

WHAT A WEEK AT THE IKP IN AUSTRIA

When we left for Ampflwang, Austria to attend the International Kurzhaarprüfung (IKP) we had been told by both of our leaders (handlers) that Atlanta vom Hege-Haus and Bellevue vom Hege-Haus were in great form. Mr. Bommers' daughter Rita suggested that it was very possible we were to witness something very special and was she ever correct.

The first surprise came on Friday at the conformation judging. Atlanta was judged to be right between a V and SG and unfortunately received a SG. The surprise was that Bellevue who has been a V1 dog twice and a V3 dog once showed poorly and received an SG. Oh well on to the field and water work which is the most important after all.

Given that the dogs were assigned to different groups we had to choose which dog to follow. We chose to follow Atlanta and hoped to find Bellevue at some point during the day.



Thomas Hofstetter and Bellevue at the IKP Confirmation Show



Mr. Bommers and Atlanta waiting to work in the field at the IKP

As Rita predicted Atlanta delivered from the start. By the time our group had finished the field work consisting of working pheasants, hares, and the blind duck retrieve from the tall grass the judges in our group were all taking about her. It was obvious that something special was going on. Even to a person at their first IKP when comparing Atlanta to the other dogs in our group it appeared as if Mr. Bommers had brought a Kleemann dog to a Derby (keep in mind that three of the other four dogs in our group prized and the fifth failed at the water).

After the field work was completed we waited for the call to proceed to the water to complete the examination. At that point we found Thomas Hofstetter (Mr. Siegfried Hofstetter's son who was leading Bellevue) and received an update on Bellevue. Thomas informed us that Bellevue had been outstanding in the field and he was confident Bellevue would receive a 4h for nose. We decided we would have time to go with Atlanta to the water and be back to the meeting area in time to go with Bellevue for his water work.



Atlanta retrieving the duck at the IKP

At the water Atlanta provided one last special moment. The dog in front of her was unsuccessful in finding the duck so it could be harvested. The duck had gone down the pond toward the river approximately 150 yards and the dog would not go far enough to find it. The judges called for Mr. Bommers and Atlanta and we became concerned as they had not freed another duck and the duck from the previous dog

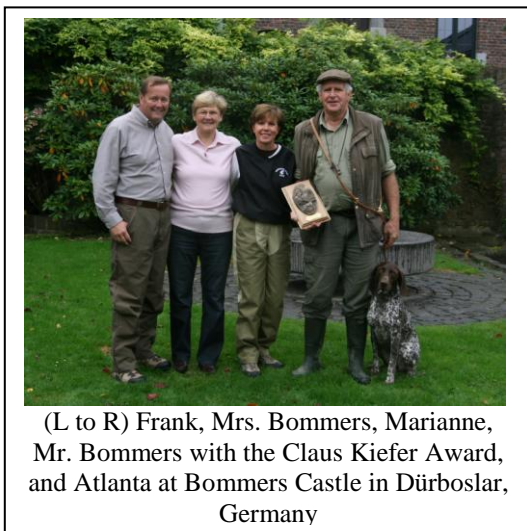
had been gone for over fifteen minutes. Later we were informed (they all spoke in German and we could not understand) that they told Mr. Bommers the duck from the previous dog was still in the area and Atlanta must find it. Appearing to have all the confidence in the world Mr. Bommers sent Atlanta on her search and he calmly visited with the judges. Atlanta started around the pond and reaching a distance of approximately 150 yards caught the duck's scent from across the channel. She went to the duck and flushed it back to Mr. Bommers where it was harvested and retrieved. You had to be there to understand what we are trying to describe. The judges all gathered and call us to the dog where they said that Atlanta was not only the best dog in our group but without a doubt the best at the IKP and one of the best they had seen.

Following all of the dogs water work the judges informed the leaders of their decisions. Atlanta had received perfect scores in all categories with 4h's for her nose, pointing, and water work – three 4h's at the IKP is amazing.

At that point we hurried back to the meeting area to go with Bellevue to the water but Thomas and his group were gone. We were told that Hofstetter was at pond #2 so we hurried back to where we were (#1 and #2 were near each other) only to discover that it was Mr. Siegfried Hofstetter and not Thomas. That evening Thomas told us that Bellevue had a spectacular water search involving a diving duck and could have very easily received a 4h for his efforts. In all Bellevue had received a Prize 1 with all perfect 4's and a 4h for nose. In that the nose is considered to be the most important element of judging Bellevue finished in the top seven at the IKP. Bellevue, along with Atlanta, would be among the twenty-four dogs invited to participate in the show search on Sunday.



Mr. Bommers and Atlanta with the Judges, Shooter, and Field Man after in water work



(L to R) Frank, Mrs. Bommers, Marianne, Mr. Bommers with the Claus Kiefer Award, and Atlanta at Bommers Castle in Dürboslar, Germany

At the dinner on Saturday night Mr. Bommers was recognized as the leader of the Best Dog at the 2007 IKP and received the Claus Kiefer Memorial Award for Atlanta. Having received the award Mr. Bommers stated that this was the highlight of his career as a leader. It should go without saying the 2007 IKP will be a highlight in our career as owners and will be hard to surpass.

When evaluating our good fortune keep in mind that 198 dogs entered the event. Atlanta received three 4hs, one dog received two 4hs, and Bellevue and twenty-three others received one 4hs for a total of 26 dogs that received at least one 4h. Also forty-nine dogs or 25% of the field failed the test.

Our good fortune at the 2007 IKP proved to be more than we could ever imagine. We are very proud for our dogs and their leaders Mr. Bommers and Mr. Siegfried and Thomas Hofstetter.