

Raven's Biographical Sketch

Michelle Mace

Little Rock, Arkansas

As far as Raven goes, here is his story.

Raven will be 3 years old next month on June 16th. I started training him when he was 7 weeks old. So yes, his training did take well over a year, normally it takes about 2 years to get a dog to Mission Ready status, but in Raven's case, he took a little longer to mature, which is fine. Of course, there were LOTS of instances where HANDLER ERROR came into play, but that is also okay, we each have to play out our own learning curves. About 7 1/2 years ago, when I first got into poodles, I knew practically NOTHING about them, only that I thought they were neat dogs. I got a dog named Chez, through what I learned the hard way to be, questionable avenues, (remember I was naive and ignorant at the time) and he was my first show dog. Then about a year or so later, I got a very cute bitch, Katie, as my second show poodle. Both of these dogs came from little known "breeders," and their individual pedigrees are nothing really spectacular. There are some dogs on there with highly recognizable names. Chez, who is Raven's daddy, is a grandson of CH. Chorus Line Magnum PI on the top side, and Katie has CH. Ted-El Halo Jetsetter three times on her top side of the pedigree. Also on the bitch's side, there are some well-known Dassin dogs, Delano and Broadway Joe. About half the names on each pedigree are "pet" names, and I have no idea of anything about those dogs. Although on paper, each dog was not particularly outstanding, each one had a few extraordinary traits that made them very special. With Chez, it was his loving personality, steady temperament and willingness to do anything you asked of him. Katie was sort of independent, slightly 'crazy,' ;-) and had a flash and style and personality you couldn't deny or ignore.

I showed Chez for two years and he got a total of 6 points, but he really didn't have the attitude for the ring. But he loved agility, and we played at that for fun. Katie, on the other hand, was a little firecracker. She gathered all her singles in 26 shows, (all owner handled) and lacked only majors to finish. Her last show she went Reserve to a major.

Both Raven's parents tested OFA Good, CERF normal, and SA negative. I had intended to breed them when either one got finished, but then some complications arose, which I won't go into here because it's not relevant, and neither one got finished, so I held off on the breeding.



Then, one April I went to a week long SAR seminar, this was when I had Jo-Jo, my first poodle I trained for SAR, and an unintended breeding took place while I was away. For me, it was the luckiest thing that ever happened, because I got Raven from it. There were 11 puppies, 6 boys and 5 girls. Raven was the 4th boy to be born, and he was also the smallest boy. I knew I was going to keep one for SAR training, because Jo-Jo was on her way out. She was a wonderful dog, but just didn't have what it took for SAR. I also knew I wanted a male, so I didn't even consider the girls. When I put their colored puppy-ID collars on them, Raven's was black. Ironically enough, that's because on first impression, he was my last choice. There was nothing seemingly special about him, he was the smallest, and until he was about 4 to 5 weeks old, he never really showed any potential or promise. But around 5 weeks, he started being the one with all the "firsts." - Escaping the pen, getting up on the couch, exploring the new place, demanding attention. How well I have learned not to trust first impressions or judge a book by it's cover! All the girls had homes waiting for them by the time they were 8 weeks old and ready to go. I also had several waiting for boys, as soon as I knew which ones were staying and which ones were going. Also, all the pups were placed on strict spay/neuter agreements, and every one has been fulfilled. When it came time for puppy testing at 7 weeks, we used the standard Volhard test, plus a few SAR-specific things thrown in as well. Most of the boys had tested just Average, and then it came time to test the "little one." Well, it was apparent that the "little one," was the ONLY one. He blew them all away by miles! He got the highest/most desirable scores on every part of the test. There was no question about which puppy was staying, and also two others that were marginal, and I would "test drive" them for a few more weeks, just to make sure. So that's how Raven came to be, and from there he has never looked back.



Right from the start he loved jumping and climbing on things, and has never met a stranger, and never shown fear or apprehension about any person or thing or place.

I guess if you really want to compare it to something, I'd say he's a parallel with a Cinderella or Ugly Duckling story. A small, runt puppy with a mish-mosh of a pedigree, not outstanding physically, except for being extremely cute, but as cliché as it sounds, it's really what's INSIDE that counts. :-) Raven continues to be "the little one," he's only 22 inches tall and about 43 pounds. I get a lot of comments like, "Isn't he small for a standard?" I say yes, but considering his job, if he would happen to get hurt in the field, I'd sure rather carry him out than a 90 pound Golden or Shepherd! There are advantages to being the Little One. :-)

As for the name, Raven, that came from several sources. I have a very good friend in London whose nickname is Raven, and my Raven is really named after him. Least of all because of his color, but it just so happens that black works. ;-) I also did some research on Native American Lore and Raven is one of their Spirit Guides, and is considered the Creator. Raven also is a trickster, (you bet he fits THAT description) and keeper of the light of sun and moon. There are also many more legends about Ravens, from all areas of the world, and I find them all fascinating. And, there are so many similarities between

these and poodles in general, and also this particular poodle's personality, that there could be no other choice but Raven for his name.

Raven is definitely healthy, and his parents continue to be. Chez is now 9, and still acts like a puppy. Katie is spayed and placed with a wonderful family, and I hear from them often. No health problems reported. I haven't done any health testing on Raven yet, but I will probably go ahead and do his eyes and hips. I'm hoping that we might try for a Versatility Certificate from VIP. As for other titles, certificates, etc. Raven has his CD, but we only did that for "fun." In SAR, control and obedience are very important, and along the way we got a little competitive, so I thought, what the heck. Incidentally, although I have been showing dogs for over 6 years now, and I have gotten one major on a dog here or there, but never personally finished one yet.....Raven's CD is the first title I have put on a dog all by myself. :-))Other than that, we do SAR because someone needs to, and I feel I'm the right kind of person to do it. The reward of returning a missing person, alive and well, to their family, or even providing closure to a grieving family by returning remains, is way better than any piece of paper I could hang on the wall. Most SAR groups, as ours is, are volunteers who have "day jobs," and we usually pay for all our own expenses. This includes costs for training, equipment, travel, dog care, and taking a day off work to go on a search when they call you. It is a huge sacrifice of time from your job, your family, and your social life. We are on call 24/7, no matter what the weather. And even through it all, I find myself coming back for more because I absolutely love it. I think that's why most people do it, because if you're looking for fame or glory, you're looking in the wrong place.

Raven never meets a stranger, and his absolute favorite person in the world, no,not me, his Auntie Marty. He would leave me in a heartbeat to go with Auntie Marty. All I have to do is say her name and he's scanning the perimeter for her, whining and wailing in anticipation. His favorite game is making Auntie Marty yell at him. Auntie Marty likes everything neat and orderly and calm....well....Raven likes everything just the opposite. When we go to visit Auntie Marty he will steal her dogs toys and run through the house with them while she yells and runs behind him trying to get them back, because her dogs will pout, and not touch the toys for a day or two after Raven plays with them. :-))Then he will get up on her couch and root through the cushions and pillows, wallowing like a pig, and thus pushing them all onto the floor. The whole time I am helpless with laughter, and Auntie Marty goes yelling again which makes me crack up even harder and Raven wallow even more. Raven also knows where Auntie Marty keeps her dogs' ball in a small box in the back of her van. He will periodically sneak over there and steal the ball out and then run with it while she hobbles after him,.....yelling of course. :-))

While Raven is not a food hog, he will usually eat anything you are trying to eat. He especially loves popcorn, cheese, ice-cream, any type of meat, and his latest thing is almonds. Our Kroger store carries shelled almonds in a one pound bag, and the darn things are addicting. As I'm typing this right now I'm munching on a few, and he's right at my elbow, pawing and whining at me so I'll toss one his way every minute or two. He will not eat any type of pre-packaged dog treats like Jerky Strips, that have artificial colors and stuff like that in them. I don't like feeding them anyway, but sometimes it's

just easier to grab something off the shelf, especially if I've forgotten to get some Bil-Jac out of the freezer, which is his usual treat reward when he works. But he will spit them out every time, like he's offended I would dare to offer His Majesty such hog-swill. :-)

Raven is my only dog, out of 7, that gets to sleep on the bed, and he's not crated at all when he's at home, even if I have to go out. This doesn't do much for his superior attitude, but he's the only one who I can trust not to pee on anything or chew up anything. Although, someone did steal a package of deer-burger off the counter last night that I was thawing. Only Raven, Rainha and Draco were loose, and I have a feeling though it was a team effort. :-| I feed a semi-raw diet, and I was going to put it in their food anyway, but I thought they might like it totally thawed out first, instead of only half.

I'm sure I could go on and on about daily life with Raven, which is anything BUT boring! But I have to stop somewhere. He usually goes with me every day on the mobile, and enjoys meeting everyone we encounter. But now he has to share the limelight with two new young upstarts in the SAR regimen, Rico and Draco. The "competition" has been good for him, but I know when I'm not looking, he taunts the puppies because they aren't allowed on the bed. :-) Naughty boy, just wait til they grow up.....what goes around, comes around. :-)

Michelle and Raven