

13/11/2012

Xcellsa.com

Today, as I look back over the years that I have been associated with dogs and look for that "Quality" that made my "Special Dog" what mattered to me the most from each of them has been the "memories".

It has always zeroed down to the "Memories" and "Moments" they lived displaying their true "character"; not surprisingly enough much like humans that cross our lives, to me it is the fondness with which I remember each dog that passed through my life that makes them Special. All of them were fun in their own way some of them big winners others not so successful, some of them were not shown at all but all of that doesn't matter at the end of the day... at least to me.

A "Special Dog" to me is far more simple to understand and define once we ignore the complexity caused due to overlay of human emotion over show ring expectation (this perhaps stems from a gratifying need to boost Our "Human Ego" and the success of "My Dog") and deep dive to define that really special bonding, the Dogs with whom those special moments or phases were lived through, those dogs we think changed our lives and live on in our minds long after they have gone from this material world.

Therefore to me, the qualifying factor for a "Special Dog" is that the dog should have lived with us and passed along to the other side. He might have enough credentials, achievements to get him there whilst he is alive but the acid test is how he lives on in our lives after he is gone.

Thus far two such dogs that are beyond the rainbow are really special to me; ironically both of them were not show dogs. They were by no means ugly they just weren't shown that much. One was "Robin" a Doberman brought into our family when I was 13 years old. His father was a Russian Import registered as a single dog with unknown parents with KCI and his mother was born to American parents with quite a few champions in her pedigree, he was brought up with my kid sister(just an infant then)on the same mattress on the same brand of baby food. Both of them were our babies (my brothers and mine) and soon the family had four kids.

He was big and powerful dog with a real attitude and very protective of the 3 of us. By the time he was 18 months we had over 6 dogs at home some of them multi BOB and multi CC winners but Robin was still part of "Fantastic Four"

He was trained very well for obedience and protection, till date, I should say he was and still is, one of the best obedience dogs I ever had. He was always ready for work and adventure. Through his eyes he always asked "whats next"

He was also one of Dads Favourite and trusted dog. Many a night he has accompanied Dad to the Farm and Factory when we had instances of theft and pilferage. We really were at rest knowing Robin was with him. A few times I had also accompanied dad in his late night sorties and I still remember how we at once instance roped in 2 intruders into our property with Robin by our side he was just so fantastic! a real Dog.. Didn't know the term then but today I would

call him a "Working Dog". Robin passed away when he was 9 years old but his memory lives on and he served us well till a month before he left us.

The Second Dog that came in to my life to change it forever was a German Shepherd "BlueBloods Condor" this was about 1990-91. His Father the legendary VA6 Odin von der Tannenmiese S/o dual Sieger Quando Von Arminius, sire of ISO, Odin and many other super dogs at that time and Condor's mother, Gerti von der Stromwulke D/o of yet another legend, the VA dog Mark vom Hause Beck. In the following years Odin would make his mark as a producer with the Siegers Zamb, Jeck and Seigerin Yolli.

Enough Said about pedigrees, let's talk Condor. I got him at the age of 8 months his breeder said *" he is a large puppy ..almost a Full grown dog you can walk in your garden on a leash.. he has weak pasterns but that's something you should exercise and try to see if it fixes in time all else he is a "A" grade puppy"*

Come the day of arrival, Dad and I find ourselves at the airport with another well-seasoned Breeder (was already 20+ years into the game) awaiting his female (Full sister to Condor).

Cargo department brings out the Crates and lo and behold! come out the two young dogs. Large, yes, they were. The Female had Soft ears and Yellow eyes, My boy Condor well, he had muzzle that looked a foot long, his ears soft and held perfectly like a Rottweiler's, his pasterns not weak but outright Flat! his hocks touching each other so badly that he couldn't stand straight (he was always referred to as Clint Eastwood with knock knees coz of this by my friends) and Yes..I could walk him 3 steps on a leash post which he lay flat on the ground. This Jaw Dropping experience numbed the 3 of us beyond words. The Breeder, who got his female, was shocked at what he got but when he looked at the plight of Condor didn't have much to complain anymore.

He and My Vet (who joined later) promptly said, *" Send it back he has sent you an unhealthy and defective puppy"*. When I looked into Condor's eyes I could see spirit, happiness, the kind of " lets do it" attitude. This dog wanted to run, walk and do a thousand things other dogs take for granted. He would lay down in 3 or 4 steps but in a few minutes stand up and run again.. I saw in him spirit... my father saw something else in my eyes that day...He saw disappointment... failure and let down... you see, I had researched the bloodlines and negotiated for this puppy not Dad (he paid for it and it cost him a fortune). I knew that soft pasterns was a thing to watch out on Quando, never imagined all the rest I got in Condor.. I felt I let him down in getting us this "defective puppy". Most of all I felt I Dad was not going to count on me to do the right thing for anything else ever!

I looked at Dad for direction ... what was the thing to do next and he chirped, lets try, give him a chance, I think you can make a dog of him yet... work with him.... over the next weeks we did our bit to see if his hips were ok etc. they all looked alright he just seemed to have had bad ligamentation over all and to add to his woes he was heavy in bone and had mass.

So started our mission, the moments I had come to cherish with Condor and the way he changed my life.

First: Diet; Cartilage ridden bones and spinal bones everyday apart from the diet (no availability of commercial dog food in India at that time) Tripe and Beef along with Ragi and Rice with Vegies. Shark Oil, Vitamin supplements (right or wrong as per now days) this is what we gave and this seemed to work.

Second: Massage with combination of Oils (Ayurvedic) known for ligamentation and muscle therapy

Third: loads of exercise

Forth: Mould taped onto his ears which would be supported so that they can help stand properly

A typical day started around 5.00 A.M with walks followed with massage of legs (pasterns, stifle, and Hocks) morning and evening and also the ears. Soon, Condor had his ears up and began to have his head filled out at least he looked like a GSD.

Over the next year his legs became stronger and firmer muscles all over, his pasterns firmed up but never got perfect, his body filled out and by now he was able to run 5 km without a break albeit at his pace. People who had heard of this "Defective puppy" used to visit us home to see him regularly; soon they were astonished at his progress. Condor was one dog that was always ready to go even after a 5 km Run he would lay in his favourite place and just the word Condor would get him running to your heels again.

Condor had Spirit and Character, to get to the next step we needed power generated from his Hinds for this we started using the harness on him and encouraged him to "Pull" the handler forward. This technique worked like a charm on him; soon this "defective puppy" could generate enough thrust from his rear to generate a harmonious transmission into his Movement not very fast but a steady gait.

Working with him every day we were winners him and me. He was always willing to go that extra mile... to push the envelope to the edge. In his maiden outing he was placed 2nd place in Junior Class at the GSD Speciality show in Coimbatore. Total entries that day topped 60 dogs. Not bad for a "defective puppy" I tend to believe he showed much better than himself coz he wanted to push himself be better than he was. I showed him once more and he was placed within the top 5 in his class. He was never shown since but was a valuable stud being noticed and used by many prominent breeders of his day. He never produced a single progeny with any of his "defects". His progeny were of very good proportion, excellent bones and fluid, correct movement. He also passed on his head type which was well appreciated by breeders.

Every week someone or the other would visit or see him develop, they used to find some subtle changes in him for the betterment and used to voice it... This was encouragement to us (Condor and me) WE FELT WINNERS! Every little improvement was a giant step in our mind.

What I cherish most is not those moments when we showed and got placed in the speciality rings, what I cherish is when he was with us through all my life every day he was always there by my side. He instinctively knew when I was down or up in spirit. He was my best friend, my partner. Whenever I get home he knew I was approaching, he would wait at the gates knowing it's me this, he did till three days before he passed away.

For about 4 years in between he was at Dad's Factory site. He was always free to be about the premise, he knew when Dad or I were approaching a good KM away, he would race to the gates and wait for us and then gait right behind the vehicle till our out house.

After 8 PM the Workers in the night shift would not be allowed to go towards the store area. No one save family would be allowed near our outhouse without us. Such was his character and Temperament. We knew we were safe with him. So much for a "Defective dog" To me he was more dog than many dogs that I have known...

Some dogs are born to rule the Confirmation contests, these dogs just need us to help them win... together we become winners! Many other dogs are beautiful in body and mind but may not be good enough to be Confirmation champions, they are no less dogs because they only fair in Confirmation competitions, we can still be winners with them take for example activity such as IPO and VPG. Each day the dog learns to do his agility trails or basic obedience or protection routine he outdoes himself and emerges a winner... both dog and man the winning team! Through their lives with us our dogs leave us with "moments" and "memories" to remember and become really "Special Dogs" so special that they live on with us forever!