

## Riverwatch Curly-Coated Retrievers

**Mary and Gary Meek**

*Sue LeMieux*

Mary and Gary Meek have had Curly-Coated Retrievers since 1989, and in this comparatively short time their breeder/owner-handled Riverwatch Curlies have made important contributions to the breed and helped establish recognition of the breed on a Group and Best In Show level.

SL: When did you first become involved with purebred dogs? What was the first breed you showed?

MM: As a child I had a Cocker Spaniel named 'Penny.' She was my third birthday present and I grew up with her as my best friend. As a teenager, my father acquired a Weimaraner and I had the privilege of helping to train him for the field and then hunt behind him during my teenage years.

I think I have almost always had a dog at home. My children spent their early years with an Irish Setter bitch and a Siberian Husky bitch. Shortly after I became a single mom, I rescued a lovely white Afghan Hound and through a friend got involved with showing. During the late 1970s, Linda and I would pack up our station wagon with two dogs, seven kids, picnic lunch and dog paraphernalia and travel all over Michigan attending all-breed and specialty matches. I bought my first show prospect Afghan Hound in 1981 and learned to show him. Since I was a single mom with four children, going to shows was a treat and when I retired him at age 6 he was one major short of finishing. During that time I acquired my second Afghan and bred her once for her breeder.

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