

Breed First - Champion to earn a Draft Dog (DD) Title



CH Cache Retreat Pardner DD

Donald & Kathryn Gore

By Kathryn Gore

Story of CH Cache Retreat Pardner DD

I always loved Saint Bernards so when Don and I decided it was time for us to get a dog, a Saint was our first choice. We had no idea how to find a breeder so I started going through back issues of the newspaper with very little success. Finally, I found an ad nearly two months old. The owners lived only a half-hour drive away so I called. We were pleased when we learned the owners had just had puppies. We decided to go and look at their dogs. When we saw the adults, for some reason they didn't look like real Saints to me, but the puppies were cute, so we put \$100 down on one. When I got home, I just didn't feel right about that puppy. A nagging feeling wouldn't leave me alone. Don and I talked it over and decided to see if we could find some real Saint Bernards. I called around and found a Breeders Referral. We were told by some local club members that Ivan Palmblad was the kennel to look at. The next Saturday we packed up our four children and headed for Providence, Utah, an almost 2-hour drive away. We were impressed (to say the least) by Ivan's kennel. At the time, I remember him having nearly 30 beautiful Saints, plus puppies. He told us to make a list of what we wanted in a Saint and he would see what he could do with an upcoming litter. This was a big investment for us. Being a young family, we saved for several more months before we had enough. In the meantime, I researched. I got every book I could find from the local library, learned everything I could about Saint Bernards, and put together a list of everything good in a Saint I could think of.

We loved Pard the minute we saw him. Ivan told us he was more dog than we had asked for. He suggested we consider showing him. He put us in touch with the local St. Bernard club, which we promptly joined.

Everyone who met Pard fell in love with him. He was so gentle and his greatest desire was to please. He was the perfect companion for our children. We had a nine-month old baby girl at the time, and he quickly learned to keep one step ahead of her. She loved him and would crawl across the room after him. Just when she got to him he would move to the opposite side of the room to avoid the tugs and pains a baby can cause.

When we began showing him in the puppy class at some local fun matches, we were surprised when Pard took first place every time. We had so much fun as a family on our outings to fun matches that when he got old enough there was no question about putting him in point shows. Even though Don and I were novice owners, he started raking up the points. The more we showed the more he won. It was great. Because we could only afford to attend local shows, it took a few years for him to gain his Championship.

One of Don's fondest dreams was to have a team of Saints compete in the Iditarod. What a sight that would be. It probably wasn't practical, being natives of Utah, but if you're going to dream, dream big. So when it was suggested in our club meeting that we hold a draft dog competition in connection with our club show, we jumped at the chance. Don built a beautiful red cart from some bicycle tires and metal, I made a red harness for him, and we were set. We began to train. It was fun to watch the expressions on our neighbors faces when Pard came around the corner with a cart filled with 2 or 3 children. When the children weren't available for Pard's training, Don insisted that I take a ride. It was fun, but a little embarrassing.

Pard did very well in his first draft competition, but got confused with backing up and failed the test. However, about a year later we were thrilled when he passed.

In everyday life, Pard was unique. He loved attention, and bath time was a great time for attention. When we prepared for shows, or he was just dirty, it was fun to ask him "Pard, do you want a bath?" He would run from the kennel in the back yard at quantum speed all the way around the house, through the front door we'd purposely left open, up the stairs, through the bathroom door, and jump into the tub. Then, because we were taking too long, he would jump back out of the tub, run back down the stairs and out the door to come and find out what was taking us so long. He put up with the tub portion of his bath, but the part he loved the most was lying on the floor while I blew him dry. He had a sort of a purr of ecstasy as I brushed and dried him.

Pard loved people and he especially loved children. We attended many show-and-tells at the local school where he stole the show. He loved to be petted, and never was the least bit aggressive with children.

When Pard was about a year old, we got our second Saint, Cache Retreats Windwalker. Pard was so funny. He knew that Windy was a dog and he considered himself to be a person, thus most the time he would have nothing to do with her. Yes, he would put up with her puppy ways. She would grab hold of his jowls with those sharp puppy teeth as she ran around the yard trying to get him to play with her. He would just strut alongside of her, as if to say, "Don't you know? You are a dog. I am a people. Live with it!!!"

During the winter months, Pard stayed in the house and was a perfect gentleman. His favorite place to be was watching TV, sprawled across Don's and my lap, and he was such a teddy bear that we couldn't deny him (as long as we were in our comfortable clothes). If I was washing dishes or fixing dinner, his favorite place was laying across my feet. He was a great foot warmer.

When Don and I went on walks around the neighborhood, the only reason we kept him on a leash was for the sake of our county ordinance. He was so obedient that he would have walked alongside us without any fear of him doing anything wrong or running off. He could have been left outside in the front yard without any restraints and stayed in the yard just because he had no desire to leave.

We were blessed with nearly twelve wonderful years with him as a part of our family before he died of old age related illnesses. He was the best friend our children ever had. He loved everyone, and everyone loved him in return and left our family with wonderful memories.

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