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Pet Tips 'n' Tales

by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

A Mountain of a Dog

"I'm a distance runner and triathlete," says Bev. "Cypress' Daddy, Troy, and I decided on adopting a Greater Swiss Mountain dog because we wanted a dog that liked exercise but wasn't destructive without a daily two-hour hike. We wanted a family pet to enjoy our outside activities, not one to leave at home alone.

Cypress loves sports, but she can only jog for about quarter of a mile; yet she can hike for hours. We solved the situation by letting her sleep in while I train.

Interestingly enough, even though swimming isn't innate to her breed, Cypress loves water. We are deeply bonded, and she doesn't like being away from me, so when I am swimming, she waits on the shore until she can't stand it any longer and then jumps in and joins me. It's amazing watching her paws under water, paddling and turning over! Once she reaches me, I swim parallel to the shore, and not too far out, in case she tires.

Because the Greater Swiss Mountain originates from Switzerland, they are natural born hikers, and Cypress is amazing! She loves climbing to the top of Cypress — even in the snow!

She's a different dog in snow: she has boundless energy; she dives into the snow, and she quickly ascends even the steepest hills! She wonders why we can't get up the mountain as quickly as she does. When she gets to the top, she is Cypress on Cypress Mountain!

For the first five years of her life, Troy worked from home, so our furry daughter hung out in the office with Daddy. Since then, she has joined me at work. When I say, "Time for work", she bounds to the front door, excited to be going to her job.

Like 99.99 percent of dogs, she loves car rides, especially with the window down, so she can have her head out, breathing in all of the interesting smells.

I run a tutoring company, and she joyfully greets the students in the reception area. Periodically, she enthusiastically snooperizes each tutoring station to check on everyone's progress.

Cypress is a living advertisement! When people stop us and ask about her, I explain that she comes to work with me. They ask what I do, and I often end up tutoring their son, daughter or grandchild!

When Cypress sees someone or a pet that she loves, she lets out a hearty hound sounding BAROOOOO! Her bark is unique, dramatic, and quite startling, if you aren't used to it.

Because we spend so much time together, we have an incredibly strong bond. Cypress is the only dog I know of who looks directly



Photo by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

Nope, not a Bernese Mountain dog! Meet Bev's Cypress, a 10-year-old Greater Swiss Mountain dog named after her favorite mountain, the one she has a passion for hiking up — even in winter!

into people's eyes for sustained periods of time, especially mine. She knows so much language, too, it's incredible: kitty cat, doggie store, Grandma, walkies, time for bed, Daddy, car ride, go see, and check it out are just a few.

She is always totally aware of her surroundings, and at home, she is a great watchdog. She pays attention to everything, and if anything seems amiss, she alert barks, so that I can see if anything is happening. When I tell her, "Thank you, that's fine", she knows that she has done her job and that everything is OK. She gives me such a sense of safety.

We live in a basement suite, and the owners live upstairs. Cypress absolutely adores kitty cats, and they have two, so she is in heaven! When she was a puppy, the cat next door, Bailey, loved dogs. Bailey would roll on his back and Cypress would bark and go into the yoga pose: downward dog, to get closer to him. She'd gently nose and paw him, and the cat let her. With that experience, Cypress thinks that all kitties love her and want to play with her. She can't understand why most cats flee in fear, when she happily sprints towards them in a hearty welcome!

We can't imagine life without Cypress. She brings us immeasurable joy and loves us unconditionally. I often tell her that she is my truest love; she has a pure, open heart, and I absolutely adore her. Troy's feelings are not hurt because he feels exactly the same way about Cypress."

TIPS

"One of the reasons Cypress is so healthy, and beautiful," says Bev, "is her diet. She has been on raw food since birth. She also enjoys treats: eggs, cooked salmon, berries, peaches, bananas, dried beef heart, and lamb liver! Her vet puts her at half her age. I can't count the number of times people have stopped us exclaiming, 'She's beautiful!' I wish that I received that many compliments and attention!"

Because Cypress is a working dog breed, she likes to have a job. In the snow, she wears a harness with a leash attached. I can tell Cypress to "pull", and she will dig in her claws and use her power to get me up steep hills. After a snow workout, she gets refueled with lamb liver or another delicious treat; and plenty of fresh water to drink. It's important that I take good care of my number one girl in the world!"

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