

## **SWISS SILHOUETTE KENNELS:**

To prospective owners of a Bernese Mountain dog I would offer the following advice: You will not find a more professional, qualified or conscientious breeder than Shelly and Bill Leary at Swiss Silhouette Kennels (SSK). As an owner of several BMD's, two have come from Swiss Silhouette and both provide an unqualified justification for this recommendation. Check out the Puppies link on the SSK website: the snowy puppy on the cover page picture is Khyber (a.k.a . Justice) from 2011 litter "J".

Breeding stock is important and many professionally managed kennels provide this, including SSK that has a proven history of developing excellent and healthy bloodlines. This is obvious and easily confirmed from the detailed information their website provides for each of their dogs. But that is only the start. Where SSK stands out above the others is the care and attention they give their puppies after they are whelped. To say they are given close, personal attention would be an understatement. During their most critical developmental period ... their first 3-16 days... each puppy is given ENS (Early Neurological Stimulation). This requires five daily stimulation exercises that incorporate thermal and tactile stimulation, motion and locomotion which have been shown to effect the rest of their lives and improves their longer term health outlook.

As the puppies begin to mature they receive Manding Training .... conditioning them to 'ask' for attention by sitting in front of people they are interacting with (vs. jumping at them or pawing). They are introduced to the normal noises and distractions they are likely to encounter. This includes -

Sounds: TV's, coffee grinders, automatic garage doors, vacuum cleaners, etc.

Textures: Linoleum, carpet, wood, concrete, towels, and yes, mud puddles, etc.

Obstacles: Water tunnels, teeter-totters, lawn sprinklers, etc.

Movement: Car rides, being handled by children, other bigger animals, etc.

All of these are experiences are done in a way that does not induce fear and makes for a puppy that will adapt to the real world without insecurities and with a great deal of confidence.

Perhaps even more important, each puppy is exposed to people ... lots of people ... through a managed program to help socialize them. Berners have an innately gentle personality, but this remains such an important step to ensuring your puppy is well adjusted and has a great personality. As I recall, Shelly has a target of about 100 different visitors for each puppy. This takes a commitment, time and effort you don't find with other breeders.

Each puppy's early growth and development is closely monitored and formally documented on a weekly basis so you can see them as they mature ... they change remarkably fast. The care and food they get is amazing: a diet with the likes of raw goat's milk, yogurt, probiotic, egg yolk, fruits, raw bones and many other 'dietary delights' you would not expect. All this makes for a healthy puppy. All puppies are micro-chipped, given appropriate vaccinations and veterinary wellness checks, rear dewclaws removed and registered with the AKC.

SSK's Prospective Berner Owner Questionnaire gives you another critical perspective to just how serious of a breeder they are. It's nearly as comprehensive as you would expect to complete if you were applying to adopt a child. There are several reasons for this: They care about each puppy and want to know it would be going to a responsible and knowledgeable owner. It is also necessary for them to know the environment and lifestyle the puppy is going into. As they develop, each puppy is given a series of thorough evaluations and 'testing' to assess their temperament, aptitude and activity level. This forms the basis for a selection process that SSK uses to 'match' the most compatible puppy

from each litter to your situation. It's their choice, and personal experience suggests this works!

Should you be fortunate enough to get one of SSK's puppies you are not forgotten and left on your own. They provide continued support and valuable resources for each new owner. This includes guidance on feeding, supplements, vaccinations, training and exercise, and equipment (collars/leashes/toys, etc) among other things. You are also provided with a private forum to connect with the new owners of other puppies from the same litter so you can share questions, issues, and/or experiences as your puppy matures.

Need more? You only need to study the depth and personal involvement demonstrated by the SSK website. This confirms the serious and professional approach that SSK takes to improving the Bernese Mountain Dog breed. No puppy mill here!

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Khyber a.k.a. Justice, Swiss Silhouette 2011 Litter "J"

Khumbu a.k.a. Reese, Swiss Silhouette 2019 'Confections' Litter