

Large Munsterlander News



Snowy Oaks imports Aron von Grinzing from Austria

Aron von Grinzing is the newest addition to the Snowy Oaks family. He spent his first four years in Austria with Erwin Schwindsakl. He comes to us with a great "track record", including having already sired a few litters overseas that are reportedly doing quite well. When we decided a year ago to bring in another male, we discussed the pros and cons of purchasing a puppy versus attempting to purchase an adult dog from Germany, and decided on the latter. Our hopes were that the expense associated with purchasing an adult would largely be offset by eliminating any "surprises" that are inherent in purchasing a puppy:

- Already certified free of hip dysphasia
- Already tested and eligible for breeding
- Known conformation (height, weight, overall physical structure)

Temperament would be the only thing left with some degree of uncertainty, as we have often found that owners may be too close to their dogs to be objective in this regard.

We began our search in October 2004, with substantial assistance from Joe Schmutz and Sigurd Käser.

A couple candidates surfaced in January, but we elected to pass on them. Aron was identified as a possibility in February - we were quite excited about him. Unfortunately his owner, Erwin Schwindsakl, changed his mind about parting with him at the time - a situation that changed again in late April. He arrived in Chicago from Austria on May 20th in fine shape - better than we were after a seven hour drive from Minneapolis, followed by 90 minutes of shuffling paperwork around between Lufthansa and the Customs Office! But we were thrilled when we were finally able to release him from the crate for a little "relief" before heading back to Minneapolis.

In general, Aron has greatly exceeded our expectations. He is an extremely handsome male, standing 25.5" tall, 68 pounds, with a square, lean build. He had a beautiful coat and feathering when he arrived, but after three months of water work followed by brushing nearly every day, and a few trips to the field, he is starting to look more like the rest of our dogs that are getting worked regularly. He exhibits exceptional drive and desire relative to both game and training dummies - he absolutely loves the water and is a very a strong swimmer. His temperament around the house is happy, playful (almost too puppy-like in this regard), communicative (although not always appreciated and often difficult to interpret), and very well behaved. He is friendly with strangers, and is working well in field situations , with a variety of other dogs as well as getting along great with his "harem" here at home. There have been are a few disappointments but fortunately they involve training and/or exposure. His field work on birds is about what we would typically expect from a six month old puppy. Although he exhibits an instinctive, intense and stylish point, it has simply not been cultivated in the manner that we would expect: he is not staunch, let alone steady to wing, and "whoa" (or anything like it) is simply not part of his present vocabulary! Quite a bit of work is necessary to teach "whoa," as well as other manners, that we require for upland bird hunting. This presents a unique training challenge due both to his age and to his previous training to "halt" (lie down with head between paws). As a product of German/ Austrian testing and perhaps hunting practices, which seem to emphasize performance after the shot, Aron's training foundation has simply been for a largely different purpose searching for, tracking and retrieving a wide variety of game including birds, ducks, hare, fox and deer. We have no doubt that he absolutely excels in all of these areas, as is indicated by his test scores, but we have some work to do to redirect his talents to suit the needs of upland bird hunting. All the pieces seem to be there but Aron still needs to put the upland bird puzzle together. He seems more than ready, however, for any type of waterfowl. Aron will do some upland hunting this fall, and as he is a very bright dog, he may learn from the experience, but our expectation is that he will largely flush and chase birds (which will obviously not result in any shots being fired). As whoa

breaking is a fine winter activity, Curt elected instead to focus on retrieving and water work with Aron over the summer. He also thought this would involve less pressure and go a lot further in developing trust and a relationship with hire, which has proven to be the case. As there are elements of steadiness involved in waiting for a release command, and honoring another dog's retrieve, it should provide a good foundation for further work over the upcoming months. And he has been getting plenty of exercise with 100+ yard retrieves courtesy of the dummy launcher!

All in all, we are very excited about the potential that Aron represents in all regards hunting abilities, conformation and temperament and we couldn't be happier with our decision to have hire join the Snowy Oaks family. We would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Erwin Schwindsakl for sending us such a wonderful animal, and for the effort associated with the extremely solid training that he exhibits.

We would also like to thank Joe Schmutz, Sigurd Käser, and Günther Adams for their assistance in making Aron's presence here a reality for us.

By Romy Shreve
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