

History of the Flintridge Australian Shepherds

A letter written by Dr. Weldon T. Heard

In writing a history of our present line of Australian Shepherds whose names bear a prefix or suffix of Flintridge, I am reminded of a statement made by my old genetics professor in college, who said, “the world is full of collectors, but there are very few breeders.” I also remember the remarks of a group of millionaires when being interviewed. They agreed that their success was the result of many trials and errors and a lot of luck. Whether any of these reflections are pertinent will be decided by the owners and the judges.

Although we have been involved with and interested in Australian Shepherds since 1928, our present family of dogs, as far as we are concerned, is of rather recent vintage. This group of dogs really owes its type and origin to a female whose recorded name is Smedra’s Blue Mistingo. I obtained this female from a client of mine who I had previously advised to “buy an Australian Shepherd.” This lady took my advice but later moved into an apartment and I bought the puppy from her. Although I had several other dogs at the time I saw some characteristics in this dog that I admired very much and felt they were worth perpetuating. I gave her to a friend of mine with the agreement that if she were ever bred I was to receive the choice of the puppies. My friend bred her later to Harper’s Old Smokey and our choice of the litter was the female we called Blue Spice of Flintridge. In



(Left to right) Salt of Flintridge, The Herdsman of Flintridge and Cactus of Flintridge. Photo courtesy of Marcia Hall Bain.

my estimation this female possessed nearly all the fine qualities that comprise a great dog of any breed. She was beautiful, she was balanced, she was brilliant—unfortunately she is gone.

We made our first great error when we spayed Spice's mother after producing this litter. There was also a very impressive male dog in this litter—he is dead now also. Hoping that this quality didn't all come from the bottom side of this pedigree, we then bred Spice back to her sire and from this litter came several outstanding dogs, two of which have had much influence on the dogs presently bearing our name—Salt of Flintridge and Chili of Flintridge. From here on it was a matter of selection and making those matings that promised superior offspring. How can you tell?

In my mind I have tried to hold that image of what I consider to be the ideal Australian Shepherd. I drew up a 100s grading system embodying the basic ABC's—ability, beauty, conformation—and walked each individual up against it. Some who are more knowledgeable than I feel that beauty is unimportant, but I am not only vain but feel most people will spend more time looking at their dogs than working with them. It is easy to dream of these goals and pre-plan them on the pedigree blank but they are realized only at the whelping box. Here we adopted methods recommended by the old German Weimaraner breeders.

In their development of the German Weimaraner they selected only the two top puppies from each litter. We have adopted and generally followed this practice in our own breeding program. I was raised with the idea that if your offspring were not as good or better than the parents your breeding program was a failure. This we have tried to maintain as our mental portrait of what we believed was correct. We wanted our dogs to be more than just a good dog but a life-long pleasant experience. If it pleases others, that is gratifying—if not, we feel we have accomplished what we set out to do. We hope it was right.

(Signed) Dr. Weldon T. Heard

“Dr. Weldon Heard had the vision and did the work to create something beautiful and intelligent. He gave us what we needed to move the breed forward.”

Phil Wildhagen, Bonnie-Blu



Photo courtesy of Phil Wildhagen.

*Champion
Wildhagen's Dutchman of Flintridge
CDX Hall of Fame
ASCA's first Champion of Record, first CD, first CDX*

Call name: Dusty

Born: 1969

Sire: The Herdsman of Flintridge

Breeder: Dr. Weldon Heard, Flintridge

Dam: Heard's Savor of Flintridge

Owner: Phil Wildhagen, Bonnie-Blu

Dr. Weldon Heard developed the Flintridge line in the 1960s and 1970s when standardization of breed type was in its infancy. Through very tight linebreeding, he consistently produced Aussies with beauty, quality and high intelligence.

“The dog that initially spread the influence of the Flintridge line was a blue merle male named Wildhagen's Dutchman of Flintridge, also known as Dusty. Dusty, followed by his brother Sage (Fieldmaster of Flintridge), arrived in California in 1970 and began several years of outstanding show success and ultimately, the popularity of this line blossomed.” From *The Early Aussie Breeders* by Phil Wildhagen.

Prior to Dusty's entrance onto the show scene in 1970, Dr. Heard's Flintridge dogs had not been exhibited, and people had limited knowledge of his breeding program. There was little consistency in Australian Shepherd breed type because breeders had selected primarily for working ability.

Dr. Heard, who was skillful in breeding horses, cattle, sheep and dogs, had a broad perspective. He wrote, "Some who are more knowledgeable than I feel that beauty is unimportant, but I feel most people will spend more time looking at their dogs than working with them."

Dr. Heard, who lived in Colorado, was developing a line of Aussies with consistent, beautiful breed type. Phil Wildhagen, who lived in California, began looking for an attractive, typey Aussie. Phil's journey to meeting Dr. Heard, introducing Flintridge dogs to the Aussie world, and creating a major impact on the breed took a bit of luck and a lot of perseverance.

This significant chapter of Aussie history began in a rather ordinary way. In 1968, Phil went to the dog pound

and adopted a mixed-breed dog. A friend mentioned that the dog looked like it was part Aussie. Phil had no idea what an "Aussie" was, so he researched the breed as best he could. Then he purchased a purebred red tri bitch named "Bonnie," but he recognized she had poor breed type.

Phil's interest and enthusiasm for the breed was kindled. He set out on a long road trip to locate Australian Shepherd breeders and to gather knowledge about this fascinating breed. His trip took him to British Columbia, Canada, and all over the western part of the United States.

While traveling through Colorado, Phil experienced a moment when effort and perfect timing created very good luck. A friend told him to visit Dr. Heard because he thought Phil might like the Flintridge dogs. Phil met Dr. Heard and was amazed at his dogs. They were by far the best Aussies he had ever seen.

Phil was introduced to the Flintridge dogs in a memorable way. Dr. Heard let the dogs out one at a time, and each hopped up and balanced on a post. Phil was deeply impressed by the quality and



(Left to right) Savor, Cactus, Scotty (Herdsman), Salt, Spice and Clover.



(Left to right) Cactus, Scotty (Herdsman) and Salt. The Herdsman was the sire of Dusty and Sage.



Heard's Savor of Flintridge. Born 1965. Dam of CH Wildhagen's Dutchman of Flintridge CDX HOF and CH Fieldmaster of Flintridge HOF.



Heard's Salt of Flintridge. Born 1964. Grandsire of CH Wildhagen's Dutchman of Flintridge CDX HOF and CH Fieldmaster of Flintridge HOF.

consistency of the breed type in those dogs because it was in stark contrast to other Aussies of that time.

Then, in a second stroke of good fortune, Phil was able to purchase a handsome blue merle puppy from Dr. Heard. That puppy's name was Wildhagen's Dutchman of Flintridge, affectionately known as "Dusty." Phil returned home to California with high hopes for his beautiful new puppy. He began to show Dusty, and the puppy won every time he was in the ring. However, Dusty was criticized for having much more white trim than other Aussies. Phil was new to the breed and sensitive to those remarks. He wanted to understand the concerns about white trim before fully committing to Dusty, so he sent the puppy back to Dr. Heard.

Phil researched the genetics of white trim and learned that in Aussies it was called the "Irish pattern," which is a recessive trait. He learned that the dominant merle pattern is the gene that restricts the base body color, and doubling up on it can cause excessive

white markings and serious defects. When Phil understood those genetics, he was satisfied that Dusty's white trim was a normal color pattern. Phil paid another visit to see Dr. Heard and Dusty. The youngster, then seven months old, was gorgeous. Phil took him home again to California and the rest is history.

Handled by Phil, Dusty had a highly successful show career. He won Best of Breed almost every time shown, and at a year of age, he was awarded Best of Breed at the 1970 IASA National Specialty. His success and handsome appearance caught the attention of other Aussie fanciers, and the popularity of the Flintridge breed type blossomed.

Dr. Heard's bloodlines were suddenly in demand. Phil brought Dusty's brother, Fieldmaster of Flintridge "Sage," to California, who also had a very successful career as a show dog and sire. Together, Dusty and Sage had a profound influence on breed type of the modern Australian Shepherd.

Dusty's influence as a sire was just as impressive as his show career. His offspring were top show winners and tremendous producers, and they became foundation dogs for many well-known kennels in the 1970s. Through his outstanding progeny, Dusty's influence continues to the present day.

Dusty sired 33 champions, which was an astonishing number in that era. His most notable offspring were:

CH WINDERMERE'S SUNSHINE OF BONNIE-BLU CDX HOF, sire of:

- CH Rising Sun of Windermere CDX STDsd HOF
- CH Sun's Mark of Windermere CD HOF
- CH Wee Willie of Windermere
- CH Windswept of Windermere CD HOF
- CH Afterthought of Windermere CDX STDd HOF
- CH Moonshine of Windermere HOF
- CH Adelaide's Scotsman of Windermere
- CH Sunspot of Windermere
- CH Hot Toddy of Emerald Isle HOF
- CH Arrogance of Heatherhill CDX STDd HOF

CH SWEET SEASONS OF HEATHERHILL, dam of :

- CH Arrogance of Heatherhill CDX STDd HOF

CH BRIARPATCH OF BONNIE BLU CD HOF, dam of:

- CH Fieldmaster's Cast the Die HOF
- CH Fieldmaster's Key to the Mint
- CH Fieldmaster's Home Brew
- CH Patch-Work Quilt HOF

CH COPPERTONE'S CACTUS OF BONNIE-BLU CD, sire of:

- CH Roe's Blue Jasper of Coppertone
- CH Viola's Miss Demeanor CD
- CH Coppertone's Cactus Flower

CH ROBINSON'S BONNIE BLU YANKEE, sire of:

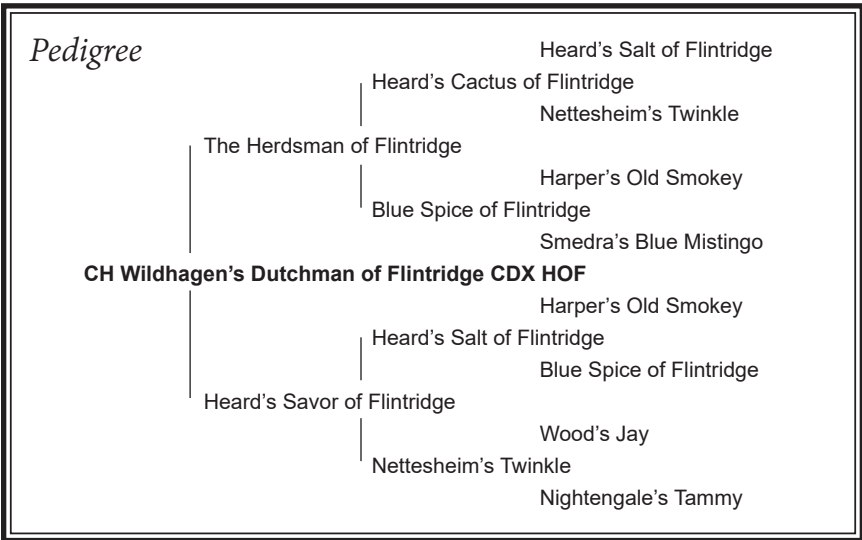
- CH All That Glitters of Gefion CDX STDsd

CH SUNDOWN'S MAIZE OF BONNIE BLU, sire of:

- CH Sundown's Sir Uno
- CH Vanlandingham's Ebony Lace CD OTDd, HOF

CH OVERBY'S HEATHER OF BONNIE-BLU, dam of:

- CH Buck Fever of Blue Mist



OTHER FOUNDATION BLOODLINES

This book focuses on Aussies that descended from Flintridge foundation stock. However, any discussion of foundation dogs needs to have a broader perspective. A fascinating article explaining the early development of our breed and describing other important foundation bloodlines is available online and also in the 1977 ASCA yearbook. It's title is *The Early Aussie Breeders*, and it was written by Jan Haddle Davis and Phillip Wildhagen.

http://www.workingaussiesource.com/stockdoglibrary/davis_history_article.htm



Dusty's daughter Tamishon of Bonnie-Blu. Born 1973. By Dusty x Wildhagen's Thistle of Flintridge. Photo courtesy of Marcia Hall Bain. Photo credit: Dai Leon.



Dusty's son CH The Captain of Heatherhill. Born 1976. By Dusty x McCorkles Blue Tule Fog. Photo courtesy of Heatherhill. Photo credit: Dai Leon.

 CONVERSATIONS

Carla Freitag · *Thanks for sharing, Paula McDermid. My Cody was born in 1980 and went back to these dogs. Cody was one awesome guy.*

Mary Stewart · *Thanks once again for all this great info. I was breeding way back when these dogs were “it.” My stud, CH Aristocrat’s Repeat Performance, was a Dusty great-grandson.*

Dianne Linda Feinstein · *My Zephyr’s pedigree goes back to Dusty on his sire’s side. His sire was CH Sir Hogan of Cornerstone and his dam was CH Donegal’s Caitlin. He was co-bred in 1992 by Connie Chapman of Cornerstone Aussies and Terri Altergott of Accolade Aussies.*

Where do I begin about Zephyr? He could be as hard as nails, yet sweet and sensitive. Protective to a fault, yet the best buddy of people he knew well. I never knew a smarter dog. He seemed to read me ever so well. Terri called Zephyr the mold-breaker, and that he was. He might have been a wonderful obedience dog, except that he was noise-sensitive and he became stressed whenever sounds echoed around him. He’s been gone almost 10 years, and I still miss him deeply every day. He was my human kid in a dog suit.

My sweet Odin. If I could have 10 just like him, I’d be a happy camper. As a puppy, Odin was as laid-back and mellow as Zephyr was ramped-up. He had the typical Aussie reserve with people, and was great around other dogs (which was important because I used to care for a friend’s dog in my home.) I tried to get a Companion Dog title on him, but he just didn’t like obedience work. Odin loved agility and playing Frisbee with Zephyr.

Odin’s dam produced some of the best puppies in Terri’s breeding program, including her beloved Minnie and my Odin. She also produced Minnie’s full sister, Rebel, and Odin’s littermate, Robin, who were two lovely dogs that belonged to friends.



Wildhagen’s Dutchman of Flintridge “Dusty” was awarded Best of Breed at the 1970 International Australian Shepherd Association (IASA) National Specialty held in Napa, California, and judged by Mrs. Phyllis Greer. Dusty, handled by Phil Wildhagen, won the Open Dog class, defeating two other well-known Aussies of that era: Second place to Dusty and Reserve Winners Dog was awarded to Farrington’s Buster Ivory, and third place was awarded to Dusty’s littermate brother, Fieldmaster of Flintridge. Photo courtesy of Phil Wildhagen.



Dusty (left) and his brother Fieldmaster of Flintridge "Sage" (right) are shown with some of their trophies and ribbons. They were about one year old in this photo. Photo courtesy of Phil Wildhagen.

Lori Fausett · *Our family has continued to line-breed on these same dogs through the years. Odyssey, Zuzax and Soundtrack pedigrees are all filled with several crosses back to Dusty and several of the old Flintridge and Arizona lines.*

Teena Meadors · *My first show Aussie was a black tri bitch sired by Dusty. Still miss my ol' Maggie girl.*

Becky Hornburg Pugh · *I had a bitch in the 1980s that came from these lines—my first Aussie, "Skeeter." Smartest dog ever! I bought her from someone in the Orlando area. I registered her as "My Skeeter Girl" with ASCA and the NSDA. She loved to play Frisbee and she picked oranges off the tree. I took her to eight weeks of obedience classes and trained her to crawl and play dead. I miss her.*

Rebecca Sebring · *Sadly, all the pictures of my dog "Teaka" were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina when it hit my home in New Orleans. Teaka's registered name was CH Awesome Desire. Her sire was CH Shenandoah's Awefully Awesome and her dam was CH Briarbrook's Shooting Star. She had CH Fieldmaster's Three Ring Circus in her pedigree three times. and for three generations she was all Flintridge. I showed her in conformation, obedience, and herding. She was quite the character and companion!*



Dusty's son CH Command Performance of Hazelwood. Born 1979. By Dusty x CH Regal Vanda Berry of Hazelwood. Photo credit: Author.



Dusty's daughter CH Sweet Seasons of Heatherhill. Born 1970. By Dusty x McCorkle's Blue Tule Fog. Photo courtesy of Heatherhill. Photo credit: Eddie Rubin.



Dusty's daughter CH Grand Dutchess of Wyndham. Born 1978. By Dusty x Blue Lad Sugar Is Sweet. Photo credit: Author.



Dusty's son CH Coppertone's Cactus of Bonnie-Blu. Born 1973. By Dusty x Wildhagen's Thistle of Flintridge HOF. Photo courtesy of Marcia Hall Bain.



Dusty's daughter CH Briar Patch of Bonnie-Blu CD HOF. Born 1973. By Dusty x Wildhagen's Thistle of Flintridge HOF. Photo courtesy of Marcia Hall Bain.



Dusty's great-grandson CH Aristocrat's Repeat Performance. Born 1980. By CH Fieldmaster's Cast The Die x CH Silvertone's Easy Money. Photo courtesy of Mary Stewart.



Photo courtesy of Diana Hefti.

Andy

Christmas Edition of Windermere CD

CH Wildhagen's Dutchman of Flintridge was an amazing dog, and many years ago I was lucky enough to own his great-grandson. My Andy was born in 1989 and was by CH Final Edition of Windermere CD STDs ATDd and out of CH Christmas Wishes of Windermere CD STDcs OTDd.

Andy was out of the last Aussie litter bred by Stew and Judy Williams of Windermere. I was so lucky to have him! He was such a sweet boy, and was my first real show dog. We lost him in 2000 to hemangiosarcoma.

Andy earned his CD in both ASCA and AKC. He was almost ready for Open obedience, but I got busy with my young

kids and never finished pursuing that. We took a couple of agility workshops in the very early 1990s and he did well, but I never followed through. We moved from Missouri to Washington state about then, and it took a long time for me to get back into agility. Andy was intelligent and biddable, but a big goof at the same time. He had a GREAT sense of humor.

My first Aussie, who was a rescue, was very clever. If he wanted to get out of the yard, he found a way. Andy was a gentleman, and wouldn't have even considered doing something like jump a fence. One day a storm blew down privacy panels around our back porch, leaving an opening into our larger, fenced yard. The other dogs went through the opening and had a grand time in the yard. Andy barked and told me they were up to no good—while he stayed on the porch where he was supposed to be!

I have a wonderful memory about Andy. I was holding my six-month old son, Chris, on my lap, and Andy began to lick him. Chris had fast hands and managed to grab Andy's tongue. Andy's eyes literally crossed and he went "Erk!" and Chris let go. Then Andy gave him more kisses. LOL. It was so funny.

- Diana Hefti



CH Final Edition of Windermere CD STDs ATDd "Eddie." Born 1980. By CH Windermere's Sunshine of Bonnie-Blu CDX HOF x Fisher's Blue Heather of Windermere HOF. Photo courtesy of Judy Williams.



CH Christmas Wishes of Windermere CD STDcs OTDd "Chrissy." Born 1985. By CH Tri-Ivory Roquefort of Higgins CD HOF x Sunny Wishes of Windermere. Photo courtesy of Judy Williams.