

Whippet Review interviews

Justin Smithey
and
Cheslie Pickett Smithey
PINNACLE
WHIPPETS

Sugar Valley, Georgia

No Whippets, and no littermates of any breed, have won as much in U.S. dog show history as GCh. Pinnacle Tennessee Whiskey and GCh. Pinnacle Kentucky Bourbon have in the past few years. Both won the AKC National Championship, the AWC National Specialty, the Whippet Top 20, and much else. Whiskey was the country's top Hound in 2018, Bourbon in 2019 and 2020, each time placing among the Top Ten of all breeds. Whippet Review's editor BO BENGTON talked via email with the pair's breeder and owner, Justin Smithey, and his wife, Cheslie Pickett Smithey, Bourbon's handler and co-owner.



Justin and Cheslie with Whiskey (left) and Bourbon. Photo by Rhonda Cassidy.

WR: Cheslie, let's start with you. Do you prefer to be known as Cheslie Pickett or Cheslie Smithey? Or Pickett-Smithey?

Cheslie: Cheslie Pickett Smithey. Usually people call me Chelsea ... even at my college graduation, when my name was phonetically spelled!

WR: You and Bourbon must be very tired after the last couple of years. How many times do you think Bourbon was shown in the last two years? The Canine Chronicle statistics list her as having won 111 BOB in 2020, but the 2019 figures are not available - about 250 BOB total, I would guess. How many Groups and BIS?

Cheslie: What a whirlwind! Bourbon's two-year campaign certainly got cut a bit

short due to COVID-19 and the shutdown of dog shows last year, but we still got plenty of showing in. Her win record consists of 108 all-breed Best in Show wins, 236 Group Firsts and 15 Specialty BIS.

WR: So she won BIS almost half the time she won the Hound Group ... That's a very high average. Statistically, a top special usually takes one BIS for every seven Group wins!

Cheslie: Bourbon was #1 Hound and #3 among all breeds in 2019, again #1 Hound and #2 among all breeds in 2020. Her biggest wins in the all-breed arena were Best in Show at the 2020 AKC National Championship and Reserve Best in Show at the 2020 Westminster Kennel Club.

Her litter brother Whiskey was #1 Hound and Top 10 among all breeds in 2018. They are the only littermates

to both be #1 Hound, the only littermates to win the AWC National Specialty, and the only littermates to win BIS at the AKC National Championship. Bourbon is now

the top-winning Whippet in AKC history, and only the second Hound in AKC's almost century-old history to win more than 100 Best in Shows.

"On a different note, Whiskey and Bourbon are probably the only littermates who have been on Good Morning America!"

WR: The American Kennel Club is older than 100 years, of course, but they started awarding BIS along modern lines in the mid-1920s. I do a lot of research in all-breed dog show history, and I can't think of another pair of littermates, since they first started publishing annual statistics in 1956, who have both been No. 1 in their Group for the year, and also placed among the Top 10 of all breeds. There were two Doberman Pinscher sisters who placed in Top 10 of all breeds in the 1970s, but only one of them was No. 1 Working Dog. You're making dog-show history!

Justin: That's amazing, but on a different note, Whiskey and Bourbon are probably also the only littermates who have both been on Good Morning America!



Bourbon and Cheslie in the ring. Photo by Rhonda Cassidy.

WR: What will Bourbon think of staying home now?

Cheslie: Bourbon enjoys being at home. She has a large grass paddock to run in and play with her other Whippet friends, and also spends lots of time snoozing on the bed. That being said, Bourbon was never lackluster on the road, or even close to what some may consider “burned out.” I think she could have happily continued showing, as she truly enjoys showing and the 100 percent attention she receives from Justin and me while on the road.

WR: Bourbon was born on September 2, 2015. I’m wondering about her career before she was famous. Was she shown at all in 2016, and how did she do at her first shows? I know she won her first all-breed BIS in late 2018, when she was already three years old. And then the campaign really started ...

Cheslie: Bourbon’s first shows were at the Penn Ridge Kennel Club in August of 2016. She was close to one year old. She was Reserve Winners Bitch under Jan Swayze-Curry and then Winners Bitch the next two days under Helen Stein and Dr. Robert Indeglia. Her next show was the American Whippet Club Southern Specialty, where she was Best in Sweepstakes at the MAWA specialty under Phoebe Booth and was Winners Bitch, Best of Winners and Best in Specialty from the 12-18 Month Bitch class under Raymond Yurick from Canada.

In 2017 Bourbon was shown at the



Left, Whiskey won BOB at the 2017 AWC National Specialty under judge Harold “Red” Tatro (Reglen Whippets). The following year Bourbon did the same under judge Christy Nelson (Runner’s Whippets). The trophy presenter in both photos is AWC National Show Chair Cindy Scott. Photo left by Kit Rodwell, right by Steve Surfman.



American Whippet Club National Specialty. She was very “green” and had only been shown sparingly. The judge was very kind and gave her many opportunities to get her act together, but she did not co-operate or show well enough to receive a placement. She did not perform very well at this show and did not place in the Open Bitch class.

She showed just a couple more times that year, at the Chicago Whippet specialty, the supported entries in Amana, Iowa, and one day at the 2017 AWC Southern specialty. She finished her championship in Chicago under Ken Murray, won her first Hound Group at Amana under Stacey Davis and then won the 2017 AWC Southern specialty under Iva Kimmelman. She also was Best in Specialty at the 2017 AWC South Central specialty under Mary Beth Arthur that fall, winning the supported entry the day prior under Cindy Scott.

In 2018 Bourbon went to just a few more specialties, including wins at the 2018

AWC Eastern Specialty under Donna Lynch, the AWC North Central Specialty under Claudia Miller and the AWC National Specialty under Christy Nelson. Of course, the National Specialty was the most important and thrilling win of 2018, if not her career. She also won both Chicago specialties that year.

We showed her one day at the AWC Southern Specialty in 2018, where she went from Best in Specialty under Al Miniero on to her first all-breed Best in Show under Marjorie Martorella. The AWC Southern Specialty was a very lucky show for Bourbon, as she won it for four consecutive years under Ray Yurick, Iva Kimmelman, Al Miniero and Randy Tincher.

This all might sound like quite a bit of showing, but prior to 2019, we only showed her at specialties, and many times just on the days of the actual specialties – not at the pre- or post-shows. She was at home for the most part.

“How can you ever imagine winning over 100 Best in Shows with a Whippet?”



Whiskey and Bourbon as puppies.

WR: What made you decide to start campaigning Bourbon seriously? After Whiskey’s great success in 2018, did you expect to do as well as you did?

Justin: We always thought both Whiskey and Bourbon were the quality of dogs that we would want to campaign. It was a natural progression to show Bourbon after finishing up with Whiskey. Even though Bourbon was so close to my ideal Whippet, I never in my wildest dreams could have imagined or expected her to do as well as she did. How can you ever imagine winning over

100 Best in Shows with a Whippet?

WR: Bourbon had an unusual career in that she had already won several specialty BIS before she was campaigned at all-breed shows. Was that a deliberate strategy on your part?

Justin: I don't think it was a deliberate strategy. After Whiskey was Best of Breed at the 2017 American Whippet Club National Specialty under Harold "Red" Tatro, III, we chose to continue showing him and campaign him. At the time of this win, Whiskey was basically a year and a half old, unknown dog. This national win truly set the stage for his campaign. He continued to show for the remainder of 2017 and all of 2018. Bourbon needed training and socialization and we enjoyed showing her at the specialties, so Cheslie took her to the specialties that were possible to attend, while I was off campaigning Whiskey to #1 Hound.

WR: At that National you won with Whiskey, didn't you also win the Stud Dog class with his sire?

Justin: Ringo won the stud dog class with Whiskey and Bourbon as his get in 2017 and 2018 under Denise Tatro and



Whiskey and Bourbon at home.

Molly Rule-Steele.

WR: Few top dogs can have started out with more breeder acclaim from specialty shows than Bourbon, leaving it to her brother to win at all-breed shows at first.

Justin: Aside from both Bourbon and Whiskey's incredible record at the all-breed dog shows, we are just as proud, if not more proud, of their specialty win records.

WR: They both also won the AWC Top 20 competition, maybe the People's Choice award as well. What was that like?

Cheslie: Yes, Bourbon won the AWC Top 20 competition in 2018, while Whiskey was awarded the People's Choice award. In 2019, Whiskey won both the Top 20 Competition and the People's Choice award again.

"I'll leave the question of who's the better one to personal preference and others' expert opinions."

WR: Getting back to the early days, I remember hearing about Bourbon all the way back in California when she won her first couple of specialties from the classes.

Justin: We thought she was exceptional and were pleased that so many of our fellow breeders and

breeder-judges thought so as well.

Bourbon won one specialty Best in Show from the classes, the 2016 AWC Southern specialty I mentioned above, in an entry of well over 100 Whippets. This is still one of our most memorable wins with Bourbon. She also won a specialty as a move-up, the day after finishing her championship under Todd Miller.

WR: There has long been speculation about who's the better of the two, Whiskey or Bourbon. Early in their careers, someone — Mary Dukes, I think — said that "Whiskey is better but she is sexier," meaning more exciting ... Who's the better one?

Justin: I think that it goes without saying that I think that they are both great Whippets. I still feel as though most Whippet breeders have so much more knowledge and experience than I do ... I'll leave the question of who's the better to personal preference and others' expert opinions.



Whiskey was BIS at the 2018 AKC National Championship in Orlando, Florida. Judge Elliot Weiss holds the BIS ribbon. Photo Vicki Holloway.

WR: I remember watching when Whiskey won the Breed and Bourbon was BOS at Westminster 2019, the year before she won the Group and Reserve BIS there. How frequently have they been shown at the same show, and who usually won?

Cheslie: No, it was in 2018 that Bourbon and Whiskey were both shown at Westminster under Johan Becerra-Hernandez, with Whiskey going Best of Breed and Bourbon as Best of Opposite Sex. Whiskey went on to a Group 4th that year under Jeffrey Pepper. Both were also shown at Westminster in 2019, which was Whiskey's last all-breed dog show, under Jamie Hubbard, and then Bourbon was Best of Breed and Whiskey was Best of Opposite Sex. Bourbon went on to a Group 2nd under Patricia Trotter. Last year, Whiskey was not shown, and Bourbon was Best of Breed and went on to Hound Group First and Reserve Best in Show.

Bourbon and Whiskey were only shown at the same show a few times on specialty weekends. While both won and lost, Bourbon usually won. It is also of note, and something we are very proud of, that there were many times at these major shows or specialties that one was awarded Best of Breed and the other was awarded Best of Opposite Sex.

WR: Of course, the quality of the dog is what you start with if you want to win a lot, but as you no doubt know by now, you need much more than that for a serious specials campaign: financial resources, the opportunity to travel, and above all a dog who's willing to perform a couple of hundred times a year. How's that been for you and Bourbon? Has she ever let you down? I think it would be quite natural if she had!

Cheslie: Once Bourbon was trained and used to the dog show environment, she never let me down. I think that if a mistake was made, it was likely handler error. Sorry, Bourbon!

A DEVOTED TEAM OF OWNERS



Judy Descutner, Cheslie, Dr. Ken Latimer and Nancy Shaw with Bourbon.

WR: How did you stitch together the team of owners who backed you at the shows?

Cheslie: Dr. Ken Latimer was an owner of both Bourbon and Whiskey from the very beginning of their careers. Judy Descutner was also a longtime friend and Whippet enthusiast. She generously offered to be a part of Bourbon's career while we were wrapping up Whiskey's campaign. Nancy Shaw was not a Whippet person but is a great friend and client (Justin won the National Specialty with her French Bulldog!) and happily agreed to round out our team when asked. We couldn't have put together a more devoted, encouraging or generous team to help us fulfill Bourbon's promise.

WR: Has Justin ever shown Bourbon? And have you shown Whiskey? Do you both travel to all the shows together?



Bourbon was Res. BIS at Westminster Kennel Club 2020 under judge Robert Slay. At the end of the year she had won more than 100 BIS, became the top-winning Whippet in the U.S. of all time, was No. 1 Hound and No. 2 of All Breeds 2020. Photo Ashbey.

Cheslie: Justin has shown Bourbon a couple of times and won a couple of groups on her along the way. I finished Whiskey's championship. We travel to most shows together, but in 2019, I traveled extensively with just Bourbon to many shows across the country.

WR: Any particular policy you adhered to during the campaign?

Cheslie: Generally, Bourbon would be entered at several shows each week and we would decide at the last minute where to go. I would love to have the money back that we spent on extra entry fees!

Even though Bourbon was shown from Palm Springs, California, to Miami, Florida, she was never flown at any time, in cabin or in cargo, during her campaign.

We tried to seek out judges that liked the breed, that we respected, and we often found that breeder-judges, or those that came from a Hound background, seemed to appreciate her more, especially on a Best in Show level, where Hounds are so often overlooked.

WR: I have it on good authority that you're friends with David Fitzpatrick, the owner and breeder of the Pekingese who was #1 All Breeds 2020. It must have been difficult to both socialize and compete at such an exalted level. How did that work?

Justin: I have been friends with David for many years and consider him not only a great friend, but one of my mentors in the sport of dogs. We competed at many shows in 2020. We generally had dinner almost every night at the shows and both stayed at each other's home while traveling in the area. Once we were out of the ring we were not competing!

WR: What was traveling and showing dogs in the time of COVID like?

Justin: We found that most dog shows maintained strict COVID protocols with masks and

social distancing required. We kept to ourselves for the most part, bringing our own food and spending time in our van, waiting to show – not socializing around the grounds. With entry limits and few shows to attend, we found ourselves looking for a show’s opening date, not closing date, to try to get our entries in a particular show. It was also different as there were frequent judge changes. It was a very different experience altogether.

WR: What do you feel is Bourbon’s greatest strength as a show dog? As a Whippet? Do you feel there is any difference between being a “good Whippet” and a “good show dog”?

Justin: I think Bourbon’s greatest strengths as a show dog is that she is a great Whippet. She wasn’t a dog that we ever expected to stand around baiting at the end of a seven-foot lead. That is just not her temperament. She has more of a classic Whippet demeanor, as she would do what you asked, but never saw any reason to stand around begging. I think that the Sighthound temperament is part of the reason Hounds are not always recognized on a Best in Show level, when they are competing with a Fox Terrier or Doberman. I think it is even more exceptional that she was rewarded on the Best in Show level displaying a true Sighthound attitude.

I think Bourbon’s greatest strengths as a Whippet are first and foremost that she maintains a beautiful and correct shape both standing and moving, her ideal smoothness and elegance, outstanding neck, along with a beautiful Whippet head.

WR: There must have been occasions when Bourbon was defeated and you were disappointed? Can you give some examples?

Cheslie: There were certainly several occasions when we were disappointed when Bourbon was defeated. That being said, we really try to focus on the positives.

WR: What about Whiskey’s career?



Cheslie’s first BIS with a Whippet, GCh. Bo-Bett’s Favorite Pick in 2016. Justin was Res. BIS with the Italian Greyhound GCh. Marchwind Barbara Ann.

Highs and lows? Justin, as a breeder, what do you feel are the best features of Whiskey vs. Bourbon? Anything you would like to improve?

Justin: Whiskey had an outstanding career in both the all-breed and specialty arenas. He was the #1 Hound in the U.S. in 2018 and ended his career with Best in Show and Best Bred-by-Exhibitor in Show at the 2018 AKC National Championship under Elliott Weiss. He was also Best in Show at two of the three pre-shows to this event of approximately 4,000 dogs each. He was Best in Show at the Kennel Club of Philadelphia under Geir Flyckt-Pedersen. His win record is 23 Best in Shows at all-breed shows and 131 Group Firsts, in addition to his specialty wins. We were particularly proud of this win record as an exceptional Whippet male. In my opinion, Whiskey’s best features are that he is moderate, perfectly sound, beautifully headed, and has what I consider ideal foot-timing in motion.

WR: What were the littermates like? I think you told me they were all sold as pets. How many were there? Have you seen them as adults? (A couple are on the internet in the Whippet Breed Archive.)

Justin: When this litter was born, we were heavily campaigning a Whippet and an Italian Greyhound for Carol Harris of Bo-Bett Farm. We also had another litter at the

same time that we were raising for Dr. Latimer. As much as I would have enjoyed raising more puppies from this litter of 10, we were very busy and it was not feasible for us. The litter was beautiful and deep in quality; however, we evaluated the puppies to the best of our ability at eight weeks old and placed the others in pet homes at that age. We have seen some littermates as adults and they are beautiful. But we are happy with our keepers!

WR: Justin, how did the breeding that produced Whiskey and

Bourbon come to pass? I have heard that you saw their dam at a show and immediately felt that she would be an excellent match for their sire. Is that true? What was it about her that attracted you? How come Yvonne Sovereign is listed as co-breeder?

Justin: I saw their dam, Ch. Sowagla Appraxin Patchouli, as a puppy in the classes at a specialty. I was attracted to her, because she was a larger bitch with outstanding conformation, and she had a beautiful head and expression. That day, I approached her breeder-owner Yvonne Sovereign about leasing her for a litter. Years passed and it was never mentioned again. Then Yvonne called me out of the blue and said Patchouli was in season and asked if I was still interested in leasing her. Yvonne set the terms for the lease. I paid a fee to lease Patchouli and Yvonne would stay on as co-breeder of the litter, but all puppies were mine and I would choose the sire. We agreed, and Patchouli was on the next plane to Atlanta.

Another reason I was interested in breeding Whiskey and Bourbon’s dam to our “Ringo,” Ch. Bo-Bett’s Lord of the Rings, was that he had crossed so well with a “Jake” daughter. Jake, of course, was Ch. Fleetwood Return To Sendr. There were numerous champions from that combination, including multiple BIS Ch. Bo-Bett’s Quick Pick, multiple Reserve BIS Ch. Bo-Bett Appraxin Angel and two other Group winners.

WR: Where were the puppies raised? How did you settle on Whiskey and Bourbon as your picks?

Justin: The puppies were born and

raised at my kennel in Sugar Valley, Georgia. I had been hoping for many years for an exceptional son of Ringo, and Whiskey was a standout from a very young age. I chose Whiskey as our keeper, and I liked Bourbon the best of the girls when I evaluated them at eight weeks old. We would grow them up and see how they developed from there. Whiskey was my pick of the litter from the start. Bourbon was a late bloomer and it really took her until about five months of age to come together.

WR: Did you repeat the litter?

Justin: No, the litter was not repeated.

WR: As far as I can see the pedigree that produced Whiskey and Bourbon is an outcross. Was that deliberate? I know that Whiskey was No. 1 sire of new AKC champions for 2019 (maybe for 2020 also?); do you feel that he's producing particularly well with any particular line? Any particular type of bitches?

Justin: Whiskey has produced well so far with several types of bitches; however, I would generally recommend a big and substantial bitch to be bred to him. He has also crossed well with both related and totally unrelated bitches. We are proud of the quality that he has produced thus far. We are also

just now seeing his influence in the second generation through his sons and daughters. Specifically, we have a Whiskey daughter, Pinnacle The Emerald City, that we are excited to watch develop. Also, the #1 Whippet in 2021 in the Breed System at the time of writing is his son, Ch. Longleson Fly Me To the Moon.

A LARGE INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE

WR: Quite a few overseas breeders — in Scandinavia, Europe and South America — have taken advantage of getting shipped frozen semen by Whiskey, which means that he will have a large international influence. How do you decide on the breeders who get

to purchase frozen semen, and do you retain some rights to approve the bitches? What have the results been like so far? Is it very complicated and

expensive to ship frozen semen overseas?

Justin: Most of the overseas breeders that have purchased semen have been well-established breeders and some are personal friends. We trust their judgment on what bitches should be mated to him. It is very uncomplicated for us to ship frozen semen, as our reproductive vet handles all the requirements and shipping. The buyer handles the expenses. We actually just shipped semen to Australia and the bitch is carrying a large litter for her owner. We even imported a puppy back by Whiskey from one breeding of Knut and Cecilie Blütecher in Norway, Showline Sterling Silver at Pinnacle, out of their import from Italy, Int. & Nord. Ch. Sobers Roseberry for Sporting Field.

WR: What about the foreign kennel clubs — do they have a lot of regulations you have to abide by?

Justin: The foreign kennel clubs are more complicated than the AKC, but we're happy to do our part in facilitating the breedings.

WR: Have you seen anything of Whippets abroad?

Justin: We had the opportunity to watch Whippets at the Melbourne Royal Dog Show in Australia while Cheslie judged the Junior Showmanship finals at this show a few years ago. We also have watched Whippets at Crufts in the past. It is always interesting and educational to see Whippets in other parts of

the world.

In 2019, I went on a vacation to Scotland with David Fitzpatrick and stayed with Bert Easdon and Philip Martin of Yakee Pekingese. Bert co-ordinated a fun dinner at Leigh Morris and George Waddell's of Crosscop Whippets, where we met their famous "Hazel" [*Ch. Nothing Compares To You at Crosscop JW. - Ed.*]. This was a fun and unique opportunity to visit her and her other fine Whippets.

When foreign travel becomes less complicated, I hope to continue our international travel and hope to see more great Sighthound entries around the world.

WR: Whiskey and Bourbon's sire, Ringo, has produced a lot of champions — about 60, I believe — but has their dam been bred to other dogs?

Justin: Patchouli was bred to other dogs, but since she wasn't our bitch, I haven't kept tabs on her puppies. [*The Whippet Breed Archive lists four other litters out of Patchouli, including at least three champions. - Ed.*]

WR: You talked about Patchouli above, but the sire, Ringo — how would you describe him?

Justin: I would describe Ringo as a dog that was a much better producer than he was an individual. He was very curvy with a beautiful neck and head, and quite



Ch. Bo-Bett's Lord of the Rings, sire of Whiskey and Bourbon, bred and co-owned by Carol Harris. Shown and co-owned by Justin. Photo Kit Rodwell.



Ch. Fleetwood Return To Sendr, imported from South Africa but with U.S.-born Sporting Field parents, is the maternal grandsire of Whiskey and Bourbon. Gray Photo by Cathy.

sound. However, he was fairly short-coupled and was a bit straight in front. He had an outstanding show-dog type temperament that he did pass on to many of his puppies. Ringo lived with me from around nine weeks old until his passing at 14 years old. I co-owned him with his breeder, Carol Harris.

WR: Are you familiar with any of the dogs further back in Whiskey and Bourbon's pedigree?

Justin: Yes, I am familiar with a number of the dogs in the pedigree, especially with the dogs in Patchouli's pedigree due to my close relationship with Calvin Perry of Appraxon. Many may not know that Jake, Patchouli's sire Ch. Fleetwood Return to Sendr, originally lived with me and was shown and finished his championship handled by me, when he was first imported from South Africa by Debbie Butt. Both his parents are Sporting Fields exports to South Africa, however.

WR: What was Jake like?

Justin: Jake was ultra-curvy, up on leg with very good movement. I always admired the Sporting Fields Whippets and actually spent a great deal of time there in the early 2000s. Debbie Butt asked if I would be available to pick up a dog she was importing at the Atlanta airport, and I happily obliged. This handsome young puppy was Jake; I was happy to keep him until he finished his championship. After that he went on to live with Yvonne Sovereign.

WR: You started early with Whippets, right? Tell us about how you became interested in Whippets and in show dogs generally. Was anyone else in your family interested in dogs?

Justin: I have always had an interest in show dogs, specifically Whippets. Around 1999 or 2000, I found a phone number for a Jaguar Whippet Kennel that was advertised in the back of a *Dog Fancy* magazine, and I gave them a call. They referred me to Kitty Williams, who co-bred with Calvin Perry. Calvin had a litter that was ready to go to their new homes. I was 16 years old when I purchased my first Whippet, Appraxon Lexus, from Calvin from this litter.

My family loves dogs, but they do not have any interest in dog shows. Lexus later

had a litter, sired by Ch. Jetstreams Bobby Sox. Calvin came down from Bristol, Tennessee, to my family home and took two of the puppies. I did keep one red brindle male and he was shown, although unsuccessfully. This was the first time that I showed a Whippet myself. If I was guessing, this would have been in 2002, the year I graduated high school.

WR: Where did you grow up?

Justin: I lived in Sugar Valley, Georgia, as a child and actually built a boarding kennel and home on the same property that has been in my family for generations.

WR: Didn't you also work for Mary Dukes in California as her assistant when she was a handler? Any

memories from that time? I obviously missed a great opportunity to get to know you then ...

Justin: I had the pleasure of working for Mary Dukes when she was showing the great Ch. Tivio's Fallingwater, a multiple BIS and SBIS winner, so that would have been around 2003 or 2004. I loved Lucia! It was a great learning experience in dog care and handling. It was also a great experience to see the quality and type of Whippets being exhibited on the West Coast.

With Mary, of course, it was of great importance to see how a top handler for Whippets and Italian Greyhounds operated — both breeds that I was very interested in: how the dogs were housed, groomed and conditioned. However, what was so fortunate for me was that I was the last live-in assistant she had before she took the job as an AKC rep. As



Justin with Ch. Tivio's Fallingwater in the early 2000s, when he worked for Mary Dukes in California.

she sorted out her clients I was the beneficiary of two very important ones, Dr. Fumio Koga of Japan and Lucy Doheny of Santa Barbara — both of whom were into Italian Greyhounds, not Whippets.

WR: You mentioned that you were also close to the late Cal Perry of the Appraxon Whippets for a while. Did you co-breed any litters?

Justin: From the point of getting my first Whippet from Calvin, I was very close to him. We traveled to many dog shows together and I made frequent trips to his home and kennel. Calvin was extremely generous with his time

and knowledge, and I made many wonderful friends within the dog fancy because of him. I consider him a major influence on my life in dogs. We co-bred a number of litters together. We even spoke about me inheriting his kennel name, and a number of dogs that I bred were registered under the Appraxon name. However, I think that Calvin Perry is synonymous with Appraxon and I needed to have my own kennel name. Prior to settling on my own kennel name about eight years ago, I was overwhelmed with and quite uncertain of how to choose your own prefix. It was a little daunting for someone young, new, and learning how things work in dogs.

Two bitches that we owned together were, first, "Bambi," Ch. Woodsia Appraxon Whitetail, who was born in 2002. She would be considered important as she was the first Whippet special that I showed. She was bred by Sue Rosenbeck and Calvin, who ended up



Ch. Woodsia Appraxon Whitetail, winning a big BOB from the classes in Louisville, Kentucky, under Claire Newcombe. "Bambi" was co-owned by Justin with the late Calvin Perry (right). Photo Booth by Greg.

"When foreign travel becomes less complicated, I hope to ... see more great Sighthound entries around the world."



Above, the kennels. Below, Justin's first Whippet litter, ca. 2002.



A favorite Best in Show photo: Bourbon wins Trinity Valley Kennel Club 2019 under Eddie Dziuk. Photo by Melia.



Justin with UK Ch. Nothing Compares To You at Crosscop JW, "Hazel," in Scotland in 2019.



Justin with his and Cheslie's Miniature Horse, the filly Pinnacle Legally Blonde, shown by Mike Rosauer to Reserve National Grand Champion in Tulsa, Oklahoma.



Cheslie was WB at the 2020 Papillon National Specialty with (Ch.) Wildfire Sunshine In My Pocket. Judge Jason Hoke. Photo Wilkerson.



Ch. Bo-Bett's Brindle Bombshell, born 2003, owned and bred by Justin. "I had no kennel name, so I asked Carol if I could use her kennel name." Photo Booth.



Carol Harris with the Italian Greyhound Ch. Bo-Bett Cute As A Button, Justin with Ch. Bo-Bett Bachelor's Button, sire of No. 1 Italian Greyhounds in U.S., South Africa and Japan.



At the AWC Southern Specialty in 2017, Bourbon won the second of four wins at this show, this time with Whiskey as BOS. The judge was Iva Kimmelman (Merci Isle). Bourbon was still a year away from her first BIS! Photo Don Meyer:

with her. I vividly remember him calling me telling me what a nice young bitch she was; I needed to come get her and show her. I did go get her, also became a co-owner, and she was the first dog that I was actively showing in Best of Breed, although still on a quite limited scale.

We took her to the National, and although she didn't place, she found a true fan in Patti Coles. She convinced Calvin to let her co-own her with Calvin and me. That was fine by me, as Patti generously paid for my show expenses! I thought that was wonderful and happily took Bambi to more shows. She was a Top 20 Whippet, my first, and I also took her out to the Cascade Hound Association show, which she won under Tom Kirstein. She lived with Patti when retired from showing.

The breeding that produced her was repeated and her younger full sister was also owned by Calvin, Patti and me: she was named Ch. Appraxin's Southern Belle at Hi Tor. She was WB, BOW and BOS at the National under Claire Newcombe in 2007, shown to this award by Patti.

Then there was "Blair," Ch. Appraxin Queen of the Jungle, born a few years after Bambi. She was raised by me, and Calvin and I owned her together. She was definitely a very important bitch for me. She was out of my first champion and sired by Jake. She won a Group 1st from the classes and was Top Producing Whippet Dam one year. Blair is the Ch. Fleetwood Return to Send daughter mentioned above that produced BIS, RBIS, and Group winners and was part of the reason that I was interested in leasing Patchouli for a litter. Although Whiskey and Bourbon don't come down from her, we still have this bitch line and it still produces some beautiful dogs.

SHOWING FOR BO-BETT

WR: How did you come to work for the Bo-Bett Whippets and Italian Greyhounds of Carol Harris?

Justin: My relationship with Carol Harris started very early. I was around 18 years old when I bred a bitch that I had purchased from Calvin to her stud dog, Ch. Bo-Bett's Red Rolls Royce. This litter produced my



Ch. Appraxin Queen of the Jungle, "Blair." Photo Julie Poole.

first homebred champion. A few years later, I purchased an Italian Greyhound from Carol, Ch. Bo-Bett Bachelor's Button. We co-owned him and our friendship developed further. Eventually, Carol's handler at the time retired, and I started handling both Italian Greyhounds and Whippets for Bo-Bett. This was a dream come true, as I idolized Carol and her program from the start of my involvement in Whippets. This was not

a typical or strictly handler-client relationship, as we discussed every breeding, every puppy, traveled to dog shows together and were much like family.

I cannot adequately express how much I learned about breeding, handling, choosing puppies, and kennel management while working for Bo-Bett. To this day, there is not a dog that I handle where I do not have Carol's voice in my head, giving me tips on what might make a dog look better. Working for Carol was the single most influential experience in my career and has shaped the breeder and handler that I am today.

I handled seven different all-breed Best in Show winners for Bo-Bett, and among these dogs was even my first homebred Best in Show-winner, Ch. Bo-Bett's Quick Pick, whom I mentioned above. She was bred and raised by me and owned by Carol. There were several other dogs that I bred and raised that I had the opportunity to show for Carol, such as Ch. Bo-Bett Appraxin Angel, Ch. Bo-Bett's Treasure Chest, Ch. Bo-Bett Appraxin Back Talk, etc.

WR: How many years did you work for Carol?

Justin: I handled for her around 13 years.

WR: Cheslie, you were breeding Papillons with

your mother when you met Justin, right?

Cheslie: We are still very active in showing and breeding Papillons. My mom has bred Papillons under the Wildfire prefix for more than 30 years. I finished my first Papillon when I was around seven years old and never looked back! We have bred a few all-breed Best in Show winners and a National Specialty Best in Show winner, along with other major winners at national specialties. Last year I bred and handled the Winners Bitch at the National, Ch. Wildfire Sunshine In My Pocket. My mother will judge the Papillon Club of America national specialty next year, and I have just been elected to the PCA Board of Directors.

WR: How do the Papillons get along with the Whippets, or with Bourbon?

Cheslie: We do not let the Papillons and the Whippets run together!

"There is not a dog that I handle where I do not have Carol's voice in my head, giving me tips ..."

WR: What did you think of the Whippets at first, as a Papillon breeder?

Cheslie: When Justin and I started dating, the Whippets really sparked my interest. Of course, I loved the dogs themselves. I also loved the comradery among the Whippet breeders and fanciers. I was also really fascinated with the specialties, as the Papillons do not have big specialties with great numbers, judged by breeders. They were also different than Pa-



Ch. Bo-Bett's Quick Pick, bred, raised and handled by Justin for owner Carol Harris. She won multiple all-breed Best in Shows in 2013, here under judge Kent Delaney. Photo Skibinski.

pillons and of interest to me, as many of the breeders worked together and shared dogs and lines with each other. Papillon breeders are not this way. The Whippets have truly sparked another passion in the sport of dogs for me. Actually, if I were to only own one breed, it would be a Whippet.

WR: A surprising number of Whippet breeders, at least in California, also show Papillons — Sue Vernon, Shellie Juden — very successfully. Why do you think that is?

Cheslie: It is very interesting ... I am not sure!

WR: What are your breeding plans for Bourbon?

Cheslie: Bourbon is confirmed pregnant via ultrasound to a black dog, Ch. Snow Hill Whistling In the Dark. She is due around March 10 — we could not be more excited!

WR: Maybe we can add something about the whelping before we go to print

Cheslie: I'm happy to share details and photos if she has whelped prior to going to print.*)

WR: Do you think you'll show either Whiskey or Bourbon again?

*) "Bourbon had five puppies — four dogs and one bitch on March 11: two brindle-and-white males, one black-and-white male, and one white male with black ears. The bitch is mostly white with a brindle spot on her side. Bourbon is a very good mom!"



An early snapshot of Cheslie with a Papillon, the breed she still is deeply involved in through her mother's Wildfire kennel.



Ch. Pinnacle Perfect Symphony, born 2019, a Whiskey granddaughter. Photo Jeff Hanlin.

Cheslie: While they are retired from being actively campaigned, we do plan to show them again at the occasional specialty and prestige shows. That is one great part about

Whippets — they are ready at the drop of a hat!

WR: What's the daily routine at home — feeding, exercise, grooming, etc.? And what facilities do you have? How many dogs? Do you have kennel help?

Justin: In 2007, I built a boarding facility, Kennels in the Country, in Sugar Valley. We have full-time staff for both our boarding clients and our personal dogs. I lived above the kennel until Cheslie and I married. We built a new house on the same property and also a small kennel by our house for our personal dogs. We have several large grass paddocks for the Whippets and Italian Greyhounds. We rarely use crates for our dogs, except for feeding and traveling. In my experience, nothing is better for conditioning a Whippet than large areas for them to run free with other dogs. This exercise also stimulates good appetites. Our dogs are fed twice per day; we feed Purina Pro Plan.

WR: Are you involved in any field activities?

Justin: Although we do not have the time to participate in coursing events, our stud dogs have produced field champions and dual champions, most recently Dual Ch. Snow Hill Thinking Out Loud, sired by Whiskey out of Ch. Snow Hills Devils Dance In Me. Ringo also produced Dual Ch.

Ableaim You're Still The One out of Ch. Ableaim Que The Music.

WR: Do you have any other breeds than Whippets?

Justin: We actively breed both Whippets and Italian Greyhounds here, while the Papillons are bred and raised at Cheslie's mother's home in Florida. And in recent years I have become very involved with Miniature Horses ... I think some people would think it's amusing to know that I use a professional handler to show them!

WR: Any plans to become judges? What's in the future for Pinnacle, Justin and Cheslie?

Justin and Cheslie: We would consider judging down the road, but not quite yet! We are enjoying our dogs so much at this time and attending a slightly less hectic show schedule. We enjoy breeding, developing young dogs, and showing dogs for some of our longtime clients.



Whiskey and Bourbon. Photo by Nathalie Jaklewicz.