

The Obsession of Long Gone



STORY AND PHOTOS BY ADAM WILLIAMS

As the sun dips behind the White Mountains in northern New Hampshire, 7XCH Long Gone Madison slips through the gate of the backyard at Lloyd Murray's farmhouse. Without seeing which way she ran, Lloyd knows where "Maddy" has gone. He knows his dogs well, and his dogs know two things: grouse and woodcock.

Long Gone Farm is on 15 acres outside Stark, a former paper mill town. This thinly populated country is shaped by wooded, undulating terrain that buffers residents from the bustle of cities, major highways and consistent cell phone signals. The area is heavy with birds that find cover amid sprawling state and national forests and surrounding properties, all open land for hunting. Within this bird dog's paradise, Maddy has raced off, a streak of white with black ticking. She didn't need, however, to go far.

As expected, Lloyd spots the 7-year-old bitch a couple of hundred yards away in a field of green and yellow grasses surrounded by pine trees. She is pointing a chukar that had been released in a demonstration for a visitor an hour before. Though alone in the field, Maddy shows the discipline that has made her a seven-time champion, one of the top-heralded English Setters ever to compete in field trials. She stands rigid, her feathered tail erect in the golden light, coolly eyeing the bird that dawdles under a bush merely feet away.

This is why Lloyd moved north from his roots in southern New Hampshire 25 years ago. The land and wild bird habitat afford boundless opportunities for him and his setters to fulfill their passions.

Lloyd maximizes his availability for leisure with the Long Gone setters. A chef who trained at Johnson & Wales University in Providence, R.I., Lloyd

has owned White Mountain Chalet, a catering company and event hall in nearby Berlin, N.H., for 24 years. He works long hours on weekends, especially during the spring and summer wedding season, but reserves time to walk miles through the woods with his dogs on weekdays and during fall and winter. As he walks, he listens for the faint sound of the brass bells they wear around their necks to signal their locations in the woods. Lloyd



Lloyd Murray trains his English Setters, from left, Long Gone Conway, CH Long Gone Boston, CH Long Gone Buckwheat and 7XCH Long Gone Madison, on his 15-acre farm in Stark, N.H.

