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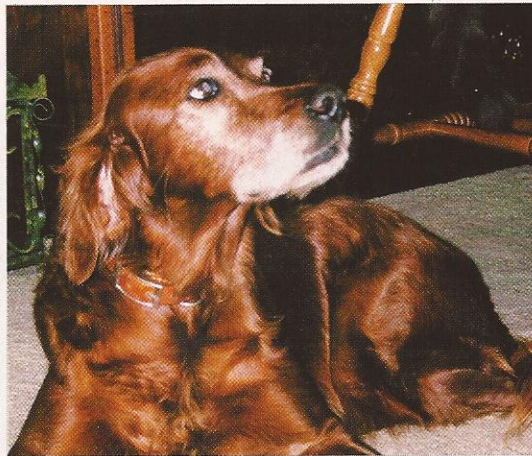
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Passing Shots | FROM THE EDITOR

SAYING GOOD-BYE IS always tough.

While I hesitate to use this space to do too much editorial "soul-baring," perhaps the following personal musings won't seem overly self-serving.

Molly, the older of my two field-bred Irish setters, recently succumbed to kidney failure. Although we tried a course of antibiotics and special diet for several weeks, this only slowed her decline slightly. When she began to refuse all food and was clearly no longer comfort-



PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANCES PATERIK

able, I called the vet and asked him to come to the house, and he administered the injections while I sat next to her. She was 13½.

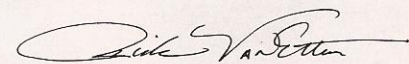
Molly was a granddaughter of National Field Champion Ivor Glen Ruben, featured on the November/December 1983 cover of *Gun Dog* (coincidentally, the first issue of this magazine in which my byline appeared), and she was the easiest-handling, highest-tailed pointing dog and softest-mouthed retriever I've ever owned. She was terrified of thunderstorms but excited by gunfire, and although she weighed only a little over 40 pounds, she was fearless when confronting other dogs much larger than herself.

Molly loved peanut butter cookies but she disliked eggs, the only dog I've ever known who would make a determined point of not eating them by pushing them out of her dish. She was the most unobtrusive housedog I've ever lived with but she never outgrew her maddening habits of digging holes in the back yard or rolling on whatever carcass she found while afield...the more advanced its decay, the better.

When I brought eight-week-old Penny home three summers ago, Molly quickly adopted the role of a stern aunt, tolerant to a point but never failing to let Penny know when she'd exceeded the nonsense quotient. Though Penny grew to be nearly twice Molly's size, to the very end Molly could flatten her with nothing more than a growl when the occasion demanded.

Recently, as Molly's condition worsened, I began keeping Penny down in the basement much of the time. Now that Molly is gone, Penny will be spending a lot more time upstairs with me—at 3½ years, she's still a bit on the obstreperous side, but I want to believe she's ready to take on the responsibility of full-time house-and-gun dog.

After all, she had a fine role model.



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