

LIFE IN BRONZE

Montana sculptor Liz Lewis produces situational-bronze sculpture with fly-fishing, wingshooting, and general outdoor themes.

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“Clay is a wonderful medium to work in, there’s really nothing you can’t do.”

“I found my own fun—outside,” Montana sculptor Liz Lewis says about her life growing up in Wisconsin. She now produces sporting and wildlife bronze sculpture. As a child, Liz used a nearby marsh as a playground. “I spent every day out there, making bows and arrows and catching bullfrogs,” she says. That was where she developed a love of the outdoors that led her to the fly-fishing and wingshooting themes she now casts in bronze.

Liz was a competitive shooter as a teen, becoming the first junior girl to be part of the All-American Sporting Clays Team, ultimately earning a sponsorship from Beretta. She says that was an “intense experience” and took her to some fun competitions, such as those in Europe, but eventually her position became more like a job. “It got to be too much. So I finished college at Montana State University with a degree in fish-and-wildlife biology and married the man of my dreams.” They stayed in Montana to fly fish and bird hunt. “I’ve been bird hunting my whole life,” Liz says.

Her husband Jimmy was a fly-fishing guide in Bozeman and Liz joined the outfitting business for six or seven years. “As soon as we’d finish the last guided fishing trip, we would pack up the dogs and go hunting. Everything in our lives was designed

around where the best bird-hunting was—you know, you gotta have your priorities straight!” she says with a laugh.

Before they had their daughter, Hayden (now 10), she was pursuing a career in outdoor photography. The demands of being a mother made it difficult to spend time afield with a camera, and so she decided to try her hand in sculpting. Her friend, fellow Montana artist Rod Zullo, gave her a block of clay and sculpting became her new artistic release. Her first work was a sharp-tailed grouse that she modeled on a photograph she took at a sharp-tail lek in Montana. The success of that piece and those that soon followed led her to make the decision to sculpt full-time.

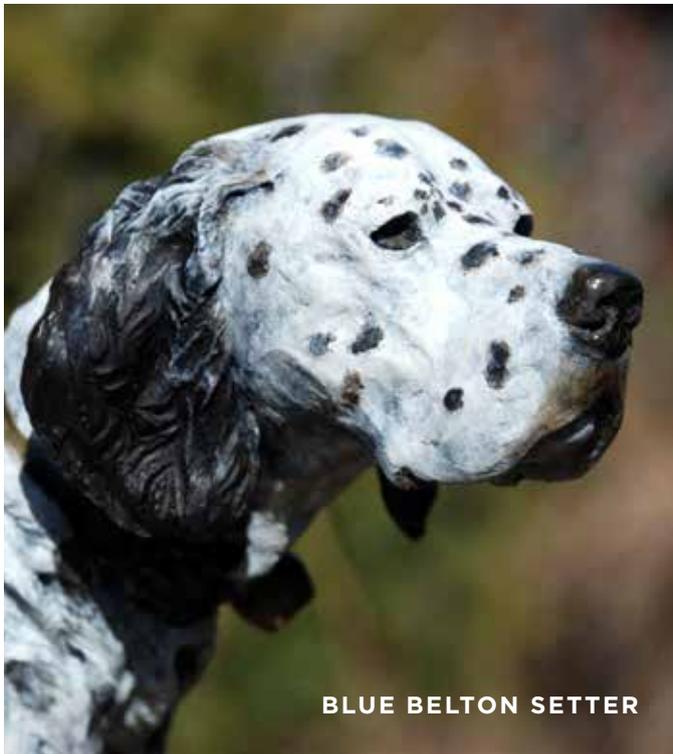
“Clay is a wonderful medium to work in; there’s really nothing you can’t do with it,” Liz says. “And I have lots of experience in the outdoors to draw on.”

She uses several foundries in the Bozeman area to cast her lost-wax-style work. Recently, she has begun exploring the use of colored patinas to reproduce the coloration of sporting dogs, as displayed in some of the photographs on the following pages. Her work can be seen at the Southeastern Wildlife Expo each year and is available at many national sporting-art galleries or at www.lizlewismt.com.—*Joe Healy*



MARE AND FOAL





BLUE BELTON SETTER



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SPANIEL**