

SO...what's it really like to live with one?

Boxers are playful, mischievous, and don't like to be ignored. They chase bugs, they dig in the garden, and they can jump 6 feet in the air to pick pears off your tree! They learn how to open doors, open food bins, open fridges, and open hearts... Boxers adore children, protect your home and property with a serious bark, yet welcome approved visitors like old pals. This is an active breed that will become very bored, very fast. The Boxer is best suited to stay-at-home owners, or those who work part time. For full time workers, their Boxer almost always demands doggie-daycare! Many Boxers are happy to go to work with their owners, and are well behaved when given proper training.

AKC Gazette February 1991, by Stephanie Abraham

WHAT THE STANDARD DOESN'T SAY

Boxers make us laugh. By nature they offer us a lot of comic relief during otherwise tough days. Who can avoid a smile when a Boxer greets you, wiggling, bent like a pretzel, with a forbidden slipper in his mouth? Every breed has its essential characteristics, those qualities that tell you that you live with a Malamute, not a Min Pin. Surely, there can be no more unique a personality in dogdom than that of a Boxer. Boxers are excellent retrievers. They will pick up almost anything you can toss for them, with bounding enthusiasm and the greatest joy. Too bad; they will never bring it back. Rather, they enjoy playing "keep-away," careening around the yard, loving every moment of your exasperation as you try, in vain, to teach your Boxer to be a Labrador. When your frail Aunt Martha comes to visit, just after her hip surgery, you can be sure that your Boxer will launch himself like a rocket in greeting, jumping on her with full force as you watch, horrified, as she disintegrates before your eyes. A Boxer gives love, even casual affection, in its most exuberant form, and training a Boxer not to jump is often a Life's Work. And by the way, after he's finished with Aunt Martha, he may engage in one of his favorite pastimes: running straight at you, throttle open, then dodging aside at the last possible agonizing moment, usually.

Eating: Most Boxers are good at it, but they may train you, in their youth, to feed them roast beef and caviar. For every Boxer that chows down kibble mixed with canned dog food, there is another Boxer capable of convincing you that he will starve unless you give him the porterhouse that he loves. If all of your efforts to coax him to eat normally fail, you may resort to the

controversial practice of "stuffing": force feeding ugly food balls. Most often this is done to ensure proper conditioning for the show ring, and many people abhor the practice. Nevertheless, it will continue to be done, and one thing is absolutely certain: When the championship is won, and you tell your neurotic eater to leave you alone and either eat or waste away, he will never miss another meal.

Boxers don't like other Boxers. Or rather, they don't like other Boxers of the same sex. While males and females may live together in perfect harmony, and indeed as fast friends, two adult males, or less often females, may decide one fine day to eat each other. Usually, some momentous event precipitates the clash---once, in my case, we had WWII over a ripe pear stolen from a kitchen counter. Jealousy over an owner's affections may also be a major issue. Once war is declared, a truce is not possible. The only way to keep the would be combatants in the same household is to separate them behind closed doors. It can be done. But remember, even years later, your Boxer will remember that he hates the dog on the other side of the door. While he may be fierce if threatened by another dog, tease the cat unmercifully, and choose occasionally not to come when he's called, your Boxer will take almost any abuse from children. Boxers adore children. Given a room full of kids and adults, odds are that the Boxer is rolling around on the floor with the little people. They don't discriminate against the neighbor's kids, either. They'll follow them for miles, especially if they're on bikes, which is one of the very good reasons that your Boxer should be restrained in his own yard behind climb and dig-proof fencing.

I've only just touched on the essence of the Boxer, but you probably knew it all anyway. Boxers are fun, stubborn, physically active, loyal, and among the most good tempered creatures ever to interact with the people they love. And when we lose them, as we inevitably must, what we shall remember about them is much more than any shiny trophies or purple ribbons. We shall remember the tail that wagged with delight every time they saw us; we shall remember the morning they stole a pound of butter from the kitchen and ate it all over the Oriental rug; we shall remember their sweetly quizzical ways, and the uncanny human expression in their eyes.