

# Save room for dessert

I like not-so-sweet desserts, and I always save room for them but, in this case, Briony, who came last, was the dessert.

This shooting season, for me, this year is quite quiet... With the exception of today, I had only one proper shooting day, the opening of the shooting season. Then nothing but for two micro-walks in the countryside carrying a shotgun, alone, no boar hunting yet. I really enjoy shooting, but this year it seems to be impossible to keep up with everything. I continue training Briony, attend some trials, work and prepare demanding university exams, sadly is really hard to find any free time to go shooting. Furthermore, nobody wants to come shooting with me, I must be an awful person! No, let's put jokes aside, the problem is that Briony is steady to flush and fairly obedient, while the average Italian pointing dog is not steady and is usually... well... WILD! It would not be fair to pretend her to be obedient and steady when other dogs are encouraged to misbehave .





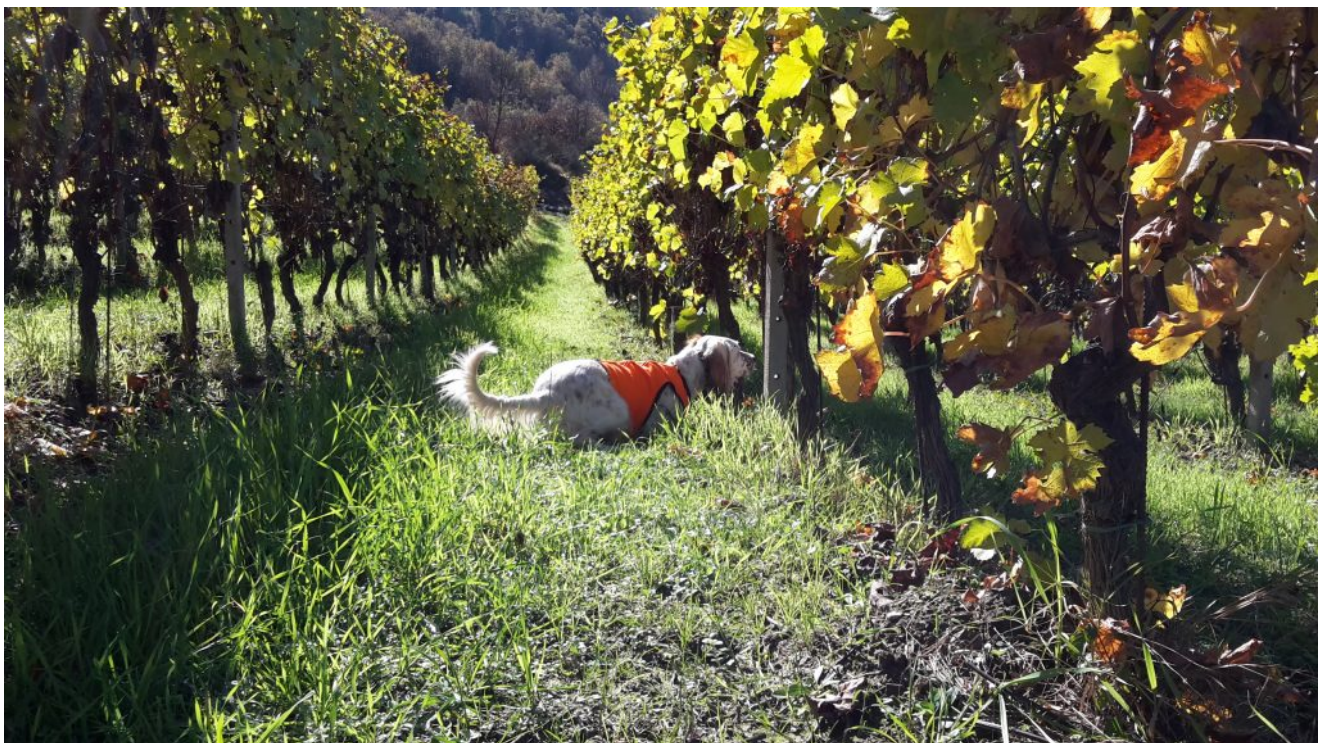
Biting the dessert!

Yesterday night I was commenting a Facebook post by my friend Andrea Vaccari (he has a [nice blog](#) on the Bracco Italiano, if you are interested in the breed). Andrea is a good hunter and a reasonably good trainer: he was complaining because almost all of the Italian hunters, who shoot over pointing dogs, feel the need to have a GPS tracking collar and/or a beeper to locate their furry friend. I agree with Andrea, this is nonsense and often equals to a lack of sportsmanship. People throw dogs out cars, let them run like wild horses and then go looking for them using some high tech device. Some people are really proud of having dogs who hunt (obviously for themselves) one mile ahead of their handler. I found this rather stupid and sometimes even annoying as beepers are extremely loud and can be heard from afar. Also, how can you test important qualities such as trainability, cooperation and connection to the handler? I am not attacking GPS and beepers because I do not like them: technology can be useful but it should not be used as an excuse to avoid training a dog.

When you say something against beepers and GPS collars, people get quite defensive and claim that they have purchased these devices for "safety". Yes, it is true, a GPS collar can be useful if a dog gets lost or something happens, but we are talking about pointing dogs, not about hounds. A pointing dog should hunt close and visible enough to be useful to the gun, which means you have to train the dog to hunt at a reasonable distance from you. If you keep the dog at the proper distance, you can see him and see what happens around him, you do not need a GPS tracking collar. Furthermore, a GPS tracking collar cannot save the dog if the dog is too far: last spring a young setter drowned in a river. He was wearing a GPS collar and the owner witnessed the whole tragedy through the device, he was one mile away from the dog. I think GPS collars give you a false illusion of safety: people think that knowing the dog's location they can save him in case of need, what they do not



consider is that they can be too far. This false illusion, in my opinion, indirectly encourages owners to give more and more freedom to dogs, in the false hope to bag one more bird, and yes birds are scarce here. I was also told that a GPS tracking collar is almost compulsory if you have a German pointing dog because they like chasing deer, people cannot not believe that you can drop a properly trained Deutsch Drahthaar when a deer is present. If you hunt woodcock, however, the beeper is even better – they claim- as you can locate the dog without checking the GPS screen constantly and... Brown dogs cannot be seen in the wood! What about a high visibility orange vest? It is cheaper and it does not make noise.



When I first got involved with pointing dogs, I used to train with Deutsch Drahthaars (German Wirehaired Pointers), these dogs were trained for German Hunting Tests and obedience was incredibly important. I used to admire these dogs (I have a soft spot for these rugged hunters) and their people, I never thought any English Setters could learn the same things. In 2015, instead, I went to England and I saw some English Setters behaving like the Germans I knew, what an awakening! I can candidly admit that for me there is a BE (Before England)



and a AE (After England) era, as my views on dog handling and training radically changed. I eventually came to the conclusion that there are two pointing dog training methods:

- ***The Italian Method: aka let the dog run and do whatever he likes and... chase him;***
- ***The German (but also British, Scandinavian...) Method: aka the dog has to do what you ask him to do, no matter what.***



As a consequence, I now feel a “**little**” out of place and none of my friends has a dog who can go shooting with Briony. The last time she went shooting with other dogs was last year, I was invited to a nice estate and I brought her: huge mistake. Dogs were running all over the place, no obedience, no steadiness nothing AND... guess what, a group of incredibly disappointed dog owners. They could not get close to the birds in time to shoot, birds were flying out of the estate and taking the dogs away with them. It was terrible, Briony was doing well but, being the only dog still around she became an easy target, all that was happening was our fault! Exhausted, I took her back the car and began picking blackthorns, shooters then calmed down, came to me and sincerely apologized. I went back to the grounds, but left Briony in the car, it was the wisest thing to do. This year... I got invited



to the same place again, by some of the same people. They are good friends, I like them and I did not want to disappoint them in any way: we have been shooting together for years and, when Briony was younger, it was thanks to the birds they paid for that she gained experience. I really owe them much, but I did not want to find myself in unpleasant situation again. I kindly accepted the invitation, but I told them I was not going to run Briony. They offered to give me ground for myself, but I refused, I told them I was happy to be their guest and I would have enjoyed their dogs. Briony was going have a run at the end of the shooting day, alone.



When I reached the lunch hut at 9 AM, they had already left so the gamekeeper told me where to go. A pack of SIX English Setters was running all over the hill: I could quickly locate everybody. Two men were on this side of the hill, and two more on the other side. Two shooters were following two (randomly chosen) dogs and the other two were following the remaining three. The sixth dog had disappeared. I joined the first two shooters that passed by me, their setters were wearing a GPS collar because, I was told, they tended to roam. The men disappeared as soon as they came, the two white dogs told them

it was time to move to a different place. The gamekeeper gave up and remained with me for a while: the missing white dog was running wild in a different part of the estate. An "important" client was shooting there, and other keepers were busy trying to catch the white wild dog, I bet he was having a lot of fun. The other friends eventually passed by with their three setters, I followed them for about three hours. The dogs were nice but they worked like a pack. Vento is the leader and the other ones, humans included, follow. These dogs could find birds, point them, honour each other's points and retrieve killed birds, but this game had no rules. Dogs were not steady and did not make a good use of the ground, I could see no logic behind their running but, most of all, they did not mind the owner. Yes, they waited for him as they wanted to retrieve the birds and they knew the birds had to be shot first but, after the bird had fallen and being grabbed in their mouths, they would quickly forget any humans.







Keeping an eye...

By the end of the morning, 18 birds (pheasants and grey partridges) were bagged but, we had gone up and down the hill and in and out of woods and briars walking at least twice on the same ground. Some grey partridge mini-coveys were also flying back and forth, teasing us. When my friends announced they were going back to the car, I went to mine and let Briony have a well deserved run, this is what happened. As soon as we left the car she pointed, she waited for me and then roaded towards the bird, a grey flew from afar, she did not see her but I stopped her. I then told her to go ahead with the action and she did it again, another grey which flew into the bushes. Briony was steady and we could perform the same action again, on a third bird. I then let her "play" again with the greys (now more hidden by briars) until bushes began to thicken to let me keep an eye on her. In less than 20 minutes, I could have bagged about three or four birds, without running back and forth like a comet, without a GPS and without a beeper. I then moved to a more open ground and let her run left and right, practicing some obedience. More greys, undisturbed by my non-chasing dog – were in a wood below us but she had already done what she was supposed to do, and confirmed me that my sacrifices had been definitely worth! I was very happy!!!





When, over lunch, I told people what happened and why I handled the dog in the way I did, they were happy for me and impressed at the same time. Some asked how I trained her, I simply told everybody that it was just hard work and that everybody could do the same. They vaguely agreed, but underlined they had no time to undertake such an intensive training program, Fishing ad hare then became the main topic until...they saw Briony again in the parking lot. She was on lead and she did not do anything special but for behaving nicely and remaining seated if told to do so. There were other unknown shooters around and many of them came to see the "trained" dog: according to some I am very "lucky" to own such a dog. Of course I have been lucky to find her when she was a plumpy puppy but, what came later was not just luck. Luck played an important role because I had a chance to have my British eye opening experience; had a chance to ask questions and get answers; had a chance to have wonderful mentors, but I was also open enough to discard an old system of beliefs and start working hard following a new scheme.

***Ps. If I could make it, you can do it! Peace, love and happy training! I am in a happy/hippie mood tonight!***



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## Are you REALLY doing that?

Why not? Do you see any alternatives? I invited the moor to move nearby, but it refused. If I wanted the [moor](#), I had to drag myself into a car and drive northwards, exactly like Mohammed did with the mountain. I had no choices: flying with a dog- and her, well our, baggage- was not convenient, furthermore, once there I would have had to rent a car which was not going to be cheap. People tried all sort of tactics to make me change my mind. *It is going to be a long journey, there will be dangers on the way, and so and so.* It is funny when Italians (with my father leading the troop) start thinking that all serial killers, all terrorists and all natural disasters are located past the Alps!

I was surprisingly relaxed about driving all the way there,

and confident that nothing bad was going to happen: my grandmother's name was England (Inglesina) she used to love me, England (the nation) was going to be equally kind. In the worst case scenario, I would have escaped from the awful Italian summer heat.

Yes but, alone? And why alone? The idea of having someone to share the journey with was tempting, but could I find anybody suitable? I did not want to deal with the "pale woman burden" (quoting Rudyard Kipling), aka some wimp complaining about everything. and I was not sure my travel plan would have suited the average person. What if the average person would not have enjoyed the moors, the weather, the [trials](#)? Going trialing in the UK for a month was the equivalent of taking a leap of faith, it was not fair to ask anyone to jump from a cliff into the unknown with me.

The scariest thing was probably the length of the journey, in kilometers (or miles, if you prefer). I knew I was going to have a blind date with British trials, but my whole "academic" career had been like that, having been always sent – and for years, not months! – from a very unknown school to another. When I was eight, as we moved to a different house and I was forced to move to a different school, I did not know anybody there, and I never managed to like it but, in the end, I survived. When high school (junior high) time came, I could choose whether to attend the local one, where everybody else was going, or pick an unknown, more difficult and more prestigious one. The local school had a bad reputation and my demanding parents simply told me that, I should not make my choices following the mainstream, but learn choose what was best for me and stick to it, even if I had to do it alone... The same happened with senior high school (raise the hand who wants to go to a difficult one!), and with the university later: most of my friends were going to engineering, computer science and economics whilst I, unable to pick my first choice (veterinary medicine), was going to major in British



Literature. It might sound easy, but it was not: each time, however, it became a little easier and it strengthen me enough to accept and scholarship and fly to Massachusetts all alone.

***A [month](#) alone in England (and Scotland) could not scare me, trials were waiting and no good opportunity is meant to be missed!***

[The journey continues here.](#)

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## Quindi vai davvero?

Perché non dovrei? Vedete delle alternative? Ho invitato il [moor](#) a traslocare vicino a me ma si è rifiutato. Se volevo il moor, dovevo saltare in macchina e guidare verso nord, ricordate la storia di Maometto e della montagna? Non c'erano altri metodi: volare con un cane – e relativi bagagli – non sarebbe stato pratico e, comunque, una volta atterrate avremmo dovuto noleggiare un'auto, mossa decisamente poco economica. Le persone, nel frattempo, si davano da fare per farmi cambiare idea: è un viaggio lungo, può succedere di tutto eccetera eccetera. È divertente vedere gli italiani (con mio padre a capo della truppa) pensare che tutti i serial killer, tutti i terroristi e tutti i disastri naturali siano localizzati al di là delle Alpi.

Io però ero tranquilla, non sarebbe accaduto nulla di brutto: mia nonna materna si chiamava Inglesina e mi ha sempre volute bene, l'Inghilterra sarebbe stata altrettanto gentile. Nella peggiore delle ipotesi mi sarei risparmiata una buona dose di italica calura estiva.

Ok ma da sola? E perché vai da sola? L'idea di viaggiare con qualcuno può essere allettante ma, conoscevo qualcuno idoneo?

Temevo di trovarmi alle prese con il “fardello della donna pallida”, citando Rudyard Kipling, ovvero dover sopportare qualche imbranato pronto a lamentarsi di tutto. Non sapevo nemmeno a cosa stavo andando incontro, e non mi sentivo affatto certa che i miei piani fossero adatti all’individuo medio. Mettiamo caso che alla persona non fossero piaciuti i moor, il tempo e le prove? Partire per un mese di prove in UK era un salto nel buio, fatto con la speranza di non cascare, non sarebbe stato corretto chiedere a qualcuno di saltare con me da una scogliera verso l’ignoto.

La cosa più inquietante era la lunghezza del viaggio, in chilometri, l’appuntamento al buio con i field trials mi preoccupava decisamente meno. Tutta la mia carriera accademica era stato un susseguirsi di appuntamenti al buio: quando frequentavo le elementari, a causa di un trasloco, sono stata deportata da una scuola ad un’altra – in cui non conoscevo nessuno. Alle medie, stessa cosa: potevo scegliere se andare alla scuola locale o in un’altra, ritenuta migliore. Nell’altra scuola sarei andata sola, senza conoscere nessuno, ma i miei genitori mi dissero che *dovevo scegliere ciò che era meglio per me, non seguire la massa, anche a costo di andare da sola*. Le superiori? Uguale! Liceo scientifico sperimentale, sfido che nessuno volesse venirci! E l’università? I superstiti sono andati quasi tutti ad ingegneria, io a lingue, ripiego per non poter andare a veterinaria. Detta così potrebbe sembrare semplice ma non lo è stata, ogni volta però, affrontare l’ignoto era un po’ meno preoccupante e mi ha rafforzato al punto da accettare una borsa di studio in Massachusetts, dove sarei andata da sola.

***Un mese a spasso tra Inghilterra e Scozia non poteva certo spaventarmi, le prove aspettavano e... nessuna buona opportunità deve essere lasciata scappare!***

[Il viaggio continua qui](#)

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# Medical alert bracelets &... dog collars!



American bracelets



A cute one

My last meeting with the allergist made me realize they exists. While googling around for an epinephrine thermo bag, I spotted them: I know, I am terrible, I can find a shopping side in everything! They looked very “American” to me, and Americans seem to have made one for any possible disease, dandruff included. Medical alert bracelets were originally created for life threatening diseases, which can make you



faint before the paramedics arrive. They are also highly recommended for children and patients with autism and dementia. These bracelets are meant to be read by paramedics, doctors and nurses: knowing that you suffer from diabetes, epilepsy or allergies, for example, allows them to administer the proper therapy without delays. But.. I do wonder... Do paramedics check for them? And how should a medical alert bracelet look like? Some bracelets are incredibly ugly, while the pretty one are often too similar to ordinary jewellery and might go unnoticed.



For kids, from Etsy

On the other hand, getting closer and closer to become a real vet, such idea appeals me. Sometimes dogs suffering from chronic diseases go missing and owners, besides worrying for the dog himself, worry about his health: a potential rescuer might not realize right away that the dog needs immediate medical care. Cushing disease, epilepsy, diabetes and heart disease are some of the issues that come into my mind. As a vet (almost...), I would be happy to see dogs wearing a tag or a specific tiny collar mentioning the problem. Opinions are welcome.



For kids, customizable

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## Braccialetti medici e.. collari per cani



Braccialetti americani,  
standard

La mia ultima visita dall'allergologo mi ha portato a scoprire i braccialetti medici. Sono tremenda nel trovare un "lato shopping" in ogni cosa ma, questa volta, mi sono sembrati subito molto "americani". Gli americani, d'altra parte, ne hanno creato uno per ogni occasione: dall'autismo alla forfora. Lo scopo dei braccialetti medici, tuttavia, non è quello di sostituirsi ad una cartella medica, ma di avvertire i paramedici che soffrite di patologie che possono mettere in pericolo di vita, problematiche che potrebbero farvi svenire impedendovi di comunicarlo.



Uno esteticamente gradevole

Oggi sono altresì consigliati ai bambini e alle persone che soffrono di demenza senile o di autismo. Attraverso questi braccialetti il personale medico può apprendere subito qual è il vostro problema: sapere che siete epilettici, diabetici o allergici può far sì che vi venga somministrata la terapia appropriata senza attese ma, mi chiedo, i paramedici italiani li notano? Come deve essere fatto un braccialetto medico per essere credibile? Alcuni sono davvero orribili, altri graziosi al punto da rischiare di essere scambiati per ordinaria bigiotteria. Diciamo che sarei curiosa di conoscere l'opinione degli operatori del settore.



Perfetto per i bambini (da Etsy.com)

D'altra parte, avvicinandomi sempre più alla laurea in

medicina veterinaria, l'idea mi piace. Internet è pieno di appelli di cani fuggiti, o rubati, che sono spariti portando con sé le loro malattie croniche. I proprietari restano soli con una doppia preoccupazione: si preoccupano per il cane e si preoccupano che possa ricevere le terapie che lo mantengono in vita. Penso alla malattia di Cushing, all'Addison, all'epilessia, alle cardiopatie: un soccorritore potrebbe non accorgersi di essere alle prese con un cane malato. Guardando il problema da questa prospettiva, non mi dispiacerebbe vedere indossare dai cani medagliette o collarini appositi.

Ps. Le immagini che corredano l'articolo sono state reperite casualmente sul web.



Componibili per bambini

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## Grazie // Thank You

For English scroll down

Ieri mattina la [pagina Facebook](#) Dogs & Country ha raggiunto i 400 "Mi piace". Mi preme sottolineare che si tratta di "Mi piace" onesti dal momento che non abbiamo mai suggerito, o tantomeno forzato, nessuno a cliccare sul pollice alzato. Contemporaneamente, il collega Emanuele Nava usciva dalla caverna e pubblicava un nuovo post, felicissima di riaverlo in squadra. Ricordo che Dogs & Country nasce nel 2013 e su



volontà di entrambi.

Sempre negli stessi momenti il pezzo offertomi dall'amico Fabrizio Crabbio (uno dei maggiori esperti italiani – e non solo- sulla razza Deutsch Drahthaar) andava diffondendosi a macchia d'olio, raggiungendo in serata circa 1300 visite! Mentre il blog, fino alle nove di sera, in meno di 24 ore, era stato visitato da 155 persone. Un risultato più che soddisfacente che ci spinge a continuare ad offrire ai nostri lettori contenuti di qualità: il vostro sostegno è ciò che ci spinge a scrivere, quindi grazie!!!



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Yesterday morning, Dogs and Country [Facebook page](#) reached the 400 Likes. I want to underline that these are honest Likes as we never forced anybody to click and like us. At the same moment, my colleague Emanuele Nava (we work for the same on paper magazine), left the cavern and came out with a nice piece on hounds. We created Dogs & Country in 2013 together, he is "the master of the hounds" , hound people missed his posts, which, unfortunately, are not going to be bilingual.

In the meantime the article my friend Fabrizio Crabbio (one of the most proficient people on the breed Deutsch Drahthaar in Italy and abroad) was spreading around like wildfire, by dinner time 1300 people had read it! The blog, in one single day, until 9 PM, had been visited by 155 people. We are extremely pleased by this result and it is the readers that keep us going! Thank you! We will try to continue writing good quality stuff!

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# Alle volte il destino

Sono molti i motivi per cui un appassionato di segugi, che ha sempre amato allevare e addestrare in prima persona i propri cani, decide di fare “uno strappo alla regola” e di entrare in possesso di un cane adulto. La prima ragione, la più scontata invero, ma non per questo la meno plausibile è che il soggetto in questione sia un cane valido. Di quelli uno in più a disposizione non guasta mai. Se poi il cane dovesse essere validissimo meglio ancora, che discorsi! Ma questa è una ragione pragmatica, materiale... Alle volte invece a noi segugisti piace tanto anche sognare.

Vi potrei raccontare allora di come nel corso degli ultimi anni di segugi ne ho visti moltissimi, una valanga. Alcuni, un numero assai limitato invero, mi sono parsi di notevolissimo livello venatorio. Tuttavia, frequentandoli poco, alla somma considerazione del loro valore venatico difficilmente si è aggiunto quel grado di intesa, che, se scocca, scocca con i cani di proprietà che si vivono quotidianamente. Un giorno però ebbi un autentico colpo di fulmine! Non mi si prenda per matto; anzi no, nel caso fate pure, non me la prenderei. Un amico mi presentò nel cortile di casa un segugino non particolarmente tipico, ma di buona fattura. Taglia contenuta raccolto. Due occhi di massima espressività, penetranti, che donavano al cane un'aria da saggio pensatore, da filosofo della caccia alla lepre. Quel cane mi rimase subito impresso, quello sguardo mi segnò ed entrai subito in empatia con lui.

Putroppo alle volte il destino è crudele e ci porta via le persone più care. Marietto che del cane in questione è stato l'addestratore se ne è andato, lasciando un vuoto anche in chi

come me, per sua sfortuna, non ha avuto occasione di trascorrere moltissimo tempo al suo fianco. Marietto però era una persona per bene, un taciturno in un mondo di chiacchieroni, sintetico e lapidario con le sue sentenze, che difficilmente si discostavano dalla realtà. Ecco credo allora che sia stato il destino a farmi arrivare tra le mani quel cane, che porto a caccia in memoria e con l'aiuto di chi lo ha allevato e impiegato prima di me.



Questa è la storia di Baldo, un segugio speciale in tutto e per tutto, che nel destino aveva scritto anche che mi avrebbe fatto catturare, dopo un'azione epica, una lepre con cui io avevo un conto in sospeso da lungo tempo. Quando conduco i cani sul terreno di caccia la mia mente spesso vaga con i ricordi dei molti personaggi con cui ho avuto il privilegio di cacciare. Molti di essi non ci sono più, ma forse è proprio per questo che spesso amo cacciare solo, perchè solo per davvero non lo sono mai. Ciao Marietto, quello che ha fatto Balduccio Sabato richiederebbe una lunga descrizione, ma tu non hai mai voluto allungarla troppo e poi tu c'eri... Agli amici magari lo racconteremo un'altra volta.



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# Eccomi rispuntare magicamente dalla nebbia



Rieccomi, dopo varie vicissitudini che mi hanno impedito di scrivere, costringendomi per una strana legge del contrappasso a trasformarmi in lepre per eludere gli agguati felini di Ross. Dalla nebbia che sta caratterizzando in modo marcato queste ultime giornate di caccia, ricompaio per abbracciare tutti i miei fratelli di passione: tutti coloro cioè che fanno della caccia alla lepre col cane da seguita uno stile di vita. Quelle che ci attendono nel prossimo mese saranno con ogni probabilità le giornate più entusiasmanti per praticare la nostra disciplina. Ricordiamoci però di cacciare la lepre col massimo del rispetto, ritengo che questo gesto sia doveroso nei confronti di un così nobile e fiero rivale. Questo è il primo messaggio che mi sento di dare al mio ritorno su questo diario, che spero di poter arricchire prossimamente coi miei umili spunti e le osservazioni che derivano dalla vita quotidiana sul campo. Un abbraccio