

Watching Our A Litter Grow

by John and Sande Mustain



Above, Asia with her littermate Lucy Lu in Nebraska



Asia's littermate Sadie fetching in Texas

We welcomed our first litter of Small Munsterlanders in January 2014 and of course got attached immediately to each of the 12 puppies. Acting as the responsible breeders we wanted to be, we worked very hard to screen potential buyers, making sure they were hunters, that the dog would be raised in their home with the family and not in a kennel, that they had a safe, fenced yard and many other criteria that we felt were important and I feel we got really lucky and found outstanding homes for all of the puppies. An added benefit was that once the pups went to their new homes, we stayed in contact with most of our buyers via Facebook or emails and now have the opportunity to watch the pups grow and share stories on their development. We kept one of the pups and named her Asia, and it's been very interesting to watch her grow and compare her development to her 11 littermates!

The pups went through their various training periods at about the same times (potty training, crating) and I found it amazing that although the puppies are scattered across the US, from Oregon to Georgia with different families raising them, they all seemed to go through their development stages at about the same time and with the same results. It has also been interesting to compare our puppy's development to her littermates, and we were proud of her accomplishments – she was always in the lead with first time events such as pointing

and fetching... until it came to swimming!

When the pups were about 4 months old we began to get pictures and emails on how fast the other pups were catching on to swimming and water retrieval so we of course assumed Asia would jump right in and take off, but she didn't. We started taking her to the pond everyday where she would watch our other dogs jump in, swim and retrieve the dummies but she wouldn't go near the water. We tried tossing treats in the water to tempt her (pieces of hot dogs on toothpicks so they would float, mini marshmallows) and that got her feet in the water, neck stretching as far as she could to try and reach the treats, but she wouldn't swim.

About a week later we were asked to board one of Asia's littermates, Ally, so we thought the competition would be good and took both pups to the pond, but to our dismay neither pup was interested in the water! Again we tried the floating treats, letting them watch the bigger dogs swim... but nothing. The next weekend Ally went back to her family and they went to the lake for a few days of vacation and a few days later we got an email with pictures of Ally swimming after ducks, after the kids in a canoe, swimming everywhere.



Above, Asia fetching a Missouri quail.



Littermate Hermie fetching a stick like a pro and loving the water in Oregon!

Watching Our A-Litter Grow....con't from page 10



Littermate Covey on the beach in Georgia @ 3 months with a friend

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The following week I went to Nebraska for some bird training and brought Asia along, hoping she could spend some time with another littermate, Lucy Lu. Both pups did an amazing job in the field, tracking, fetching and retrieving but when it



Littermate Ally, keeping a close eye on a duck



John training with Asia

came to swimming, Lucy Lu wasn't interested either. Of course, by the time I got home I heard that Lucy was swimming...



Finally, I decided to just relax and let Asia decide when she was ready. Each day when we went to the pond, Asia would patiently sit and watch the other dogs swim but didn't show any interest in getting in herself. Then about 2 weeks later, on a particularly hot day I finished mowing the grass and decided to take the dogs to a public lake near our house to cool off. It must have been too hot to fish, as no one was there but us, so I didn't put the dogs on leashes, I just let them run for the water and play. I threw a dummy in the water and just like she'd been doing it all her life, Asia ran full force into the lake and fetched the dummy. Now I can't keep her out of the water!



Asia, hitting the water full-force!