

The Best of the Best

After counting up the votes, here are the winners of EW's 2024 Pet Photo Contest

BY EMMA J NELSON

Between July 9 and August 8, *Eugene Weekly* received photos of 59 local pets ranging from birds to lizards, pigs to dogs. I had the pleasure of viewing every photo as they came in, and your animals truly made my month. Thank you, readers!

Seeing as we at *EW* strongly believe in our democracy, we put your pets to a vote.

But since this is a pet photo contest and not a presidential election, while we chose pets for three categories, they weren't categories we advertised.

You see, we asked our readers to submit photos of their Cutest, Best Posed and Ugliest pets. Only one of you was brave enough to submit to the Ugliest category, and that pet won Best Posed instead! In the end, we had to change course and create a super secret replacement category: Best Late Submission.

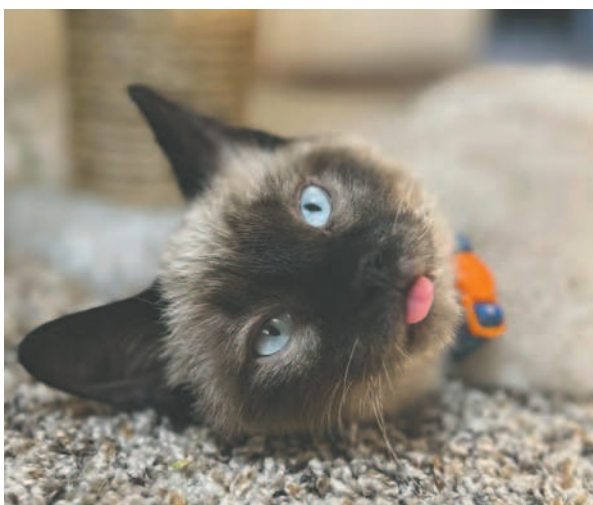
That's right. One of our lucky reader's tardiness is being rewarded. That definitely won't set a bad precedent in the future.

We also have some honorable mentions, of course. Lucky the European mixed breed wins Most Contemplative Stare, Sammy the Pembroke Welsh corgi wins Best Smile and Ruthie the labrador retriever wins Best Former Intern Dog.

You know what else we didn't advertise? Prizes!

We partnered with Eugene Animal Hospital, a local veterinarian that has been a continuous friend of the *Weekly* and our own pets, to provide the two four-legged winners one free wellness exam between now and August 15, 2025, and a chicken-themed gift basket for our two-legged winner. Congratulations!

Enough rambling, it's time for what you were all waiting for: the animals.



The Cutest Moki the Siamese

When Adriana Reppell submitted a photo of Moki to *EW*, she introduced her as "the cutest Siamese in South Eugene." In our professional opinion, Reppell was correct. We were collectively taken by Moki's bright blue eyes, ombre face and strategically placed blep.

Moki is still a youngling, Reppell says, clocking in at only one-and-a-half years old. He's been with Reppell for a year and two months now. Reppell's mother fosters cats,

and she helped nurse Moki, his littermates and his kitty birth mother back to health from a bad upper respiratory infection. Reppell's mother and partner then "schemed," she says, to surprise her with the kitten.

"I was over the moon," Reppell says, "as I had been asking for a kitten for about a year."

Moki acts as the "annoying younger brother from another cat-mother" to Mars, Reppell's tuxedo cat, she says. "Mars did not like it at first," Reppell says. "He had a case of only child syndrome. He soon learned that it's fun to have a playmate."

Outside of appearance, what's the cutest thing about Moki, you may ask?

"When he meows when tired, no sound comes out," Reppell says. "So he just opens his mouth incessantly in the cutest way possible."



Best Posed Maisie the Blind Hen

When you hear the word "pet," a chicken probably isn't the first animal that comes to mind. For Destinee Thornton, though, Maisie is a cherished member of the family. With a life span of 5-10 years, Maisie sits at a solid 8 years old. Despite this, Thornton says, she's just as spry as the youngest of the flock.

Thornton and her family have two shelter cats and six rescue chickens that all treat Maisie with the kindness and care she deserves.

"Maisie's adopted sister, Beatrice, is especially attentive to her, following her around and ensuring she's safe," Thornton says. "The other chickens definitely understand that she is different in some way, as even the most dominant hens allow Maisie to run right into them and walk on top of them all the time without pecking her."

Thornton adopted Maisie as a wee chicken after seeing an ad for a blind hen on Craigslist.

"All our chickens are rescues who needed a new home for a wide variety of reasons," Thornton says. "We don't

personally keep chickens for eggs, they are just pets."

In spite of her blindness, Maisie is able to navigate with little-to-no additional accommodations, Thornton says. Maisie gets in and out of the coop on her own, puts herself to roost and explores the world with just as much curiosity and excitement as the next hen.

"Maisie has definitely proven to me how intelligent chickens actually are," Thornton says, "versus how society sees them."

Check out @MaisieTheBlindHen on Instagram for updates on this relatively flightless, sightless bird!



Best Late Submission Cherry the Afghan Hound

Although her submission was late, Cherry's appearance was right on time. Both for us at *EW* and for paw-rent Sebastiane Power.

A friend of Power's who fosters for Wiggly Tails Animal Rescue asked if she could take Cherry in October 2023, as she was being surrendered to the rescue by her previous owner. Cherry had been rehomed twice in her early years, but she was about to be welcomed into her permanent home.

"We joined a fabulous group of neighbors who have been walking together for years. They welcomed us both warmly, and these daily walks have helped Cherry's personality blossom while also teaching her some good dog manners," Power says. "Everyone in my walking group joked that she was meant to stay with me, while I insisted I was only 'fostering' her. I love that they were right."

Power officially adopted Cherry this February, and now the lanky beauty lives alongside two of Power's "Littles," Sophie and Genie, who are Dachshund mixes.

"Cherry commands a lot of attention, which is why the little girls get their own walks and 'Mom and Me' time separate from Cherry," Power says, "and they are clingy in all the ways that Cherry is not."

Cherry is cat-like in both slinkiness and personality. Power describes her as "aloof, not particularly snuggly, but endlessly entertaining." She also doesn't particularly enjoy being groomed despite her long, luscious locks, so Power only does it in short doses.

It's clear from the efforts to make grooming a comfortable process for Cherry, the number of photos that were shared of Cherry and the depth of her answers to questions about Cherry that Power is providing a loving forever home for the hound.

"I am committed to making sure mine is her last and best home," she says.