

**PAM CH Carousel Farms Caisson VCD1 MX MXJ OF HSAs AXP AJP RN CD  
TD TC OFA H/E  
“Cassie”**

Owner: Julie Degen

Kennel Name: [Caisson Kennels](#)

Breeder: Chris Kimerer, Nicky & Lew Bunch

Sire: 3X Sel Exc CH Pinebuck's Kidd Carson ROM OFA

Dam: AOE Sel CH Carousel Farms Samantha PT TC OFA

DOB: 01/17/2002

This month we feature a German Shepherd who embodies the word “versatile”: PAM CH Carousel Farms Caisson VCD1 MX MXJ OF HSAs AXP AJP RN CD TD TC OFA H/E. “Cassie” has a resume that jumps out at you. Conformation, Tracking, Agility, Obedience, and Herding, to name a few.

Julie was looking for a dog that could do it all. She had experience working with German Shepherds. Her first Performance Award of Merit Conformation Champion was PAM CH Kingswood's Tora Tora Tora VCD1 MX AXJ CD TD CGC BH-A TC OFA, aka Tori, who she acquired from Syd Mailberg. Her goal with Tori was to finish her Conformation championship, then put working titles on her. Unfortunately, Tori was never bred and when she was 5 years old, Julie started thinking about a new addition. By this time Julie had an addiction for Agility and wanted a dog to run in one of the lower height divisions of 12" or 16". She dappled in thoughts of a breed other than the German Shepherd but knew her heart was linked with the soul of a special Shepherd to be. Julie lived in Kansas City from 1995-1999. While she was there, she had the pleasure of herding with a beautiful bitch by the name of AOE Sel CH Ken-Delaine's Carousel PT TC OFA. Cari was a wonderful herder and Julie continued to herd with Cari's progeny, (CH Carousel Farms Cosby v Elkhill and AOE Sel CH Carousel Farms Samantha PT TC, aka “Sammi”), in addition to several other Carousel Farms dogs.

They were easy to work and had tremendous drive and natural herding ability.

Julie moved to Germany but had formed a lasting relationship with Chris, Nicky & Lew. When Sammi was bred to Carson she was generously offered a puppy, but not just a puppy, a pick of the litter puppy. Julie decided to take advantage of this incredible opportunity to own another beautiful German Shepherd that could do everything like her Tori.

In addition to Chris, Nicky & Lew, she asked a good friend named Cheryl May to evaluate the litter when they were 7 weeks old, for personality and temperament, but she did not want to know the results until after she had made her own observations. When the litter was 8 weeks old, she flew from Germany to Kansas City to pick up her new little girl. After spending several days with the litter, her decision was made. Only then did she ask her friends who they would have matched her with. All involved had picked the same puppy as she had.

Cassie flew to Germany in a Sherpa bag under the seat (with Julie) at just about 9 weeks old. By the time Cassie was 3 months old, she had become a European traveler, making her way across Germany, France and Switzerland. They began training right away, always encouraging play and drive. She started tracking with Cassie at 11 weeks old. They flew back to the U.S. for the GSDCA National that Fall, where Cassie competed and earned her TD (tracking) title just under the age of 9 months. Then they returned to Germany and continued training in agility and some obedience.

When she was 17 months old, they moved back to Kansas and began to compete in a few breed shows. At 21 months old, she competed in agility at the GSDCA National in Daytona, Florida. Cassie was awarded her first championship points, owner-handled, before she was 2. On the weekend of her second birthday, she earned her first Major Reserve, graciously handled by Jimmy Moses as a ringside pick-up! She finished her breed championship with 3 majors and was owner-handled for 5 of the points, all before she turned 3 years old.

Cassie earned her first agility titles and her PT (herding) title both at just over 2 years old. At just over 3 years old, she became the youngest Performance Award of Merit breed champion, when she finished her Excellent Agility title.

Cassie took maternity leave in the summer of 2005 and presented Julie with an incredible litter sired by the famous "Dallas". Both of her sons from that litter are already breed champions and have working titles. Julie owns and trains her pick from that litter, CH Caisson's Unconditional Surrender AX AXJ OF HSAs, aka "Yankee." Her other son is CH Caisson's Atlanta Burning PT. He recently saved his family from a house fire and he's been nominated as a GSDCA hero dog. He's also being honored as a hero by their local fire department and they are nominating him as an AKC hero dog.

After her litter, Cassie resumed her agility career in the spring of 2006 and quickly finished her AXJ. **When Cassie finished her MXJ in December 2006, she became the first and only GSD breed champion to have an MXJ. Three weeks later, she became the third GSD breed champion to earn an MX. With those titles, Cassie is the only GSD breed CH to have both an MX & MXJ.**

Julie recently made the decision to move Cassie to the Preferred classes in Agility where she's having a wonderful time racking up double Qs towards her PAX.

**Cassie also had a great 2007 National: Reserve High in Trial in herding and two Herding Started legs, High Scoring Champion in Agility, a leg toward her CD, and a Rally Advanced leg. Cassie also showed in Specials, making her the only dog to compete in five different venues at the National.**

Cassie finished her CD in March 2008, with placements in large classes.

"She is just a joy to work . . . she brings lots of energy to our silly games and I love playing with her. In her mind, everything should be a timed event and the fastest dog should win," Julie said.

Cassie is currently competing in agility, is in training for open obedience, her tracking dog excellent, and herding intermediate. Cassie will be bred again this fall and Julie is hoping Cassie will give her a girl to follow in her dam's paw prints. After she's bred, she will move to Korea with Julie.

Julie acknowledges those who have played a significant role in Cassie's career: Chris, Nicky & Lew, for the wonderful "gift" of Cassie; Jim Moses and Lenny Brown for their fantastic job handling Cassie; and special thanks to Jim for arranging the breeding with Dallas.

"There are many people that I admire, but two of them who have inspired me greatly are Lori Nickeson and Jane Jeter," Julie said.

When Julie first got a German Shepherd, she saw that they were putting working titles on "pretty" dogs. She didn't have the means to finish her first dog "Scamp", (Nordwind's Sundance Scamp UD HX OTDs ATDd CGC TC TT), although he was from show lines.

When she was showing Scamp, working line people would assume that he wasn't a good worker because he was from show lines. Show people would assume he was ugly because he wasn't a Champion and Julie was working him. Julie went to the National and saw the people earning "dual awards" and right then she decided that she wanted Conformation champions who could also work.

Julie's story wouldn't be complete without mentioning her first mentor and friend, Syd Mailberg, from whom she obtained her first German Shepherd. Syd has also remained supportive of all Julie's dogs, both the Shepherds and her Golden Retriever and Border Collie, she said. Much of her experience has come from the generosity of Syd, she said, particularly sharing her dogs and time with her. Julie said she would not have accomplished anything with her dogs were it not for Syd.

Julie has been married for 21 years E.J. Degen, who has been in the US Army for 22 years and was recently promoted to Colonel. They have two children, Jim, 17, and Keri, 10. (Keri has shown Cassie in Juniors.) In addition to Cassie, they own a Border Collie named "Radar" (Herding Champion BTO Masquerade AX AXJ XF HXAs HXBs), and a Cassie's son, Yankee.

The month of June marks the one year anniversary of GSD By Design and it is the midway point of this year long series. We proudly celebrate this month by honoring Julie Degen and Cassie, a wonderful testament to our breed and a dog who proudly wears the title, Dog of Versatility.