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The Stevens Residence in Khakum Wood

Why Brae Tarn Wants True Danes

R. P. Stevens, Greenwich, Connecticut, Believes These Canine Giants Most Dependable

By ARTHUR FREDERICK JONES

Photographs by R. W. Tauskey

IT is a matter of history that the outstanding successes in military, social, political and scientific realms have depended upon leadership, brilliance and dependability. The three are, in fact, interdependent, although the third quality is often overlooked due to the sensational character of the others. Perhaps dependability has played a stronger hand in the last successes initiated by leadership and brilliance than ever imagined, for the very nature of dependability makes it obscure. To be dependable is to be able to perform continually, day after day, a



A FREQUENT SCENE

The still beauty of Khakum Wood is often heightened by the swans which float past, close by the shore of the small lake

certain grade of reasoning, technique or loyalty. In other words, it is something upon which others may count in advance.

AND it was of dependability that I thought when, recently, I visited the splendidly fashioned Brae Tarn Kennels of R. P. Stevens in Khakum Wood, Greenwich, Connecticut, for there one may find a group of outstanding Great Danes—the very embodiment of dependability. The observation is made not on their physical appearance, but upon the records of hundreds of years.



THE KENNEL-STABLE IS WELL PLACED

The landscaping of the Stevens property has been accomplished so well, and the buildings so tastefully planned and located, that one does not realize their size until after making a close inspection of the property

As in many other breeds, authorities differ as to the nation from which the Great Dane originated, but there are many reasons to believe that this majestic dog appeared first in Denmark—a land of stern seafaring men. Later, it was taken to Germany and became known there as the German boarhound.

Regardless of conflicting stories as to its origin, the breed is surrounded by glorious tales of achievement, honor, and royal recognition. The giant Dane was always associated with hunting that required the ultimate in courage with a place in the folklore and traditions of varied peoples; and with acclamation as one of the “noble” strains—or those which were acceptable as royal gifts. And, truly, the Great Dane was a noble dog in every sense of the word.

IN ancient times there were not many who could afford to maintain these massive dogs, for often an entire family could exist on the amount of food consumed by a Dane. But that was not the principal reason the breed was reserved for the peerage. Great Danes

were maintained on baronial estates for the sport they afforded in hunting the larger quarry. The ruling or titled class did not desire the peasants and serfs poaching on their preserves, and consequently they occasioned the passage of edicts forbidding any one outside their own class owning and using the Great Dane and other large breeds.

THE tradition established in those earlier days has come down through the centuries. The Dane is not a dog to be found in great numbers. He is



THUS ARISES THE APPROPRIATE NAME

Brae Tarn signifies “beautiful wooded banks leading down to the water,” and in this especially artistic photograph, one may form an idea of why Mr. Stevens so named his place in Khakum Wood

restricted to certain outstanding kennels, and he has reaped a just reward. Unlike some breeds where incessant and often ill-advised breeding has produced a deplorable downward range in quality, the specimens of the Great Dane found on the show bench and in the home are very well put together.

THIS condition, also, is in some measure accountable for the wonderful disposition of this worthwhile dog. There has been no taint of bad blood introduced that there might be a multitude of dogs. He has been bred clean and true for many generations. Strong and lively, fearsome in appearance to wrongdoers, the Dane is one of the gentlest creatures on the earth.

One is impressed, immediately, by that Dane’s aspect of power in restraint. And that impression is not an illusion, for it is a well-established fact that this breed can be controlled only by an appeal to his sense of loyalty and obedience. He is too large a dog to be ruled by force or coercion. At least, it could not be done by the ordinary person.

Brae Tarn schools its dogs in obedience from a young age, but it does not go in for the varied forms of training, such as police and field work, which have gained a certain vogue in England and in some parts of this country during the past few years. It is the opinion of Mr. Stevens that such specialized training is not intended for the Dane, although he does not doubt, for a moment, but that they might assimilate it. Still, it is not his intention to produce dogs for any specialized work. There is no need of it at his kennels.

In conversation with Mr. Stevens it was easily understood why the Brae Tarn Kennels, still in its third year of existence, has made such progress in a sport that is highly specialized and beset with difficulties. But it has been the experience of the owner that the problems encountered in raising and showing dogs may be solved far more easily than of the complexities that arise in more serious business. Perhaps it should be explained to Mr. Stevens that this country’s

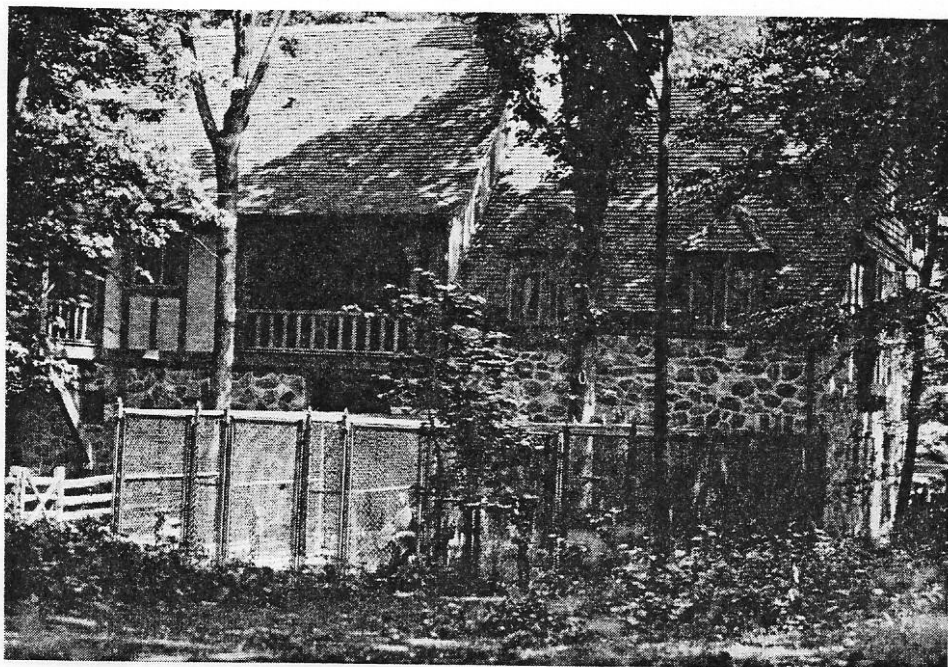
ing engineers. Ineed, he is the holder of that most unusual of engineering degrees—a doctorate—and the analysis and the solution of problems constitute the particular forte of the engineer.

THE kennels of Great Danes, which bears the Brae Tarn prefix, came not as the result of the desire for a stated objective. Nor was there any long established policy to be attained. They took shape, rather, from a general interest in dogs long entertained by the entire Stevens family, with a particular interest in the splendidly dispositioned and noble looking Dane. In some measure this was aided by the friendship of Mr. Stevens for the late George K. Riley, owner of the Erin Dane Kennels. Many of the dogs now at Brae Tarn were purchased from Erin Dane.

The buildings now in use were put up at the same time that Mr. Stevens built a home in that charming Greenwich development, Khakum Wood. Originally Khakum Wood was a part of a tremendously large estate. The Stevens' place is, possibly, the most original and attractive in the entire section, the massive stone and brick house standing above a swan lake, whose banks are wooded and steep. Indeed, the natural formation and character of the land was responsible, in part, for the selection of the name Brae Tarn. Tarn is a Scotch word referring to wooded banks sloping to the water. Brae means beautiful, in Scottish; but it also contains the first initial of both Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, their daughter, and their son. Thus evolved Brae Tarn.

The entire property comprises about 18 acres, but it is so tastefully and cleverly laid out that it seems many times that size. The residence—or manor house—is built on the highest piece of ground. It is flanked on three sides by smooth lawns running off into the forest land, which has been so thinned that the summer breezes are not cut off before they reach the manor house. Directly in back of and considerably below the house is the lake.

Off to the left, and at some distance, is the large swimming pool; 75



THE RUNS OF BRAE TARN KENNELS

In the center of this illustration are seen the individual runs leading from the pens where the Brae Tarn Danes make their homes. At the left is part of the paddock fence, and in the background the sleeping porch of the kennel manager's apartment

feet long and 25 feet wide. This pool is built above the ground, on a side hill, and the framework is of rough stone and slate. A double staircase leads up from the lawn, while at ground level are dressing rooms and the special pumping station.

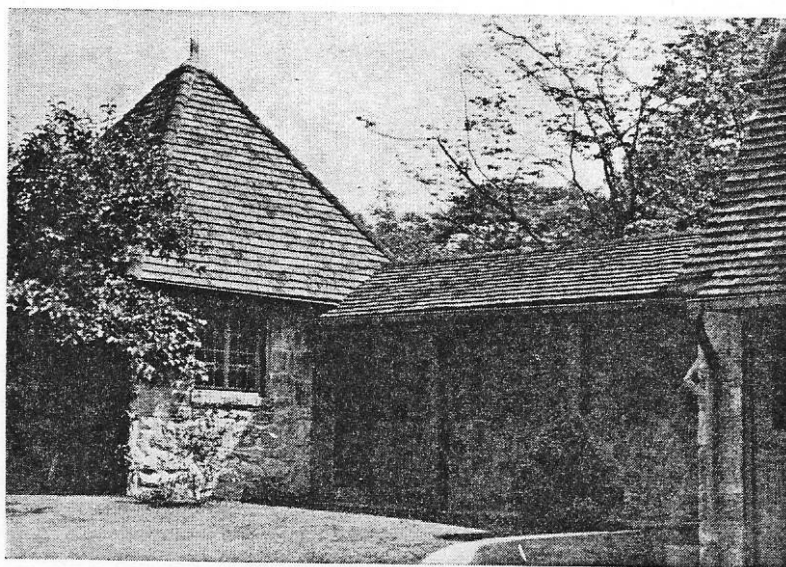
THE driveway sweeps up to and past the fourth—or front side—of the house. The combined kennel-stable-garage is located far to the right of the residence at the end of the roadway. A rustic stone wall flanks the

driveway, extending from the house to the large courtyard of the combined building.

This building has been so well placed that its size cannot be guessed easily. In fact, it is not until one has seen how much it really contains that any concrete idea is possible. Suffice it to say that, at present, on the first floor one may find the kennel, the stable, the garage, the tack rooms, a dog kitchen, a furnace room, a tool shed, an incinerator and store rooms. On the second floor, there are two large apartments, a hay loft, and more storage space. Surrounding the building are the mentioned courtyard, a large paddock for the horses, and the runs for the dogs.

THE main portion of the building is about 80 feet long by 30 feet wide. There is a small door on the end, facing the manor house; and double doors at the side, into the paddock, and also at the other end of the structure. Slightly less than half the length of the building is devoted solely to dogs.

If one enters at the small door he steps into a passageway about 4 feet



A QUIANT CORNER AT BRAE TARN

Everything at Brae Tarn conforms to the general scheme of the architect, no detail having been overlooked to make the place attractive. The covered walk above connects garage and pump house

wide which extends about 33 feet to the stable. Midway in the wall of the left side of this passageway, is a door leading into another passageway, off which open the pens for the dogs. This construction is very useful. There are many times when it is desirable to close the dogs off from the rest of the building. And this would be impossible without the two passageways mentioned. The outer passageway wall is solid to shoulder height. Above that, it consists almost entirely of windows. Upon the right of the outer passageway are the kitchen and the furnace room.

There are four pens, each 6 x 8 feet, connecting with individual runs. Half the pen is taken up by a sleeping bench, raised about eight inches off the wooden floor. Straw bedding is used the major part of the year, but in the hot weather cedar shavings are substituted to combat fleas. Each pen has a hatch controlled from the passageway. The window in each pen has a heavy grill over it to prevent the dogs breaking the glass and possibly being injured. The partitions between pens are of wood and solid, rising to a height of about 9 feet. The partitions between the pens and the passageway are of wood halfway up, and then of iron grillwork.

There is a water outlet at each pen so that there is little trouble in cleaning, which is done frequently. In fact, the entire place was spotless the day of my visit, and there was not the slightest trace of odor. The pens are never permitted to be in poor condition. They are scrubbed and disinfected every day. As a matter of fact, the dogs, too, are just as clean as their quarters. It is not necessary to wash them as frequently, especially in cold weather, but from late spring until fall, they are watched very carefully and rubbed down with a non-irritating disinfectant at brief intervals.

THE kennel passageway has been decorated very attractively in an appropriate manner. The end and side walls are well covered with the framed championship certificates of the leading dogs, and also with framed copies of their five-generation pedigrees. Also, there are a number of framed collections of ribbons adorning the wall. This decoration takes away some of the aus-

terity of the place, lending true color.

The individual runs are about 40 feet long by 6 feet wide. They are paved with cork blocks imbedded in concrete. Originally the owner tried out concrete, but soon discovered that a heavy dog—such as is the Great Dane—is likely to contract foot trouble if always upon such a hard surface. The cork blocks have proved quite satisfac-



MISS STEVENS SHOWS THEM

The daughter of Brae Tarn's owner is seen with Ch. Gross Lord v. Reisenfeld and Ch. Cita v. Schloss Nymphenburg, two splendid harlequins

tory. But when impending shows make it necessary, the Brae Tarn Danes are placed in a special cinder run. This tightens up their feet in a very short time.

Of course, the dogs have considerably more exercise than is afforded by these runs. Daily, they are taken out in the grounds at certain hours, and the sloping nature of the wooded property leading down to and around the lake gives the muscles of their legs a splendid chance to develop. There are no weakly moving Danes at Brae Tarn, and they all have a very keen look about them.

The kennel kitchen is a well-equipped room, although everything has been so efficiently and compactly arranged that there is no waste space. At the left of the door one finds the electric refrigerator and a large kerosene oil stove. Facing the door are the sink, cupboards, and a shelf for holding the feed pans. A meat grinder also is attached to this shelf. At the right

of the door are the large, metal lined, food bins.

THE adjacent furnace room really has nothing to do with the kennel, but it is an important spot in the building. To see this immaculate room is to scrap all one's pre-conceived impressions as to what a furnace room should be like. Using oil for fuel, operated electrically, and controlled by thermostats, there is nothing external about the furnace which can cause dirt. While the furnace is situated right next to the kennel and the stable, practically no artificial heat is used on the first floor. The pipes which run along the ceiling to supply the apartment on the second floor are well insulated so that very little heat leaks out.

The stable is a spacious, airy, division. It contains four box stalls, about 10 x 10 feet. And there is still a great deal of open space. There are double doors at the end and at the side. Space is afforded in the broad corridors to groom the horses and even to give them some exercise. But the stable is mentioned mainly because part of it has been converted to canine uses.

Two of the box stalls have been taken over by the kennel department as whelping pans.

While not designed for dogs, these really make ideal places to keep these big matrons. The stable is much quieter than the kennel, it being possible to shut the connecting door between the two sections. Then, too, the stalls are considerably larger than the pens, and thus give the bitch more opportunity of moving about without crushing any of her puppies.

As the stable has a wood block floor, the stalls used for whelping purposes have been provided with burlap or bagging carpets. This is to give the young puppies better footing. They do not slip about and strain young muscles and tendons when they attempt to walk on bagging. Of course, each of the stalls used for whelping is provided with a commodious sleeping bench raised slightly off the floor.

In addition to the accommodations mentioned as being in the combined building, there is another structure at the other end of the property. This is a small building, 12 x 12 feet, and con-



CH. YOUNG ARKUS V. FRAUENLOB

This attractive golden brindle is an outstanding show competitor. Recently he sired a fine litter out of Paula

taining only two pens. It is used principally for bitches in season, but its gravel runs are often utilized to condition the feet of show specimens. These runs are rather ample affairs, 50 feet long by 7 feet wide. They are enclosed on sides and top by a heavy type of mesh wire.

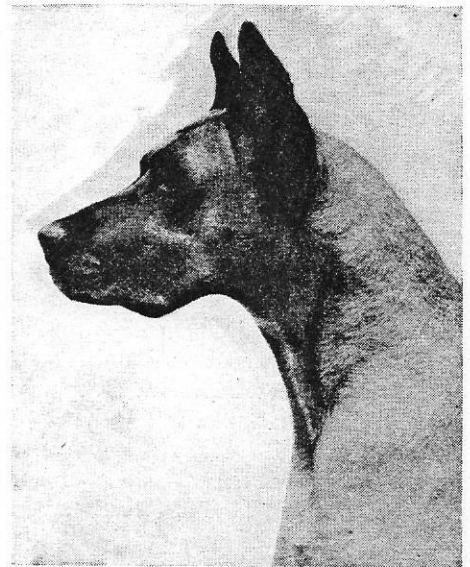
While the arrangements that have been detailed are splendid, they are not sufficiently large for the increasing number of Brae Tarn Danes, as a result, some time ago, plans were drawn up for an additional kennel which will be erected on an adjoining piece of the Stevens property. It will take care of the young stock and those members of

the kennel that, momentarily, are not engaged in show activities or in breeding. The show specimens will be retained in the main building which is the nearest to the residence.

BRAE TARN has been maintaining for some little time a matter of 12 or 14 Great Danes. There is to be a normal increase over this number, some of the puppies being retained for breeding purposes and one or two adults being added in order to bring certain characteristics into the line toward which Brae Tarn is aiming. The kennel never will be allowed to grow so large that it is unwieldy. In fact, there could be little worse in the dog game than a kennel of such size that individual attention is impossible.

The atmosphere at Brae Tarn is one of lively interest upon the parts of everyone. All members of the Stevens family are quite keen about these majestic Danes, and they are fortunate in having a kennel manager who not only knows his business, but supervises the care of his charges with as much concern as if they were his own. That means a great deal in conducting a kennel.

Particular care is devoted to the feeding of the dogs. They receive nothing but that which has been proven of absolute wholesome value. But, of course, there is no radical difference between the feeding at Brae Tarn and at any of the other big successful kennels. The differences are slight, and some might overlook them entirely. In reality, they are the result of those little bits of knowledge which come



CH. PAULA OF ERIN DANE

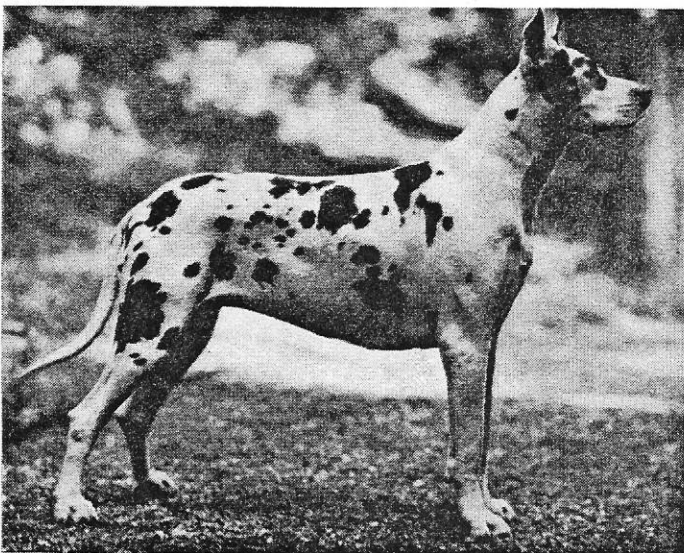
This splendid specimen had an excellent record in the ring, and is now proving a very good brood matron

with experience and which often spell success.

AMONG the foods one finds bone meal, biscuit, beef, lamb, beef broth, and cereals. The beef and lamb are usually cooked. Usually there is a "kennel soup" poured over the biscuit. Canned salmon is used once a week, and canned tomatoes occasionally. The puppies have plenty of milk and eggs, although care must be taken that the stomachs of the youngsters do not sour. They also get beef and puppy biscuit.

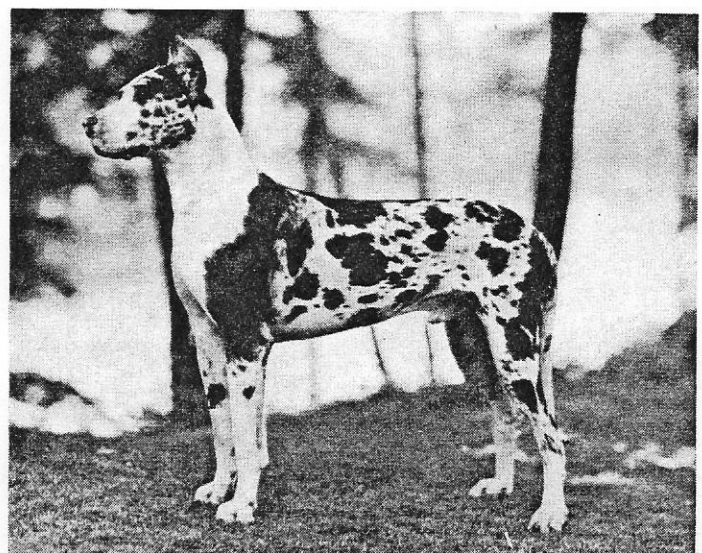
Salt is usually mixed with the dogs' food, (this not only giving them a cer-

(Please turn to page 80)



CH. CITA V. SCHLOSS NYMPHENBURG

This is an especially well put together bitch, all her points being notable. After a great record, she is now retired to the brood matrons' department



CH. GROSS LORD V. REISENFELD

When shown with Cita, this rugged, heavily boned male helps to form a brace that is close to unbeatable among harlequin Great Danes

(the bit on p 80 is missing - this is from p 81)...

No attempt has been made here to describe the manner in which these foods are given, because no diet should be prescribed by any but someone who is in direct touch with a kennel, preferably a veterinarian. Different dogs vary so much in the foods they are capable of digesting, and there are many local or specific problems to be taken in effect. Thus the mention above of the food is merely to show that a successful kennel has not found it necessary to use policies of feeding diametrically changed from those accepted in other places. The big thing in feeding is regularity, and after that a bit of common sense as to when to change a diet that is, undoubtedly, inherently good, but probably terribly monotonous to the dog. Monotony often can cause a dog to lose his appetite.

One of the greatest of the splendid array of Danes at Brae Tarn is that beautiful harlequin bitch, Ch. Cita v. Schloss Nymphenburg. She had a wonderful record in the show ring, but now she has been retired to matronly duties. At the time of my visit, she was in whelp to that other splendid harlequin, Ch. Gross Lord v. Reisenfeld. Cita is especially well put together for a bitch, and despite the fact that she was carrying puppies, her lines were very little changed.

The most impressive specimen to be seen at this kennel, or at many shows, is that outstanding bench show competitor and sire, Ch. Young Arkus v. Frauenlob. He is an attractive golden brindle, and fulfills the rugged promise of his coat by unexcelled expression, proportions, and bone. He is sound from stem to stern, and gives the impression of a dog that is really athletic as well as large.

Young Arkus is the sire of a smart looking litter out of Ch. Paula of Erin Dane. There are six in this litter, and all give promise of becoming as great as their father. Just four months old in April, they already showed the essential signs of proper development. Their bone was especially good. Of course, bone depends quite as much upon rearing as upon the sire. At Brae Tarn, everything is done that will tend to make this breed not only big but sturdy as well. The six puppies mentioned eat more than 10 lbs. of beef a day, along with the things referred to earlier.

Incidentally, as soon as the puppies have grown to a trifle more than medium size they are treated almost as grown dogs. They get those big bones which do so much for their jaws and teeth; they are posed on the block; and they must do their roadwork.

One of the best examples of the home breeding of Brae Tarn is that fine young dog, Sandy of Brae Tarn.

He is a beautiful golden fawn. His sire is none other than Young Arkus, and he is out of Nancy of Erin Dane. Sandy has not quite reached his full maturity, which means more than two years in this breed, but already he looks like a winner. One of the nice looking matrons at the kennel is Lady Bello of Erin Dane.

Brae Tarn is interested in the showing as a means of comparing the qualities of its dogs with those of other kennels, but the owner is not in the game for the game itself. His main interest centers almost solely in the dogs always having been especially keen about these wonderfully dispositioned big fellows. When Brae Tarn wins in the ring, it will be done with dogs that have even tempers and loyalty to their masters.

Perhaps no finer example of the type of Dane desired by the owner of Brae Tarn could be found than Ch. Young Arkus of Frauenlob. He is somewhat remarkable, indeed, his good disposition even going to the point where he will take medicine without an objection. In fact, he almost stands waiting to be given a spoonful of medicine if that is necessary.

Young Arkus is being used as a sire at Brae Tarn, so it may readily be imagined that the same type of sweet tempered dog will continue to emanate from this attractive, sensible kennel. And if Brae Tarn continues as it has started, there may be a new chapter to be written soon about the development of the Great Dane in the United States.

ED. NOTE: This 1932 article was written before Brae Tarn imported the Danes from Germany which really put them on the map with fawns and brindles and in turn became the foundation of today's Dinro, Marydane, Mountdania, etc. In tracing pedigrees we haven't found any carry-over from the above-mentioned Young Arkus or Ch. Paula of Erin Dane! The famous imports made later included (Brindles) Ch. Nero Hexengold, born 1931; his son Ch. Randolph Hexengold, born 1933; the bitch Dixie v. Schloss Dellwig; and (Fawns) Ch. Czardas v. Eppelinsprung-Noris, born 1934; the bitch Ch. Quia v. Loheland, born in 1933. These dogs were all descendants of the great combination of Ch. Bosko vd Saalburg (fawn) and Fauna Moguntia

(brindle) which produced the most influential Ch. Dolf vd Saalburg, Ch. Etfa vd Saalburg, and Elch Edler vd Saalburg. Mr. Stevens had no doubt got wind of their success and in those affluent days could well afford to begin anew with line breeding on those outstanding imports. As far as we know, he stuck to fawns and brindles from then on. The two HARLEQUINS, however, pictured in the article, do appear, curiously enough, in some of today's FAWN and BRINDLE extended pedigrees! This is what happened. Long ago, before the Colour Code, a "black & white" son of theirs, Young Lord Hamlet, was bred to the fawn Dolly Maplehurst Schloss. A fawn daughter, Maplehurst Gretchen Weisman, was then bred to the "light brindle" Prince Jan. Their fawn daughter, Maplehurst Helga Allstedt, was bred to the brindle Vakeck's Jansen (a descendant of those later Brae Tarn imports) to produce the brindle bitch Katrinka Schmidt. She was bred to the brindle Thor XVII, C.D., and had a brindle daughter, Von Kolyer's Gretchen, the foundation bitch of today's well-known Kolyer strain. Among her sons and daughters were the brindles Ch. Kolyer's Cygni v Adonis and Kolyer's Kamala (by Ch. Glad Adonis) and Kolyer's Ginger Snap, C.D.X. (by Adonis's nephew, Ch. Glad Viceroy Grande). These dogs were born in the '50s and can be found in pedigrees of more recent favourites like Ch. Kolyer's Kissin' Kurt, Ch. Kolyer's Judah, Ch. Harmony Hill Riffsong, Ch. Eaglevalley Kilimanjaro, etc. A picture of Von Kolyer's Gretchen at the ripe old age of 12 can be found on page 229 of the 1964 Diamond Jubilee GDCA Yearbook, which should be in the club library, and is available for \$15 from the GDCA Treasurer, Robert Haltmeier, 6 Indian Lane, Towaco, N.J. 07082, if you want your own copy! ●

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