

'SPIRITED' WIN

Tammy Lynch treasures her greatest accomplishment as a breeder-owner-handler

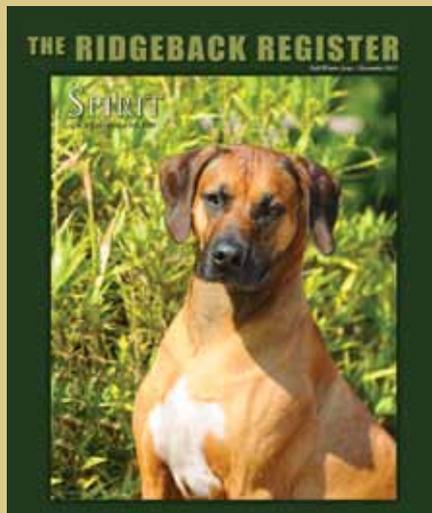
By Theresa M. Lyons
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ON THE COVER



**MBIS BISS INT'L CH. AM. GCH.
ADILI'S AMERICAN IDOL, ROM**

Sire: Ch. Kimani's Gazeley of Tahari, ROM

Dam: DC Adili's Serengeti Starlight, SC

Whelped: April 15, 2006

Screening: OFA Hips Good,
OFA Elbows Normal, Cardiac Clear

Breeder-owner-handler: Tammy Lynch

Breeders: Tammy Lynch, Nadine Vaccarino,
Phyllis Lia and Karen LaFleur

Owners: Kiki Courtelis, Tammy Lynch
and Karen LaFleur

2007

**RRCUS National Specialty BOW
and Best of Opposite in Sweepstakes**

2008

**# 2 Ridgeback (All-Breed)
#7 Hound (3 All-Breed BIS)**

2009

**Westminster Kennel Club
Best of Breed Winner
4th All-Breed Best in Show
Raisin River Regional Specialty
Best in Specialty Show
RRCUS National Specialty
Top 20 and People's Choice Winner
2 Ridgeback (All-Breed)
#10 Hound (2 All-Breed BIS)**

2011

**Raisin River Regional Specialty
Best in Specialty Show
International Champion
with six Bests in Show in two days
Raisin River Regional Specialty
Best in Specialty Show
AKC Grand Champion, undefeated in the breed,
with five five-point majors, a Regional Specialty
BOB, 2 Group 1sts, a Group 2nd and a Group 4th
Winner of more than 50 Groups,
five AKC BIS and six International BIS**

"TEAM SPIRIT" with lower-case letters is the enthusiasm that makes a group want to succeed. "Team Spirit" with capital letters is the close-knit group of supporters behind "Spirit" (MBIS BISS Int'l Ch. Am. GCh. Adili's American Idol, ROM).

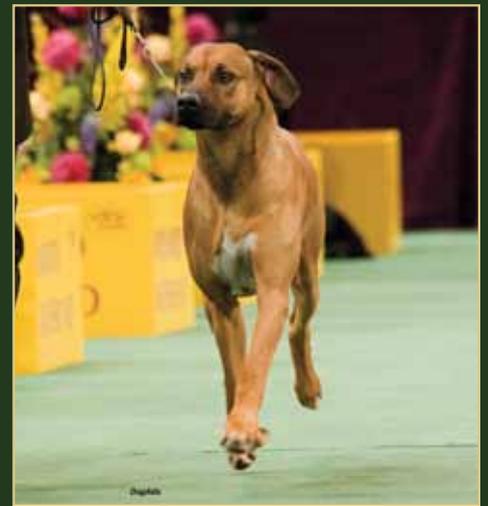
On September 15, 2011, both came to the fore, as breeder-owner-handler Tammy Lynch of Adili Rhodesian Ridgebacks in Georgetown, Ky., took top honors at the Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the United States National Specialty with her beloved Spirit.

But what made this Best in National Specialty Show victory so special was the journey to get there.

In 2008 and 2009, Spirit, guided by the handling expertise of Frank Murphy, was a top-ranked Hound with multiple all-breed Bests in Show, as well as a Westminster win at the tender age of two. He had placed highly at every national specialty he attended, starting with Best of Winners and Best of Opposite in Puppy Sweepstakes with Tammy at the helm in 2007, followed by an Award of Merit in 2008, and the coveted Top Twenty and Peoples Choice awards in 2009. He retired to the couch and fatherhood soon after.



Frank Murphy and Spirit in the Best in Show ring.



Spirit gaiting in the Group ring and showing off his love ears after winning the breed at the 2009 Westminster Kennel Club dog show

But Spirit's life of leisure was short lived. Last spring, the AKC announced its new Grand Champion program. Spirit's co-owner, Kiki Courtelis, joked with Tammy that a sibling from a repeat breeding of Spirit, "JLo" (GCh. Adili's Made to Perfection), had easily obtained this new prefix. Soon Tammy decided the challenge was on, and happily dusted Spirit off to give it a try.

In a few short months, Spirit easily obtained his Grand Championship in only seven shows and five 5-point majors. Frank took the first of the breed wins, but Tammy topped it off by winning the Raisin River Rhodesian Ridgeback Club Regional Specialty with a Group 1st, as well as two more Group wins, a Group 2nd and a Group 4th.

It was during these shows in early 2011 that judges, as well as Frank, continually told Tammy that at 5½ years old, Spirit had never looked better. So even though the plan was to take a class bitch, "April" (Koda's Rite of Spring), to the 2011 RRCUS National Specialty, Tammy decided she really wanted to take Spirit, too – not just to show him off, but to have some fun showing the boy she calls her "heart dog."

Any degree of proximity between Tammy and Spirit is enough to cause you to appreciate their special bond. During the interview for this story, every few minutes I could hear Spirit in the background barking, rummaging and doing what he does best – getting into trouble. Every so often, Tammy murmured five words, "You are the bestest boy," to which Spirit responded with either a bark or more rummaging in the background – or both.

With this kind of connection, the sky is always the limit. So when the day came to show Spirit in

the breed at the national, Tammy simply wanted to have “fun.” Everyone – especially Kiki and Frank – just wanted Tammy to go and enjoy herself, too. “There was no stress or expectations from anyone,” recalls Tammy, adding the timing just seemed right.

Through all the excitement of being at a national, Tammy still found herself struggling at times with the loss of her son, Marine LCPL Scott A. Lynch, who died in the line of duty almost a year before, on October 6, 2010. “There were times,” says Tammy, “like during the Veteran Sweepstakes, that I found it almost unbearable.” As the song “Forever Young” played in the background, Tammy remembered that the song was released around the time Scotty was born. But she was soon also reminded how much the Ridgeback community is there for her in times of need. “Several friends left the room with me,” says Tammy, “and helped me through so that I was able to enjoy the event.”

When it came down to the final cuts, no one knew what to expect. In typical Kent Delaney fashion, the judge started pulling out dogs. “When

What’s next for Spirit? “Nothing, or anything,” says Tammy. “Spirit has shown us that you can succeed beyond your wildest dreams, if you just try. And if we decide to come out for regional or national specialties, then we will. Otherwise, he will climb back up on the couch with me like he does every day.”

Tammy adds that Spirit has not only made her proud in the ring, but in the whelping box as well. She believes he not only passes along his outstanding headpiece, bone and substance, but also his character and overall zeal for life – something that not every Ridgeback can offer. She is proud of his get and grand-get as they prove his worth as a producer.

Team spirit. Whether you capitalize it or not, it’s something Tammy will treasure forever. 



Group 1st at the Raisin River Rhodesian Ridgeback Regional Specialty at the Ann Arbor Kennel Club on July 9, 2011. Garry Newton judged breed, and Dr. Judith Newton did the Group.



Spirit took six Bests in Show at international shows (one from the first day, five from the second). Judges Mr. Alberto Berrios, Dr. J. Donald Jones, Mrs. Jean Pero and Mrs. Terry Berrios.

2011 RRCUS Best in National Specialty Show Winner. Judge Mr. Kent Delaney.

I saw the first dog pulled out to the front, I thought that was it, we were getting an Award of Merit at best,” Tammy recalls. Then, realizing that the judge was placing dogs in reverse order, starting with the last Award of Merit, Tammy repeated silently as he walked by them each time: “Don’t pick me now, don’t pick me now, please, don’t pick me now!” Soon, it was down to the last two dogs, and that heart-stopping moment when Tammy reversed her mantra: “Pick me now, pick me now, pick me now!” Then he did ... and just like that, it was over. Tammy and her beloved Spirit had won the breed’s top award.

Tammy was handed a phone minutes after the win – it was Kiki, with joyful tears for their big win. Her second call went to Frank, who she thought had left the national and was already on a plane; he told her he watched the entire win from ringside, and that he too was proud of her and what she had accomplished. “Without these two,” says Tammy, “this could have never happened, and I am forever grateful.”

Tammy is also grateful to judge Kent Delaney for making it such an exciting event. “When it came down to the very end, I knew he was going to make us work for it. It was exciting to be a part of,” she explains. “A memory that will last forever.” The reality did not completely sink in until she was on her way home a day later. “I just remember crying in disbelief,” she remembers. “It was so surreal.”



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