

**CRUFTS SPECIAL**

Crufts is on March 8, 9, 10 and 11 at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham

**Thursday**  
Toys and Utility

**Friday**  
Gundogs

**Saturday**  
Working and Pastoral

**Sunday**  
Terriers and Hounds

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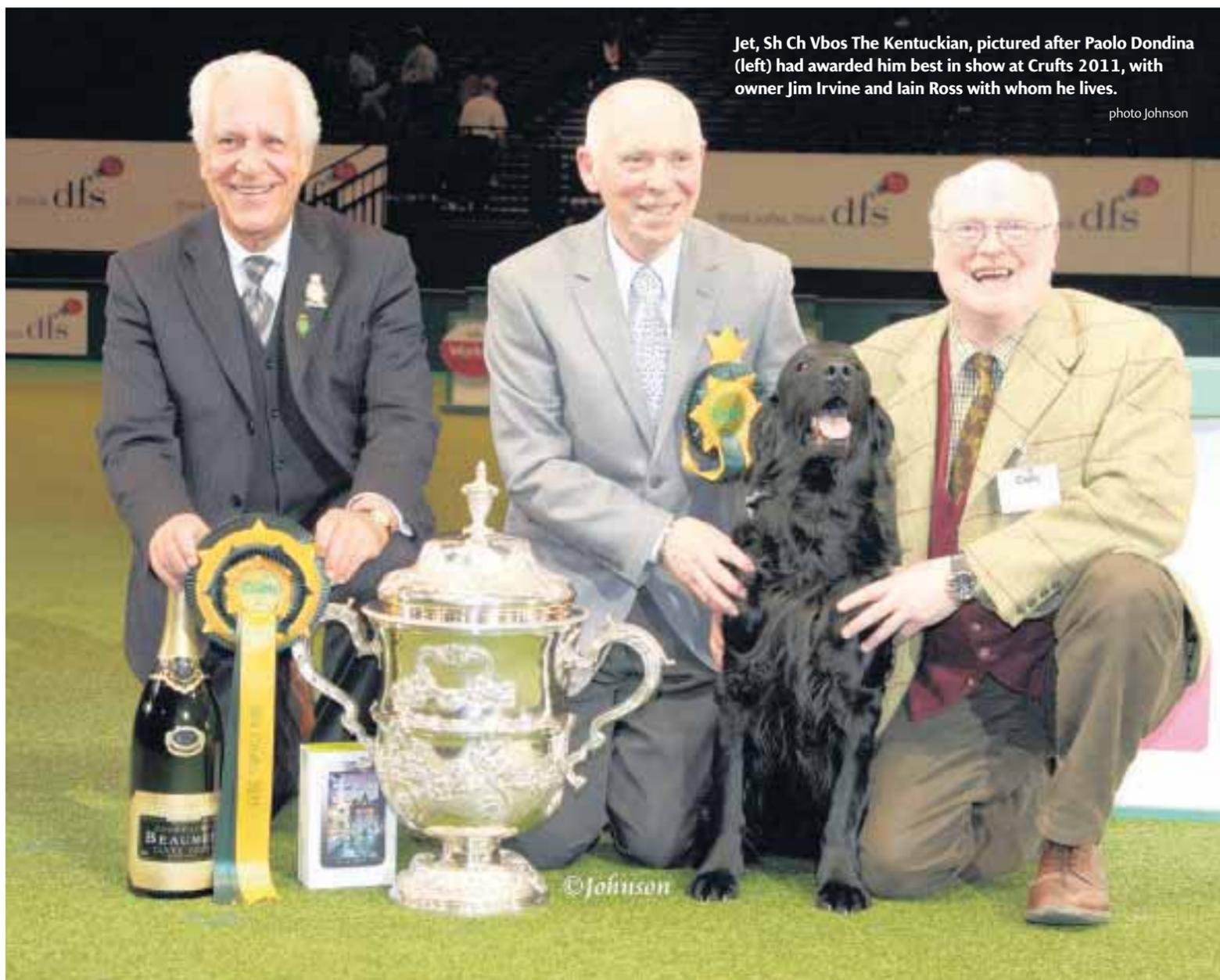
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Jet, Sh Ch Vbos The Kentuckian, pictured after Paolo Dondina (left) had awarded him best in show at Crufts 2011, with owner Jim Irvine and Iain Ross with whom he lives.

photo Johnson

## THE JET-PROPELLED VETERAN

### The story of the oldest ever best in show winner at Crufts - by BONNIE SCOUGALL

IF ANYONE was looking for a stunning example of the Kennel Club 'Fit for Life' initiative, they need search no further than last year's Crufts best in show winner. The Flat-coated Retriever **Sh Ch Vbos The Kentuckian** – or Jet as he is more informally known – was nine-and-a-half years old when Paolo Dondina selected him to triumph over the contenders sent forward from the other six groups. Jet can lay claim to being the oldest dog to achieve the prestigious Crufts accolade throughout the show's 120-year history.

His happy, almost laughing, expression and superb condition portrayed the perfect advertisement for pedigree show dogs as he radiated the impression of health and vitality.

Jet has a fascinating story but I'll start at the beginning with some information about his breeder and present owner, Jim Irvine.

Jim lives with his wife Carole in South Queensferry, very close to the Forth Bridges in Edinburgh, and has enjoyed great success with the breed since obtaining his first Flatcoat from the famous Scottish exhibitor/breeder Vilma Ogilvy-Shepherd in 1981. This was **Sh Ch Vbos Video** who won three CCs, gaining his title in 1989 at almost eight years of age.

In 1985, Video was joined by his nephew **Vbos Vervine**, another male from Miss Ogilvy-Shepherd. He won four CCs, also gaining his title in 1989 aged four.

It wasn't until 1993 that Jim bought his first bitch. This was Jet's grandmother **Sh Ch Gayplume Fine Fashion of Dravidian**, a daughter of the bitch CC record holder **Sh Ch Gayplume Dixie**. Fine Fashion won 14 CCs, including one at Crufts in 1998, the year she gained her title, and she was top bitch in 2000. She also secured a group placing at championship show level.

Dravidian was Jim's original affix but after the death of Miss Ogilvy-Shepherd, he was gifted her Vbos affix and let the Dravidian affix lapse.

Jim seldom breeds a litter, only doing so when he wants something for himself; in fact he has bred only three litters.

The first litter out of Fine Fashion, by her half-brother **Sh Ch Branchalwood Strathfinnan**, produced Jet's dam **Sh Ch Vbos Lady From Louisiana**. She won two of her 14 CCs at Crufts.

Lady was mated to **The Sorcerer's Apprentice from Jaeva**, who had won two CCs, and she produced ten puppies on August 30, 2001. This litter blended many of the breed's most successful lines and strongly featured **Ch/Ir Ch Shargleam Blackcap** who secured BIS at Crufts in 1980. He was the CC record holder and an outstanding stud dog.

Jim retained a bitch from the litter but one particular male kept catching his eye and Jim would have liked to keep him. John (Jock) Ross was a close friend and he and Jim usually travelled to shows together. In fact, Jim had helped Jock campaign his Flatcoat **Sh Ch Kintore of Rosenberg** to his title in 1994. They agreed that Jock would have the male puppy and he would be kept in joint ownership. This male puppy was Jet.

Jim's bitch puppy went on to become **Sh Ch Vbos Lady From Monterey** and another male became **Sh Ch Vbos The Tycoon**.

Jet did not do a tremendous amount of winning as a youngster, gaining just a few firsts in junior as he was a slow maturer, so the limelight was generally on his faster maturing brother Tycoon.

Jock lived in the picturesque area in the hills above the village of Glenfarg in Perthshire and his garden stretched to around six acres. He loved hillwalking and



The moment of decision...

photo Johnson

# SH CH VBOS THE KENTUCKIAN, Flat-coated Retriever dog, born August 30, 2001, bred and owned by Jim Irvine

The Sorcerer's Apprentice from Jaeva	Sh Ch Shiredale Magic And Mystery at Wistosa	Ch Shargleam Kestrel	Ch/Ir Ch Shargleam Blackcap	Ch Damases Tarquol of Ryshtot
			Ch Shargleam Water Pipit	Ch Yonday Willow Warbler of Shargleam
		Sh Ch Wizardwood Black Magic of Shiredale	Ch Shargleam Sparrow Hawk	Oakmoss Woodpecker of Shogun
			Wizardwood Lark	Shargleam Bunting (sister to Blackcap)
				Wizardwood Tawny Owl
	Fosdyke Keepsake at Jaeva	Fosdyke Illustrious	Ch Shargleam Kingfisher (by Blackcap)	
			Sh Ch Llecan Dove	
		Shardik Dove of Fosdyke	Ch Shargleam Kestrel (by Blackcap)	
			Ch Rase Iona of Fosdyke	
			Ch/Ir Ch Shargleam Blackcap	
Sh Ch Vbos Lady From Louisiana	Sh Ch Branchalwood Strathfinnan	Sh Ch Kenjo Black Mark	Ch Falswift Apparition	Ch/Ir Ch Shargleam Blackcap
			Kenjo Black Hyacinth	Ch Halstock Primula of Ravenscrest
		Sh Ch Branchalwood Fionnlighe	Sh Ch Emanon Park Gate Boy	
			Ch Branchalwood Stroan	Treetbet Black Diamond (by Blackcap)
			Sh Ch Branchalwood Benvane	Ch/Ir Ch Shargleam Blackcap
	Sh Ch Gayplume Fine Fashion of Dravidian	Sh Ch Kenjo Black Mark	Ch Falswift Apparition	Ch Halstock Primula of Ravenscrest
			Kenjo Black Hyacinth	Sh Ch Emanon Park Gate Boy
		Sh Ch Gayplume Dixie	Ch Candease A Hard Days Night	Treetbet Black Diamond (by Blackcap)
			Ch Gayplume Pirouette	Ch Heronsflight Pan's Promise
				Shargleam Snow Bunting of Candease (ex Bunting)

spent many hours out walking with Jet. This meant Jet built up a tremendously muscular frame and was certainly extremely fit but sometimes on the lean side. Jet accompanied Jock everywhere and was his constant companion, so he was very well socialised.

Sadly, Jock died in December 2003, aged 87. His son Iain agreed to keep Jet but still allowed Jim to show him and he was transferred solely into Jim's name. Iain has many other interests but whenever he was able to, he began accompanying Jim and Jet to shows and a strong friendship has developed over the years. Even after Jock's death, Jet still had his same routine and Iain lived in his father's home, so Jet still had the freedom to run in six acres of secure land.

Jet's first CC came at WELKS in April 2004 – his dam took the BCC and BOB that day. His crowning CC was achieved at Manchester '05 when his brother was reserve. He continued to win consistently and was BOB at Crufts 2008 when he was also shortlisted in the group. He topped the breed in '07 and '08.

This was a period when the gundog group was particularly strong; it's always a strongly contested group but at this time especially so as it was dominated by the record-breaking Vizsla Yogi who was BIS at Crufts in 2010. Jet was G2 behind Yogi five times!

When Jet was almost eight years old, he at long last won his first group. This was at East of England in 2009 and he then went on to secure BIS under the late Captain Ken Hogg from South Africa. He was only the second of the breed to gain a UK all-breed BIS, the first being his ancestor Blackcap.

This set Jet off on the road to many top-flight awards. Later in 2009, he was BIS at the premier gundog event, National Gundog, a show where he had previously been twice RBIS and also G3. He



Jet's final show-ring appearance was at his local show, the Scottish Kennel Club in May 2011, where he broke the breed CC record and won his third all-breeds BIS. Mike Gadsby (second left) was awarding BIS at this level for the first time and also pictured are convener Irene McManus, show manager Willie Campbell and Alison Morton of Royal Canin.

photo Johnson

En route to his Crufts triumph, Jet was the group under Dr Ron James. Margaret Holmes (right) presented the trophy. Sadly Margaret died later in 2011. Runner-up was Judith Carruthers' Irish Water Spaniel Sh Ch Stanegate Sparks Will Fly.

photo Johnson



Jet and Jim storm round the big ring at the NEC.

photo Johnson



topped the group at Paignton under Gordon Haran and went on to RBIS under Steve Hall. He also won the group at SKC in August and Gundog Society of Wales.

Success at the highest levels continued in 2010 and he topped the gundog 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 has also been awarded BIS and RBIS at the United Retriever Club.

In 2011, he won the group at both Boston and Manchester and then triumphed in the group at Crufts before going on to claim the ultimate award of BIS at Crufts.

Jet has not been used extensively at stud but has sired a litter in Finland. From this artificial insemination mating which produced ten pups, three have already gained their Finnish title, another has two CCs and three have one CC. Another is proving his worth as a Finnish blood tracking champion. He has five champion progeny from a US litter, which includes a group-winning grand champion.

In the UK Jet has a son out of the Swedish imported bitch **Ch Almanza Thank God Its Friday of Kulawand, Ch Kulawand Love To Remember**. Remmi has four CCs but during December he proved he has brains as well as beauty as he gained his gundog working certificate and his show gundog working certificate.

But aside from his show success, what is Jet like to live with? As you would imagine from the happy, biddable impression he gives when in the show ring, he is very much a quiet, unassuming lad who is easy to live with and he has the most superb temperament.

Most dogs exhibited by Scottish owners have to spend a great deal of time travelling in cars and Jet is no exception. He loves to jump in the car and settles down quite happily.

One of Iain's interests is vintage cars and he often attends rallies taking Jet along with him whenever possible. Sometimes, if Iain is attending race meetings at which dogs are not allowed for safety reasons, Jet spends the weekend at his second home with Jim and Carole, settling in very well with their bitches. He also likes nothing better than to clamber up onto Iain or Jim's knee to watch TV and of late has taken to laying his head on their shoulder and promptly dropping off to sleep.

Jet's win at Crufts presented Jim with a dilemma – he was so close to achieving the breed CC record, did he continue to show him or retire him at the top?

As Jet was still enjoying being in the centre of the show ring, Jim finally decided to enter him at a couple more shows. This decision certainly paid off as at the Scottish Kennel Club in May 2011 Jet was awarded CC number 64 from 61 different judges during an eight consecutive year period, his 15th group win and then went on to gain his third all-breeds BIS under Mike Gadsby.

I have to add that my own particularly abiding memory of Jet, aside from his Crufts BIS win, was watching him doing a lap of honour at last year's SKC Top Dog competition. Although Jet had qualified, as he did most years, Jim sportingly decided to withdraw him. The soundtrack played in the background as Jet went round was the song *Jet* by Paul McCartney and Wings from their *Band On The Run* album. Having got into his stride and enjoying every minute, he continued round again, this time to the accompaniment of *Simply The Best* – a magnificent sight and it truly summed up Jet!

To finish, I cannot do any better than quote some of Mike Gadsby's words in his critique when he awarded him BIS as Jet's final show-ring achievement before retiring at SKC in May last year: "This grand old man belies his senior years looking fit, in hard condition and in perfect bloom. Not often are we treated to a show dog that gives a physical reaction but The Kentuckian does this with so many affected by tears, goosebumps and hair standing on end. He started the day with a record, ended it in perfect style with a BIS on home turf, the perfect finale for this near-perfect show dog."



Jet's first all-breed BIS came at East of England 2009 where he and Jim are pictured with chairman John Orbell, mayor Irene Walsh, judge the late Captain Ken Hogg from South Africa and chief executive Andrew Mercer.

photo Johnson

After several near misses Jet finally took BIS at National Gundog 2009. Also pictured are Brain Cleveley of Dorwest Herbs, Angela Phillips of Challenge Dog Food and judge Ernie Darby.

photo Waddell



Jet's sire The Sorcerer's Apprentice from Jaeva with owner Jill Saville.



An informal shot of Pat Chapman's Ch/Ir Ch Shargleam Blackcap, the only other Flatcoat to win BIS at Crufts, Jet's predecessor as CC record holder and his multiple ancestor. Judge was Harry Glover and Princess Antoinette of Monaco presented the awards.

photo Garwood/Dog World



Jet's son Ch Kulawand Love To Remember.

photo Kulawand



Jet's granddam, Jim's foundation bitch Sh Ch Gayplume Fine Fashion of Dravidian, one of a long line of titled bitches.



Jet was a slow maturer. Here he is pictured at 12 months.



Jet was originally co-owned with Jock Ross who is pictured with him and his sister Vbos Lady Of The Hills. Since's Jock's death Jet has lived with his son Iain.



Jet's dam Sh Ch Vbos Lady From Louisiana.