

ON ALL FRONTS

News, reviews, books & products  EDITED BY LINDSEY KAMRATH

A Gamble pays off

When we last left Gamble the Basset Hound and art conservator Larry Castagna, they were saying their first tentative hellos at Kennedy Airport on a cold night in January (April 2010 GAZETTE). The stubby-legged pup had a tough job before him. Months earlier, Castagna had fallen in love with a Basset Hound, Solomon, in a Maud Earl painting he restored for breeder Jim Dok, of Castlehill's kennel in Washington state. But Solomon was an idealized image of a great show dog who lived more than 100 years ago.

It was up to Gamble to prove that a flesh-and-blood Basset could be just as wonderful.

So far, so good. Gamble has broadened the artist's horizons, sending him on all kinds of adventures. In May, the pair traveled to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to participate in the Basset Hound Club of America's hunt test and field trial (see story, page 32). It was a long trip, from the tip of Long Island all the way out to southern Pennsylvania, but the ride went quickly. "Gamble is a great traveling companion," Castagna says. Then, on the first day of August, they were off to an AKC Canine Experience, which was organized by the Suffolk County Kennel Club, in King's Park, New York. Gamble was one of 20 dogs to pass the Canine Good Citizen test that day.

But it's not all fun and games. Gamble is taking an active role in his owner's work, as muse, model, and critic. Castagna, an artist as well as a conservator, is working on a portrait of his dog. And nothing leaves the studio without a once-over by the hound. Here, Gamble gives a final inspection to Castagna's restoration of Percival Leonard Rosseau's 1906 oil painting *Leda*, part of the AKC's collection. Although Gamble's art appreciation was greatly improved by a treat held above the painting, Castagna is pretty certain that his dog was impressed by the beauty of the work, and appeared to be yearning to chase the pheasant.

—Mara Bovsun



Gamble gives this painting a once-over.

Play-space renewal



Our canine pals may love them, but be honest, don't off-leash areas generally leave much to be desired in the way of ambiance? That's why the Nutro Company devoted the month of June to sprucing up some of these less-than-garden spots with its "Room to Run" events. Armed with sod, brushes, hay bales, and agility equipment, volunteers from the company and the communities attacked the problem of dog-park blight throughout the United States and Canada. At Nashville's Centennial Park, Nutro volunteers erected an agility course, and at George Ward Park in Birmingham, Alabama, other volunteers constructed a retaining wall made of hay bales. The program was sparked by a recent survey, sponsored by the company, in which 40 percent of respondents said that the grass in their dog parks was poorly maintained and 36 percent complained that the places were dirty.

—M.B.

LEFT: COURTESY LAWRENCE CASTAGNA; RIGHT: COURTESY NUTRO