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# Natal Gundog Club Field Newsletter

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## JEPPE STRIDH WORKSHOPS



Insights into the recent workshops conducted by Jeppe Stridh are revealed in Interviews with some of the participants.

Hailing from Sweden, Jeppe Stridh has visited South Africa twice in the past two years and conducted training courses with dog handlers in the Cape and In KwaZulu-Natal. This year, and organized by David Padbury, he and his wife Kerstin ran two workshops over two successive weekends for KZN handlers. On his website, Stridh outlines his philosophy concerning dog training as follows:

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“The philosophy behind our work is very simple. If you use both your heart and your head, understand your dog and cooperate with him, you should be able to establish the limits within which you and your dog could share a wonderful life together. Once you get this right, you will have a happy, pleasant and obedient dog, and you will be able to give him much more freedom, while still keeping both him and your environment safe. Our philosophy can be compared to a set of traffic lights. We all know what the red light means. And we all like the green light. But the orange light makes most of us feel a bit uncertain.

Thinking about this traffic lights symbol, certainly you can see how a dog would find it easier to understand his owner if he or she used the traffic light method. Unfortunately this is easier said than done; most handlers resemble a brightly shining orange light! But if you start applying the traffic light principle in your everyday relationship with your dog, using red and green as your signals, you will soon begin to see changes. Just never forget that the relationship should be based on 95% positive (green) and 5% dominant (red).”

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Attendance at the workshops was excellent and, by all accounts, Jeppe is passionate about assisting people to train their dogs - and in general his approach to training was well received.

Overall impressions of the workshop ranged from “*challenging*” to “*interesting*”, “*excellent*”, “*fantastic*” and “*stimulating*”. This brief report is based on a series of ‘interviews’ with members from the Natal Gundog Club that attended.




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Jeppé (left) with David and Kerstin (right) at the workshop venue

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Many of the ‘older hands’ were able to consider whether or not to incorporate the approaches into their own training framework, while for the novice handlers, Jeppé’s methods served to provide a basis for further development. Described as firm and unambiguous, it would seem that the core principles of Jeppé’s training revolved around understanding your dog, working with its temperament and achieving a balance between love and respect: this to be achieved through 95% praise and 5% correction. *“It is all about rewarding your dog (the reward must be given at exactly the right time) for most of the time (95%); and the correction must be done quickly, sharply and at the right time (amount of power or force used is dependent on the dog).”*

For participants that were interviewed after the workshop, their expectations in advance of the workshop revolved largely around the desire to get fresh ideas about how to train their dog, coupled with a good dose of curiosity regarding Jeppé’s approach which was reputed to be based on strong (some might even say old-fashioned) ideas.

While many of the handlers attended the workshop to work on “*general obedience*”, others had more specific individual targets such as problems related to breaking, deliveries, general control and so on, while for others it was an opportunity to reflect and consider how to rectify many

of the mistakes that they might have made during their own specific training journeys.

Those handlers that reported that they had made progress on obedience and control seem to have achieved this through increased levels of “*proper correction*” (this appears to be correction that was harsh, well timed and definitive). It is indeed this specific set of elements that perhaps requires some scrutiny, since any ill-timed correction simply results in a host of undesirable consequences (fearful unhappy dogs that have no way of understanding what they are being punished for).




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Jeppé explaining quite clearly (and forcefully) what Wendy Sanzin needs to be aware of when training her dog

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The take home message for most people was that “*timing is paramount*”, and that the “*power of body language and tone of voice*” were key. Knowing what type of personality your dog has, and then adjusting your training accordingly was also very important. Consistency, timing, the “*black and white*” nature of the approach coupled with such a forceful personality, in what some might see as an “*old fashioned*” approach, were the elements that appeared to contribute to the success that Jeppé achieves in training.

Last words from some of the handlers:

*“Jeppé's uncompromising approach may be a bit 'in your face', especially in SA culture”;*

*“I thought he was good if you knew your dog well, quite difficult for a very novice handler to decide which is the correct approach for their particular dog so maybe in some cases could do harm if he was not there to supervise. On the other hand sometimes the positive approach can take an awfully long time to get a result ....*






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Jeppe at work with a group of handlers

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*so he did have a balance between the two, also fine if the dog/handler balance is right”; and then finally*

*“Thank you very much for the opportunity to participate in such a special event”;*

*”Just to thank Jeppe, Kirsten and David for all their efforts”;* and

*“A big thank you to David and Jean for putting the workshops together”.*




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*.... and then for some of the youngsters it was just wonderful to safe in their ‘dad’s’ arms !*

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