

# Gundogs

By Tom Davis



BITTY BY ELDRIDGE HARDIE

*When painting a dog portrait, the artist is challenged to convey something about his subject's attitude, personality and character.*

Successful businesspeople are rarely sentimentalists. They can't afford to be. They should be fair, of course, but they need to be tough. They need to have a bit of a hard shell.

This goes double if you're in the car business – and maybe triple if you're in the luxury car business, the way Trudy Higginbotham-Moody is. Ms. Higginbotham-Moody, you see, co-owns the Porsche and Mercedes-

Benz dealerships in Jackson, Mississippi. Need I say more?

Now, while I don't know her personally, I do know her husband, Ed Moody. He's an exec with Costa del Mar, the manufacturer of high-end sunglasses; he's also a serious dog man and bird hunter, and just for the record, a hell of a wingshot. So when Ed told me that Trudy's not the kind who cries easily, well, I guess I wasn't entirely surprised by

that. It was in keeping with how I imagined her: intense, self-assured, driven (a little pun there).

But when Ed uncrate the portrait they'd commissioned Eldridge Hardie to paint of their National Champion German shorthaired pointer Echo's Little Bit of Clown – “Bitty,” to those who knew her – this formidable businesswoman broke down in tears. Hardie had hit it out of the park, capturing not just Bitty's physical likeness but her attitude, her personality, her character. This was the Bitty they'd known