

Oakley

BernerGarde #33257

Oakley, born Okie, came from a puppy farm in Oklahoma and was sold via the internet to a woman in the northwest who wanted a breeding pair of Bernese. We don't know a whole lot about his first two years except that they were spent in a barn stall. The Bernese bitch in this barn did not want to be bred and continually growled him off, but he did manage to sire two litters with a German Shepherd Dog. When this 'breeding program' was finally deemed unsuccessful Okie's owner put him for sale in the classifieds where he was spotted by some local Berner lovers. They met him and his owner in a parking lot and purchased him for cash, no questions asked of them, with some ACK papers, which had never been submitted. They promptly renamed him Oakley. This was not an official club rescue, but a network of wonderful Berner folk helped pay for and see him through his health evaluation, neutering, and fostering.

While all of this was going on our family was reeling in grief as Bentley, our 6-year old Bernerboy, had just lost his battle with malignant histiocytosis. It seemed a real leap of faith to bring a 2-year old rescue into our home so soon, but Oakley is special and it was clear immediately that we had all made the right decision. Not only did he show little idiosyncrasies that we took as signs that heaven sent him just for us, but the cats and our 10-year old Bernergirl, Mercedes, accepted him right away too.

On arrival Oakley looked funny. His front end was strong and developed and his hind end looked like it had never been used. His gait was funny. He was malnourished. X-rays showed severe bilateral hip dysplasia. He never looked directly at people, but slightly askance and he quietly left the room or outside area at the sight of a camera flash, a broom or any other implement with a handle. It seemed that he had a coping skill of fading into the woodwork at the sign of any threat, certainly anything with a handle. Also, he had to be trained and housebroken as a new puppy. He was such an eager student.

A year later this most gentle of all souls fills our hearts as he did from that first day. Oakley is still easily frightened. He is afraid of clickers, crowds, direct attention from people he doesn't know, small children, and guns and fireworks heard frequently from our rural property. However after a year of good food, exercise, and equine Cosequin powder, his body is balanced and he can use his hind end. He can even jump onto the bed without using his chin to take weight off of his hind end as he climbs up. The bare crusty patches on his elbows are filling in with beautiful fur, as he doesn't have to rely on them for getting up and down anymore. When the day comes that he needs a new hip we'll see that he gets it. He can even be in the room when I sweep.

We learned that the paper trail is arduous and full of obstacles to register a rescue with the AKC, but we stuck with it on principal and many months after the initial application we were notified in separate envelopes on the same day that Oakley finally had not only an ILP number, but also a full AKC registration. So we are so grateful for and celebrate Rainshadow Gary Oak von Z; Oakley !

Susan, Alan, Jason (14), and Matthew (11) Kowitz
Sequim, WA

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