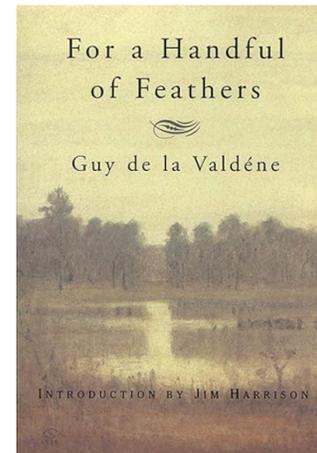


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## In Memoriam: Guy de la Valdéne, ( 1944-2023)

Guy de la Valdéne, 79, noted author, conservationist and Epagneul Breton enthusiast passed away in April 2023. Guy was born in New York City in 1944, but was reared in Normandy, France in a small Castle built in 1642. He first became exposed to the local Epagneul Bretons and hunting woodcock and grey partridge there on his family's Normandy estate as a boy. Later in life he moved back to the United States, and eventually made his permanent home on a north Florida quail plantation known as Dogwood Plantation, which he purchased and developed near Tallahassee, just outside the town of Quincy, Florida. Guy owned and hunted Epagneul Bretons most of his life. Having lived in France during his formative years, he always felt a special affinity for the breed.



As the Epagneul Breton breed began to re-emerge and become better known in the United States, Guy joined what is now the Club de L'Épagnéul Breton of the United States (CEB-US) during the early years of the club. Around 2006, when the club was undergoing some transition, he called up then CEB-US President Fred Overby, and indicated he wanted to step up to more actively help support the burgeoning club and the breed which he wanted to see succeed in the United States. By that time Guy, knew from club publications that there were field trials for the Epagneul Breton beginning to be held around the country. He casually offered to host a field trial or other event at his hunting place known as El Consuelo Farm. El Consuelo Farm was an old tobacco farm converted to a recreational hunting property and was located just outside the city limits of Quincy, Florida, and was the venue where Guy frequently hosted friends and guests that wanted to quail hunt in the region. He did an early release program there for hunting quail on El Consuelo, so as not to put too much pressure on the population of wild bobwhites he had developed on Dogwood Plantation where he resided.

The nearby local EB club known as the Epagneul Breton Gun Dog Club of Georgia accepted his generous offer to host a field trial. After the first event ran smoothly and was well received, annual field trials were held at El Consuelo Farm during December and January for more than a decade, until Guy eventually sold this hunting tract. With his profound sense of humor, he referred to the participants as "the carrots," because the trial participants commonly wore orange hats and hunting vests, which he felt gave the appearance of carrots walking through the woods! Not only did Guy and his staff welcome trial participants to the trial grounds from all over the southeast, he would generously provide a delicious catered lunch for the participants. In 2012, Guy hosted

the CEB-US National Conclave at El Consuelo. Although he was famous as an author and sporting personality, Guy preferred privacy and carefully avoided the limelight. He appreciated being unceremoniously introduced as merely the owner of "Louie," his Epagneul Breton, when he greeted all the attendees at the 2012 CEB-US National Conclave. The field trials at El Consuelo were an excellent venue for trialing on bobwhite quail in the UKC type (W) wild bird trialing format. The property was well managed by Daniel Boyd, Guy's friend and farm manager, who supervised each field trial. It was a treat for Epagneul Breton owners to be able to run their dogs on bobwhite quail in the storied Red Hills Plantation region of North Florida and Southwest Georgia which provided towering longleaf pine forests and dense rows of bi-color lespedeza along with other flora and fauna.

Guy would usually appear briefly and ceremoniously at the El Consuelo field trials to welcome participants and watch a few of the dogs run. Occasionally, he would even participate in one of the El Consuelo field trials with one of his own Epagneul Bretons. Although he acknowledged that his hunting dog's field trial manners were not polished, Guy and Louie, working as a team, pointed and flushed three coveys of El Consuelo quail in less than ten minutes during one particular field trial there. He fondly mentions a number of his Epagneul Bretons in books he authored. Being a devout woodcock hunter, in his later years, Guy would import Datsum du Cournaillie known as "Louie," from the fabled French Epagneul Breton kennel located in Callac, Bretagne, which was then operated by Herve Bourdon, another devoted woodcock hunter. Louie was a great bird finder and excellent EB hunting dog. Guy loved nurturing and hunting wild bobwhite quail on his nearby farm where he resided. He chronicles his struggles to develop and conserve a wild bobwhite quail population on his farm in his classic nonfiction work "*A Handful of Feathers*." He also took special pleasure in pursuing Hungarian partridge out west, with fellow authors, close friends and hunting partners Tom McGuane and Jim Harrison. Guy wrote eloquently about his upland hunting exploits in "*A Handful of Feathers*," "*Making Game*" which is an essay about his love affair with woodcock, and "*The Fragrance of Grass*" which details his upland pursuit of game birds including the Hungarian partridge out west. All of these books mention his Epagneul Bretons, and his affinity for the breed, both as companions and hunting dogs.

Guy was a generous person by nature. He loved and valued his Epagneul Bretons. He generously supported the breed and CEB-US during the earlier years, when support for the burgeoning breed and club in the United States was critical. Many EB enthusiasts have fond memories of days spent hunting and field trialing at El Consuelo Farm over the years. The greater EB community expresses their sincere condolences to Guy's family and circle of close friends as a result of his recent death. The EB community also gratefully acknowledges this colorful French American's many generous contributions over his lifetime to the Epagneul Breton in America.