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Owner pays tribute to former Crufts BIS, Jet

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AS REPORTED last week, Sh Ch Vbos The Kentuckian, the Flat-coated Retriever breed CC record holder and Crufts BIS winner of 2011, has died, just a few months short of his 12th birthday, writes Bonnie Scougall.

Jim Irvine, Jet's breeder and handler, said he became unwell at the weekend and by the early hours of June 3 had become extremely stressed due to irreversible respiratory problems. The decision was taken to have him put to sleep to prevent further suffering as he was becoming progressively worse.

Jet was whelped on August 30, '01 by the dual CC winner The Sorcerer's Apprentice From Jaeva ex Sh Ch Vbos Lady From Louisiana. Mr Irvine kept a bitch from the litter but he also liked one of the males. It was agreed that John (Jock) Ross, a close friend with whom Mr Irvine travelled to shows, would have him – Jet – in joint ownership with Mr Irvine.

A slow maturer, Jet did not achieve a lot of success as a youngster, gaining just a few firsts in junior. Jock died in December '03 so Jet then lived with Mr Ross's son Iain. He was transferred into Mr Irvine's sole ownership and he continued to show him.

Top gundog

Jet's first CC came at WELKS in April '04 and he gained his crown at Manchester '05. He continued to win consistently and was BOB at Crufts '08 when he was also shortlisted in the group. He was breed leader in '07 and '08.

In '09 at East of England ch show, at almost eight, he won his first group and went on to secure BIS. He was only the second of the breed to gain a UK all-breed BIS, the first being his ancestor Ch/Ir Ch Shargleam Blackcap.

This set Jet off on the road to many top-flight awards. Later in '09 he was BIS at National Gundog, a show at which he had twice been RBIS, and also G3. He topped the group at Paignton and went on to RBIS. He also won the group at Scottish Kennel Club in August and the Gundog Society of Wales.

Success at the highest levels continued in '10 and he won the group at Blackpool, Welsh KC – where he also went RBIS, SKC in August, Richmond, South Wales – which again was accompanied by RBIS – and he was BIS at Gundog Society of Wales for the second year running. He was also BIS and RBIS at the United Retriever Club.

Jet was top gundog in '10.

In '11 he won the group at both Boston and Manchester and then triumphed in the group at Crufts under Ron James before going on to claim the ultimate award of Crufts BIS from Paolo Dondina. He was the oldest dog ever to achieve this.

This presented Mr Irvine with a dilemma: Jet was very close to achieving the breed CC record, but should he continue to show him or retire him at the top? He decided to enter him at another couple of shows as Jet was still enjoying being in the centre of the show ring. This decision certainly paid off, as on his home ground at SKC in May '11 he won his 64th CC – awarded by 61 different judges during a consecutive eight-year period. This was his 15th group win, and he then went on to gain his third all-breeds BIS under Mike Gadsby. He was then retired from the ring.


Jet has not been used extensively at stud but has sired titleholders in Finland and the US. In the UK, he has sired a full champion.

Mr Irvine said: "It was with great sadness that we had to say goodbye to Sh Ch Vbos The Kentuckian due to irreversible respiratory problems. Jet's illustrious show career has been well documented in the past, but many people may not realise that it was also a very long one, winning CCs over eight consecutive years ('04-'11).


"He was a remarkable dog who loved life to the full, both in and out of the show ring, and never gave you less than 100 per cent. It was a pleasure and a privilege to have known, bred and handled this unique Flatcoat."


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