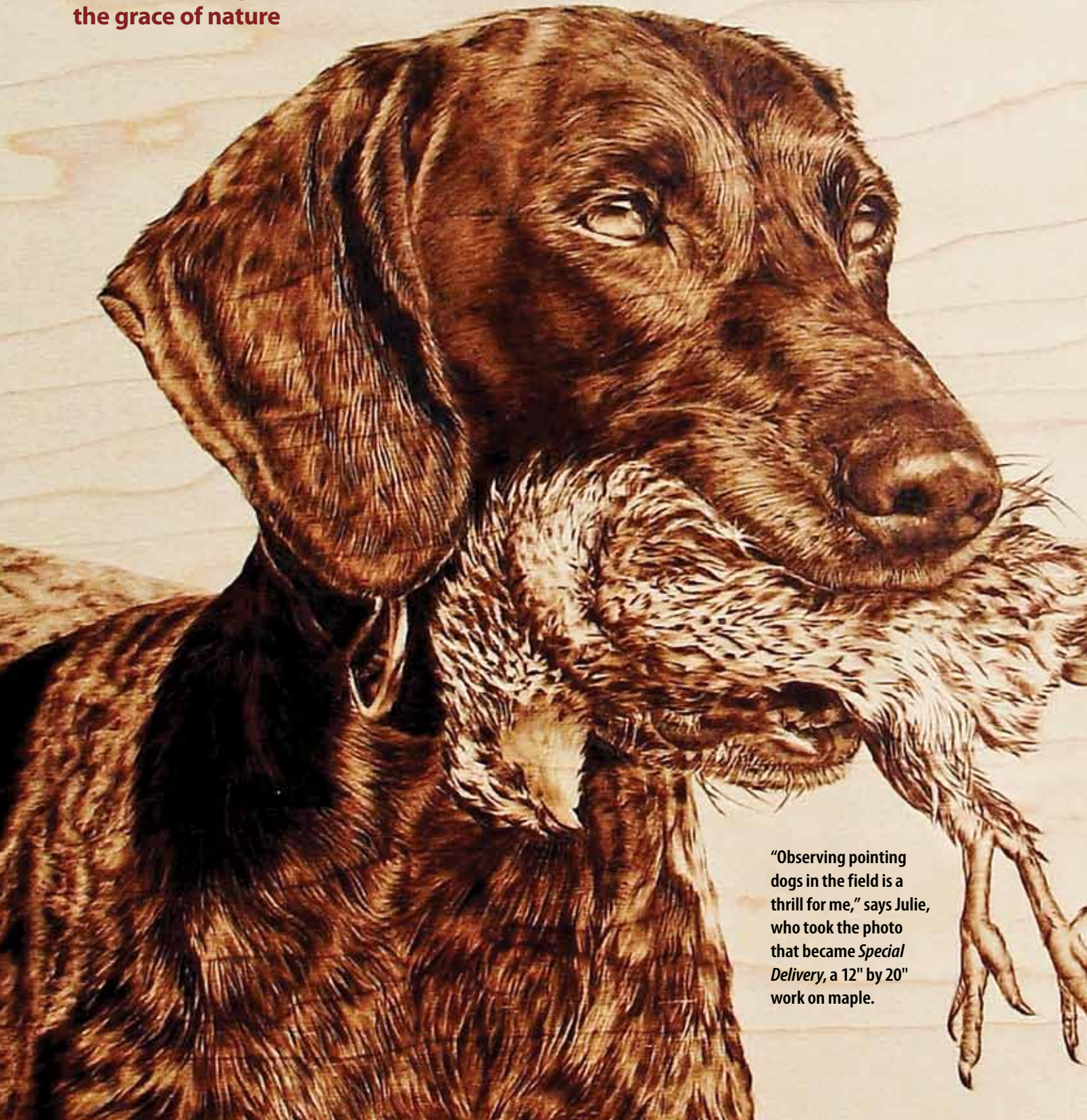


Inspired by Nature

Pyrographic artist
Julie Bender captures
the grace of nature



"Observing pointing dogs in the field is a thrill for me," says Julie, who took the photo that became *Special Delivery*, a 12" by 20" work on maple.

Although Julie Bender was an artist at heart as a child and through college, earning a bachelor of fine arts degree, it wasn't until 2002 that she serendipitously stumbled across the art of pyrography. She taught herself to burn, and her passion for the medium is now matched by her accurate and artful portrayal of her chosen subjects.

Julie says her work is "inspired by animals and nature and founded on stunning photography." Julie begins her process by drawing her subjects on a well-sanded surface. She uses a small selection of tips $\frac{1}{8}$ " or less in diameter, which allows her to burn with precision. Light-handed strokes and smooth subtle shading characterize Julie's technique. Maple is her wood of choice, as its inherent hardness allows her to burn slowly while building layers gradually.

After laying the foundation by roughly burning the piece in its entirety, Julie fine-tunes the work repeatedly to accentuate darks for a more realistic result. "I re-examine my work very carefully to ensure that the true spirit and authenticity of my subject are captured," Julie says. When pleased with the final result, she signs and numbers the piece, applies a protective finish, and prepares it for framing.

"I still marvel over this unusual medium and the fact that my subjects are brought to life solely by applying heat to wood," says Julie. "It is precisely the uniqueness of this medium and the level of detail achieved that draw collectors to my work."

Julie's award-winning pyrographic art has been displayed in museums; represented in galleries; featured in books, catalogs, and publications; and in private collections. In addition, Julie notes, "As a signature member of the Society of Animal Artists and Artists for conservation, I am delighted that my portraits can raise awareness about endangered animal conservation while advocating pyrography's place in the world of fine art."

Julie concludes, "I learn something new with each work I complete; I've found my voice and purpose through my art. I continue to embrace pyrography as my chosen medium and discover new ways of expressing the natural world that is my continuing source of inspiration."



About the Artist

Julie Bender uses the art of pyrography to express her profound appreciation of animals. Her award-winning work has been featured in gallery exhibitions and museums. To increase awareness of endangered animals, Julie contributes a portion of sales proceeds to conservation organizations. Julie lives in Decatur, Ga. For more of her work, visit www.JulieBender.com.



Julie's passion for sporting dogs inspired *Last Covey*, 12" by 20" and burned on maple. She wanted to depict her dog's inherent grace and style while awaiting a command.



In *Out of Nowhere*, a 15" by 22" burning on maple, Julie details an African elephant's ears and muscular trunk using just heat to create the shapes, values, and textures.



According to Julie, the song sparrow is in an unlikely environment, but seems comfortable enough to belt out a tune. She borrowed the title, *Nothing but Cowboy Boots*, from a country-western song. 20" by 12" pyrography on maple.