

# COUNTRY LIFE

FEBRUARY 11, 1982

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## GLUTTONS AFTER NOVELTIES CONTINENTAL GUNDOGS IN BRITAIN

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If you look at the totals of the active registrations of pedigree gundogs with the Kennel Club for 1980 you will see that over 1,880 "Continental" gundogs (weimaraners, vizslas, German pointers and large Münsterländers) were registered—102 more than the combined registrations of three of our native gundog breeds—flat-coated and curly-coated retrievers and pointers. This rather disturbing fact is of course offset by the very large number of Labrador registered, and the sustained popularity of the golden retriever, the Irish setter and the cocker and English springer spaniels. The vast majority of the latter registrations are of show specimens or pets rather than field dogs; the majority of the Continental imported breeds are used in the shooting field.

The shooting fraternity is looking more and more at the airily recently imported breeds and less and less at our traditional breeds, especially and paradoxically those breeds which in the past have always attracted the knowledgeable shooting men who rate utility value higher than the novelty of cult-breeds, or the latest howling whim.

Continental breeds have a substantial appeal for modern shooting men, particularly those



1—IBIZAN HOUND RETRIEVING RABBITS SHOT FROM THE SADDLE. The Ibizan hound is one of several breeds of Continental gundogs that have been imported to Britain in recent years



(Left) 2—A BRACE OF STABYHOUN, THE FRIESLAND SETTER. "For temperament, all-round reliability, sheer character and an unspoiled nature it takes a lot of beating"

(Below) 3—AN INTERNATIONAL FIELD-TRIAL CHAMPION BRITTANY SPANIEL. It is the only spaniel breed which points

which "hunt, point and retrieve", and an increasing number of open and novice classes are being scheduled for these breeds, with weimaraners being specially successful. Perhaps this is a local outcome from the rather conservative way we have traditionally used our native gundog breeds. The use of specialised breeds, English setters, pointers, Labrador retrievers and the sporting spaniels, has led to a rather stereotyped approach to their use in the

