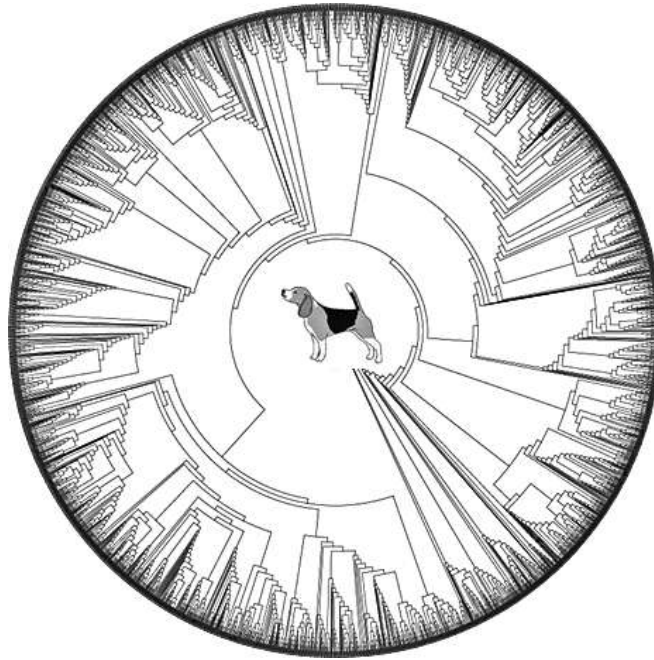


Pedigrees with Purpose



“Let the sire of the sire become the grandsire on the dam's side.” Say what?

Jim Lane - Laneline Beagles

“Let the sire of the sire become the grandsire on the dam's side.” Say what? Let me say that again, “on the dam's side, try to have the grandsire to be the same as the sire's sire on the sire's side.” Confused yet?

For years beagle breeders have been attempting to come up with “full proof” formulas to reproduce those phenoms of the beagle world. Many breeders have studied the art of breeding tactics in the fields of cattle, horses, poultry and canines of all types. Attempting to find out where in a family tree a particular trait came from, how they got this or that characteristic and what makes them do the things they do and trying to replicate things by focusing on certain portions of pedigrees. Many

put a lot into it while others settle for with what they can get from the more “simple” tactics.

As the story goes... Adam was walking around the Garden of Eden feeling very lonely, so God asked Adam, "What is wrong with you?" Adam said he didn't have anyone to talk to. God said he was going to give him a companion and it would be a woman. He said, "This person will cook for you and wash your clothes, she will always agree with every decision you make. She will bear you children and never ask you to get up in the middle of the night to take care of them. She will not nag you, and will always be the first to admit she was wrong when you've had a disagreement. She will never have a headache, and will freely give you love and

compassion whenever needed". Adam asked God, "What will a woman like this cost?" God said, "An arm and a leg." To which Adam replied, "What can I get for just a rib?" The rest is history. {*Hang on ladies, before you send me an email to put me in my place, read the rest of the article*}

"Let the sire of the sire become the grandsire on the dam's side." Not sure who came up with this famous slogan but it has been used for years in the worlds of canine, cattle, horse and poultry breeding. This prescription for line breeding has proven very effective "when" the dog linebred on is a truly superior example of the breed and can correct the weaknesses in the female/pedigree in question. Outcrossing can be like sweeping problems under the rug "if it is really an outcross that is done". The pups from two such lines now carry some mishmash of what either or both parents brought down out of their families.

Great and consistent bloodlines have been built on good, consistent dogs bred by knowledgeable breeders. Purebred hunting beagles that are superior in their perspective format or style are based on concentrating family traits, so "like" dogs must somehow be bred together. They must share the same characteristics and traits. Knowledge is the key here, knowing in-depth what you are breeding. All bloodlines carry along faults, not just the ones where the faults are seen and reported. One thing you can count on, every great breeder of any great line is knowledgeable of the bad traits within his own line. They may not share them with the general public, but they are aware of them. Again, the situation now is too often one where people breed without knowledge of faults, producing affecteds and carriers and just not knowing it, as they don't keep adequate records, do enough homework, etc... Just ask yourself how this can be preferable to accumulating information than can only benefit the breed? Who exactly benefits from all this ignorance? Surely not the dogs, the potential breeding partners left in

ignorance, or the potential puppy buyers. For the breeds to benefit from the control and manipulation of genetic traits and characteristics, we need to do what most Code of Ethics demand, keep up with the "swings" of the positives and negatives with our line of dogs and have an in-depth knowledge of the dogs we are using. This means understanding the basics of inheritance and knowing how to apply them for good results in your breeding practices. This means marking pedigrees with more than color and titles. This means accepting that most traits we now struggle with have a genetic component and treating such situations conservatively, rationally and with caution. We need to not just learn as we go, but read before we breed, and learn about the basics before we start creating litters of pups that are culls while they are still in their mother's womb. Particular combinations and crosses must not be random or by accident, but rather by precise strategic and thought out planned breedings.

A friend once told me in an email, when you bake a cake, not only do you have to have the proper "ingredients", but you precisely must have the proper "amounts" of each of the ingredients for the cake to have the desired end result.

Now let's "view" gathering all the different "bloodlines" together in your breedings that possess certain traits as adding "ingredients" to your cake. Let's also view putting the cake "in the oven", as the process of linebreeding to solidify the ingredients you have. You must have the patience to wait until you have "all" the ingredients before you put the batter in the oven. However, many people let "egos", envy, jealousy and being over competitive with fellow beaglers, even if they are family, friends or complete enemies, they allow things to prevent them from looking at the "long term" picture and they prematurely put their batter in the oven out of "hunger", hungry to impatiently want that stellar dog "now". Simply put, the perfect male that might "mesh" perfectly with your female may be tied up in the backyard of a

person's house that you may be "jealous" or envious of. You then "settle" by breeding to something else and end up producing "good" dogs, but not the best that you could have had with a little patience and wisdom. Possibly in your eyes you may have the desire to start linebreeding what you already have *{because you don't need or want no part of "that other" bloodline}*. But don't prematurely put your batter in the oven without adding all the ingredients that you need to ensure that you not only make a good or great cake, but the most "perfect" cake that you possibly can, "to your taste". But this is a form of "kennel blindness" that we will get into later in the article.

The legendary breeders of the past that changed the world of beagling as we know it? Each one of these men/woman seen things in a more transparent view of things than the average person. It's like they seen the scheme of beagling and breeding through an x-ray machine while most others are viewing things with the naked eye. Very few come along with this gift, and it seems the few that have "it", only seem to have it for a season and then they lose "it". It is almost like a ball club of any sport tapping into a certain player's talents and being lucky enough to sign them while they are in their "prime", opposed to signing them before they are fully developed or on their way out, and if you're lucky enough to get your hands on a particular dog from a particular breeding during the upside and in the "prime" of a prominent breeders vision quest... consider yourself fortunate.

Usually and technically, the breeder of any litter of pups, is the owner of the dam. It is the owner of the dam who decides that "this female" is worthy to breed and goes about to find the proper stud to breed her with, to produce the litter. For a person who is deciding to become a

"breeder" of any beagle, or to establish their own bloodline, there is much more of a commitment expected than most realize.

We can look to the history of beagling and use those legendary breeders and bloodlines that have held up as the finest examples to use in formulating our understanding of what it takes to be a breeder and what a bloodline is. One of the more notable examples of this was **George Nixon and the Pearson Creek bloodline**. The Pearson Creek bloodline was established based on three well known bloodlines of the era, the Black River, Pleasant Run and Pine Hollow bloodlines via Wilcliffe Boogie, Car-E-Line Buddy, and Echoing Nifty. A "standard" was set in each breeding that was done, only the pups that met the "standard" were retained in the breeding pool. Nixon studied pedigrees and investigated the individual dogs in the pedigrees of the dogs that he was using as brood stock. He had a vast knowledge of the principles of genetics and talked with other breeders of dogs as well as horse, cattle, sheep, chicken breeders and breeders of other livestock. Nixon had a written plan of future breeding's that he



FC Pearson Creek Bobby

wanted to make, always keeping his "standard" in mind. Nixon used line breeding, inbreeding, and out-crossed breeding among the three quality lines within the formulation of his bloodline. Throughout his career, trialers could always count on the quality that the Pearson Creek line was based on, when acquiring a Pearson Creek dog. These qualities included very specific characteristics and traits that trialers of the era wanted, needed and desired. No other bloodline of the era had the consistency of possessing, portraying and reproducing those traits that Nixon put into his dogs. The bloodlines were literally manipulated to portray the vision that Nixon had in his mind for his dogs. No other bloodline would not even begin to compare to the dominance, popularity and superiority that the Pearson Creek

bloodline had over all others during that era while in their prime. The only other "widespread" single bloodline that I can compare it to would be the "Branko" bloodline, which I admire and respect, but even then, you would have to more than triple the amount of field champions, quadruple the amount of "well deserved" hype and the records that George Nixon and Pearson Creek dogs "own" in the AKC will more than likely go untouched. And I state this with the absolute highest respect for Branko Kennels and fully knowing exactly the impact and success that the Branko bloodline has had on beagling. Companies and businesses of hunting supplies, dog food, vitamins and supplements etc... approached Nixon about Pearson Creek dogs endorsing their products, {Pearson Creek Bobby} there were 4 Pearson Creek males that dominated the field trialing circuit that were nicknamed "the four horseman". It was common to have a big trial and it ending up coming down to a bunch of Pearson Creek dogs running against themselves. While doing some research and out of curiosity I mulled over some AKC records concerning the Pearson Creek dogs. Searching the "Pearson Creek" name, after I reached the first 150 dogs, I found that 91 of the 150 dogs were field champions... I could have continued further with the same results and percentages. As good as other lines are and were, you would have to go thru 800 dogs to come up with 91 field champions. People offered to pay Nixon to set up breeding plans for their own dogs... Nixon had Rockstar status and his dogs were the best band around and Nixon was considered the "guru" of beagling in his prime, and if you were a beagle field trialer and you didn't have "Pearson Creek", you had nothing! Even today, if you were to research your beagle pedigree, more than likely you will have a Pearson Creek dog in there somewhere, much like it was the era before that with L.M. Watson's Yellow Creeks and what it will be like in the future with Branko. This era started in the late 1940's and lasted until the mid 1970's. By the 1980's the line evolved into something different from when the line was started, but I would venture

to say that in another 15 years the Branko bloodline will be in many ways different from those first key Branko crosses between Anna's Ann being bred to the males; Boomerang, Levi and Dingus. As far as absolute domination by pure numbers by different eras, the torch was passed from Yellow Creek to the Pearson Creek to the current Branko. There are and were many other great lines, but none that clearly dominated like these three bloodlines within their perspective eras.

Now the "Pearson Creek" dogs may not be the "style" that you particularly like, but it is not the end result of any bloodline that is our focus, but the method used to accomplish the breeder's vision of "his" style of dog and how he accomplished it. This is what constitutes a bloodline. The dogs breed true for the trait or traits that the breeder is aiming for, according to his/her vision. Again he did this by a "method", and after him many attempted to use his method but did not have "his" vision.

Now all coins have a flip side, and so it is with breeding beagles. There are also undesirable traits that are apparent in some dogs. There are certain bloodlines that have become known in the hunting beagle fraternity that breed true for some of the more undesirable traits, characteristics, styles and structural problems or health issues.

So what can we learn from looking at the Pearson Creek dogs as an example of a bloodline and George Nixon as a breeder of beagles? A bloodline can be defined as a family of dogs that breed true for certain traits that the breeder sets as his "standard". A breeder's standard should always start with breed type. Those traits and characteristics that were established in the bloodline that reflect the purpose of the bloodline and enable a bloodline to be distinguished apart from other lines. These include nose, line, brains, search, hunt etc... so they may dominate and be superior in whatever style or format they are hunted or trialed in.

A breeder has to start with quality stock from somewhere. A thorough research into the dogs in the background or the pedigree of the dogs is a "must" to learn about the traits that they possess as well as how exactly they were developed, by way of line breeding, inbreeding or out-crossed breeding. As in the example of George Nixon, many successful breeders usually start with two or three outstanding lines to serve as the foundation of their bloodlines. Willet Randall, L.M. Watson, Elmer Gray, George Nixon, Clarence Jones, Frank Reese {just to name a few that many refer to}. None of these breeders started with a kennel of "culls" and turned them into greatness. They started with the very best hounds they could find and afford {within the style of their preference} and maintained and improved them with selective breeding and strict culling.

The principals of genetics and the methods to breed, "*line breeding, inbreeding and outcross breeding*", and the strengths and weakness of each, needs to be understood or your "good intentions" will do more harm than good and you will just be contributing to furthering beaglers from the ultimate goal, which is to "better the beagle breed".

Accurate records of the breeding made and the pups produced need to be kept. Follow up in the evaluation of the pups is essential, as is the selection of quality brood stock for future breeding. A breeding may look great on paper, but the evaluation of the offspring is essential to confirm what works and what does not. The pups that do not measure up to the breeder's "standard" or vision should be culled, culled and culled! Did I mention the word "culled"?

A bloodline can be based on a breeder, such as in the example of George Nixon, or it can also be based on an individual stud dog or brood female. In this case, it is usually a prominent dog that genetically throws such quality, that a high percentage of its offspring all breed true for this quality. An example of this is IFC Brad-Ju's Bella Donna. She was a female that derived

from a combination of lines that all went back to the Yellow Creek bloodline which genetically possessed such quality that, when she was bred to different stud dogs such as FC Brad-Ju's Butcher, FC Mountaineer King, FC Hawkridge Firechief and FC DFJ Murphy White produced Field Champions and top Gun dogs from every litter, even though she was being bred to dogs of different strains. There was no wrong way to breed this female. She produced quality in every breeding which is why she was a 2006 HOF Inductee. The odd thing about it? Most of the time the "studs" always get the credit for the offspring, however, being out of different sires and litters the one thing that FC Lady Gertrude V, FC Mystery Hill Julie, FC Bear's Musical Peanut's, FC North Bend Moose, FC North Bend Igloo and several great gundogs have in common, is their dam; IFC Brad-Ju's Bella Donna.

As the story goes... A little girl was wondering where humans came from. She asked her mom, and her mom gave her a religious explanation, telling her how God created Adam and Eve. She asked her dad, and her dad told her about evolution, saying that humans were descended from monkeys. The little girl was very confused, so she asked her mom, "Why did you tell me that humans came from God and dad tells me that humans came from monkeys?" Her mom replied, "Well, I was telling you about my side of the family. Your dad was telling you about his." {*There you go ladies...*}

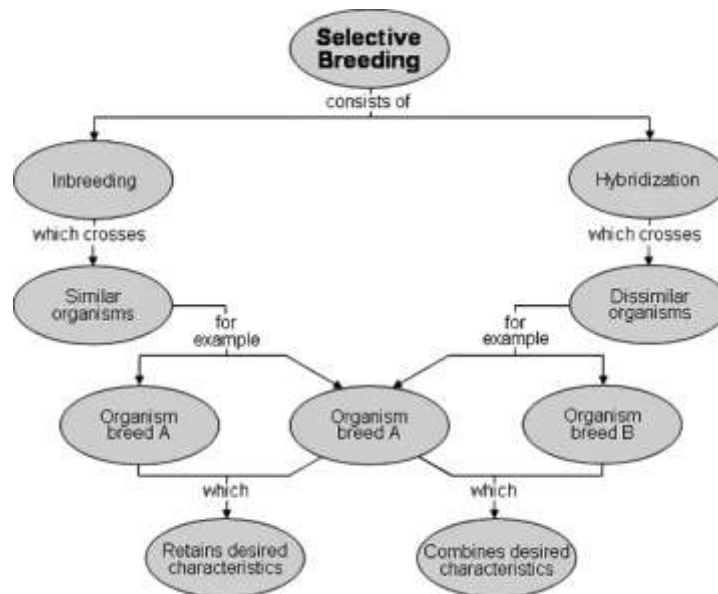
There have been a few females like Bella Donna and also a few studs that seemed like you could breed them to almost any dog and produce quality, and then there are those dogs {*most cases*} that can produce high quality when "matched" correctly with the right mate, but can produce horribly if not bred to the right mate. You need to know in-depth the dogs in your pedigree and the stud's, in order to match up the strengths, weaknesses and faults to create a balance. You don't want to enhance and bring forth a hidden fault that is in either your "great" female or the "stellar" Field

Champion that you're breeding to by combining the family trees.

The most asked and talked about question on almost any internet forum, blog or at any "club house" is concerning **inbreeding**, **linebreeding** and **outcrossing** and the debate of which is the best "method". What really matters the most is the quality and qualities of the dogs in question, not the "formula" by which they are bred, once you have the quality of dogs then you establish the method.

Linebreeding is often touted as some sort of special way to get good dogs. Linebreeding is simply weak inbreeding, so carries all the problems of both outcrossing and inbreeding and simply gives people uncomfortable with the idea of inbreeding a way to comfortably inbreed to retain desired characteristics. The degree of relationship, in any case, does not necessarily indicate the amount of genetic traits shared. Many of us has seen two "identical" bred cousins, as well as brother-sister pairs as unlike as night and day to illustrate this point. Again, smart decisions, based on in-depth knowledge of what those pedigrees mean, are needed. To breed two dogs together "wisely and for good results" you must have intimate knowledge of the dogs in their respective pedigrees and what characteristics and traits they likely share, along with the faults from two or three generations back that you may be doubling or tripling up on, which will bring those faults to the forefront. If you are not the breeder of all the dogs involved, you do not have that knowledge and more than

likely the breeders that were, are not going to share the secrets of their private breeding programs, especially the traits that may be thrown that are "faults" from a dog they used in the past. Out of "ignorance" you may be focusing in on linebreeding the very particular dogs in a pedigree from the top side or the bottom side of your dog and all the while, you may be doubling or tripling up on a dog that "includes a dog" that lacks one of the traits such as hunt, nose, search or brains etc... but was still used because it excelled in another area. I am a fan of linebreeding but you must be careful, it is a two-edged sword.



Outcrossing is considered a way to deal with a genetic problem. When your line shows a problem, breed out to "get rid of it." Except you don't, it is still there, now it is just hidden along with whatever the sire's family also contributed "in secret". It may be back to haunt you later on, when you "linebreed" that

particular dog. Document what you got and what you are getting. Outcross when you need a "hybrid state" for best expression. Outcross to bring things into your line you cannot find within it and prepare, because some unseen "traits" will accompany the traits you desire. The best outcrosses may not really be outcrosses at all, as two separate unrelated families with almost identical similar styles, traits and characteristics are merged together. Different names and lines, but maybe the same "good" genes for extreme hunt are present, for example, in both families. These trait or type breedings are a strategy to get the "good" genes for a trait without doubling up on a

specific individual. They have the extra added advantage to the breed "if not your specific breeding" of possibly helping to preserve diversity in the bloodline, your still doubling up on the same traits but you have a variety of lines or bloodlines. Of course, many "outcrossings" wouldn't be considered "outcrossings" if extended pedigrees were viewed, many breeds and many major and successful bloodlines in the beagle world go back to a handful of the same relatives and this is not necessarily a bad thing, if the dogs were good. Again, information on the dogs in question is so necessary.

Inbreeding brings the skeletons out of the closet. They were already there, but now you have to face them. It can be a great tool for finding out what you didn't know about your bloodlines, but it takes an open mind and a steely heart to face up to what you find. It also takes great dogs to breed close as you are fixing traits fast and hard. The closer the breeding, the better the two dogs must be to make it worth it. Call weak inbreeding "linebreeding" if you like, but breeding dogs closely related is technically inbreeding as the point is to double up on desired family characteristics by doubling up on the desired genes. But most everything recessive in the family eventually pops up, good and bad, when linebreeding over generations, so eventually blind linebreeding leads to the same destination as intense inbreeding, it just takes longer to get there. The bad news about inbreeding is that the homozygous sought may be found. In other words, you are trying to double up on genes for good traits but you may also double up on the genes in the immune system and that can lead to inbreeding depression. So be careful what you wish for when inbreeding, especially repeatedly and/or tightly.

Then there is **Kennel Blindness!** All breeders have their favored characteristics and traits. All are willing to sacrifice the perfection of certain traits to consistently achieve other traits they feel more important, such as in the "hunting

beagle" world, many times it is "looks", though most want "great looking" dogs, they are willing to breed to a less desirable looking dog to gain "hunt". This "field trialers" or "gun hunters" view on their chosen format leads to a "style" and the emphasis of certain traits within the correct type that a particular breeder and his line of dogs will be known for such as; nose, line, speed, brains, hunt, search etc... that many hunters, trialers and breeders have determined which styles of dogs is good for the format that they compete in or the terrain they hunt in, it preserves the variety and strength of the hunting beagle. But many breeders fall short because of their own likes and dislikes, especially at the beginning when they know little about the breed and later on, as the years pass and they achieve some success, having now looked at the style they chose to breed so long they think of it often as the breed itself. If this quality is combined with an intolerance for one's rivals and/or for the faults least liked and virtues most admired, a good line of dogs will dwindle down to be more memory and reputation than a still truly vital line producing excellent dogs. Many are also blinded simply because they are trying to "hold on" to that legendary line that was so powerful and superior years ago. The line is watered down and all but gone but they are in love with the idea, story, legend and history that the legendary bloodline represents. There is nothing wrong with this, I myself absolutely love the history and story of the legendary Yellow Creek beagles, but we must be realistic and be honest with ourselves when our line lacks or needs something genetically. It makes no sense at all for a captain of a ship to force himself to stay in the cabin to "sink with the ship" out of honor, when he can easily patch the hole and keep the ship afloat.

Kennel Blindness is also an almost universal trait of the "second-hand breeders", those that claim to have a certain line with "some" outcrosses in a bloodline who have a thousand excuses for why their dogs don't succeed, all of them are blamed on the faults of other people

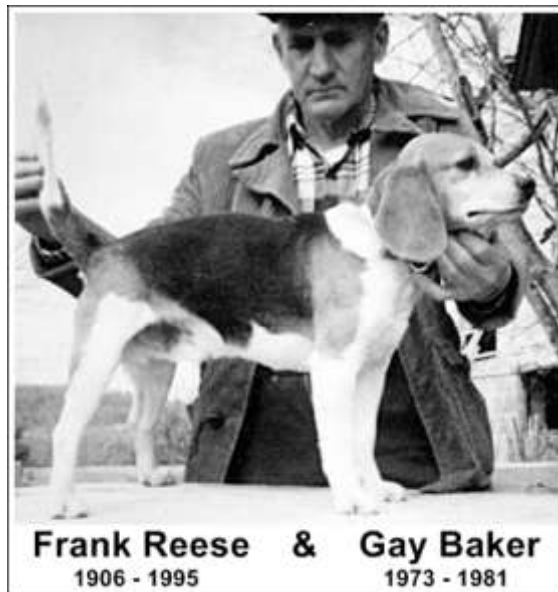
and other people's dogs. Two friends may have a male and a female that each bought from the same elaborate successful kennel and breeder and of same bloodlines. However, if those same two dogs were still owned by the same original breeder, he himself would in no way breed the two dogs. Why? Because he knows that if you combine that sire on the top side of the male that one friend owns, with the grandsire on the bottom side of the female that the other friend owns, you are combining genes that will hurt your nose, hunt, speed etc... something the two friends would have no idea about because they have no knowledge of the pedigree "in-depth".

Rev. John Parks was doing an interview with Frank Reese breeder and owner of Gay Kennels. When John asked Frank if he thought the "Gay Bloodline" would go on long after Frank was gone, Frank responded by saying that he believes that a Bloodline dies when the Breeder dies. He said this "profound" and very accurate statement because nobody knows "in-depth" the strengths, weaknesses, secret faults, positives and negatives of any pedigree like the breeder. Most importantly, nobody can capture the "vision" and driving force behind the bloodline, but the breeder himself.

Breeding up means using a well known dog on a poor quality female in the hopes her offspring will succeed where she failed. Stripped down to this raw definition it's obvious what a bad idea this is. Stud owners should not let themselves be talked into breeding to sub-standard females needing a "quick fix" and trialers and hunters shouldn't attempt to get better pups this way. However it happens all the time, most of the time it is "money" driven. But the outcome is

nearly always the same, the proud owners of those new pups find they are not enough better than their mother to be competitive "they blame the stud" and the stud owner finds the reputation of the sire is damaged by those who see these poor quality pups as typical of what he produces "they blame the female which was bred". Stud owners shouldn't allow themselves to become this kennel blind to gain a few bucks. Worse is the idea of starting out with faulty hounds and hoping to breed to get something better somehow. This falls under the old saying about "making silk purses out of sows' ears", you cannot make a good quality product using bad quality materials, but incredibly is still

attempted and defended as a way to start out in beagling. You just cannot "get there from here." Surely there are more than enough dogs in this world without starting out deliberately to make mediocre litters.



Breeding Pedigrees and trial records or to the hottest sire going... Too many people breed "paper tigers", they breed dogs who are relatives of a famous dog as if they were somehow magic or

just as good, they breed to a dog's popularity, it's trial record, it's fame, or even to their best friend's dog or the closest, most convenient dog. It's astounding as much as has been written in the last century about the warnings of breeding "paper" that it is still done so often. A sire is only as good as his get and his get will equally reflect the females taken to him. It's no use to hope the one "or 10" good pups you saw out of him will happen to you when your female isn't like the dams of those pups. It's even worse to think that his fame will arise in his litters, one cannot take the parents' trial records into the field to convince the judge of the merits of their offspring. Nor can you

honestly think that a dog having "famous" grandparents gives you a reason to breed. Further, when certain sires are overused in a breed, these popular sires become a potential danger to the breed. If their influence is too widespread, then it becomes hard to breed away from them. Diversity of style as well as genes is lost in a breed. You're putting all your eggs in one basket and if the popular sire turns out to have a damaging genetic flaw, the Popular Sire Syndrome has now spawned a "Matador", a dog whose late recognized fault is now widespread enough in your kennel to damage it beyond the point of repair. This is all bad practice. Selection is lost when a pedigree or fame is the deciding factor for the choice of breeding partner. It's ill educated to breed to an ad or a reputation. It's a doomed effort "except for sales" to breed for convenience or to "see what happens." I believe the great John Wayne said it best, *"life is hard, it's even harder when you're stupid"*. I know a few breeders of well established bloodlines that "had" good, consistent and well balanced bloodlines, but they got the "itch" to turn them into "super phenom beagles" over night and were swayed by what they read in a magazine or when they believed the hype about a dog on a forum somewhere on the internet and they fell prey to the temptation and put all their future in crossing their females with a flavor of the month male. Yes, we all want to improve our lines and kennels, but sometimes we need to abide by the old saying; *"if it's not broke, don't fix it"*. There is no exact science or method to achieve absolute greatness with every breeding. There are "hits" and "misses" along the way. The only thing you can do is attempt to increase your percentages by knowing your dogs, doing your homework, learning from your mistakes, learning from other's mistakes, by being open minded and simply choose to do the right things and leave the taking chances, guess work and attempting to capture lighting in a bottle for the next guy.

I didn't write this in an attempt to instruct or even suggest how to or not to breed beagles.



My hope is to "provoke" thoughts, ideas and opinions. We should all be questioning our motives and intentions whenever we create a litter of pups. Many are indeed on a quest to "better the beagle breed", find superiority and perfection within your own style/format of hunting beagle. The first man or woman that finds that "perfection"? Please give me a call or shoot me an email, because I would love to know your secret, but this I do know, the only way to come close to accomplishing this is to have a clear distinct "vision" and have a purpose in mind with every pedigree that you create and every family of dogs that you merge together.

Good Luck, Good Beagling & God Bless, Jim Lane - Laneline Beagles