised beef to the public. It's one of the tastier packages you can get in the mail.

