

Golf pro finds success in training dogs

Betty Dillard - March 19, 2007



*Kretzinger and his dogs, Abby and Alex.
photo by jon p. uzzel*

Ty Kretzinger found a new career where he least expected it. The hidden potential was right there all along in his own back yard with his dogs, Abby and Alex.

Kretzinger, 34, and his wife, Cindy, were searching last year for an alternative pet fence to help keep their dogs in the yard of their North Richland Hills home. The couple discovered DFW DogWatch and had their hidden-fence system installed. When he found out the franchise was for sale, Kretzinger jumped on the chance to buy it like a, well, dog on a bone.

“I was a customer first so I really believed in Dogwatch before I ever got involved. That says a lot for the product,” he says.

Kretzinger has loved dogs since he was a kid growing up near Aransas Pass. Losing 11 dogs in 7 years – some ran away, a couple were hit by cars – left an imprint on the youngster about the importance of training dogs.

His family moved to Midland, where Kretzinger realized a passion for golf in high school. He played golf while earning a marketing degree with an emphasis on professional golf management at Mississippi State University.

The golf pro and Class A member of the PGA of America spent the next 12 years training fellow golfers, as an assistant pro at Northwood Club in Dallas and as a head pro at a club in Milwaukee. He then worked in sales for five years for a company who designed floorplans as well as manufactured and installed the millwork for the country’s top golf shops.

With a desire to start his own business, Kretzinger looked to combine his love of sports, sales, animals and the outdoors. DogWatch put all the pieces together.

The underground pet-containment system stands out from its competitors, according to Kretzinger, because it’s the only one on the market that works on FM frequency. The AM based systems are susceptible too interference, he explained, and confuses the dogs. The animal wears a small receiver on his collar that identifies a designated set boundary and provides a warning prior to any correction, if he or she gets too close. “It doesn’t harm the animals,” Kretzinger says of the system. “We wouldn’t be in the business if it did.

Kretzinger is one of 200 DogWatch dealers nationwide, with a service area that covers all of North Texas, up to the Oklahoma border. His primary marketing is accomplished via the Internet, home and garden shows and word-of-mouth referrals.

Jason Churchill found DogWatch while searching for a low-cost, safe alternative to an iron fence for his beagle, Lucy. “Ty’s great to work with. He explained the benefits of it over traditional fences, including the fact that it wouldn’t obstruct our view, and then trained us on how to use it and then trained our dog,” Churchill said. “The main thing is that you have to be willing to work with your dog.”

Kretzinger and his training and installation manager, Ryan Benson, attended DogWatch University at the company's Massachusetts' headquarters to learn how to train dogs. They also can train cats ("The challenging part is finding the equilibrium between teaching cats and avoiding the scratches," laughs Benson) and have even trained a goat and a few llamas. W.E. "Skeeter" Henry, sales manager, has over 13 years of experience selling hidden fencing.

But Kretzinger says his biggest challenge is educating people about the product. "So many people don't consider this option but think only of a wood or iron fence," he says. "I call this a business of training dogs and people so they can get control of their lives again."