

THE SLM

PET

FROM BOUTIQUES TO BOARDING,
PARKS TO PAMPERING,
HERE'S HOW ST. LOUIS
CARES FOR ITS PETS.

Edited by Jarrett Medlin

GUIDE



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OWNER IN TRAINING

Certified dog trainer Cinder Wilkinson-Kenner, owner of Best Friend Pet Care and a director of the Greater Saint Louis Training Club, shares training tips.

START SOCIALIZING

"Early socialization is more important than shots. If they get sick, you can treat that. But once they're adults, then you can't change that behavior," she says. Avoid phobias by exposing puppies to as many new people and dogs as possible during the first 16 weeks.

REALIZE THE FEAR FACTOR

"The things you see that are emotionally based, like fear, are really beyond the animal's control," Wilkinson-Kenner stresses. Devices like prong collars only ratchet up the fear level, sending dogs into a state where they can't think or learn.

SAY NO TO THE "ALPHA ROLL"

"Wolves don't do that, and dogs don't do that," she points out. Pinning your dog to the ground, as recom-

mended by a certain celebrity trainer, doesn't foster a natural, trusting relationship. And while we're on the subject...

DON'T BELIEVE ALL YOU SEE ON TV

"If pet owners have to watch TV, I really wish they would watch Victoria Stilwell," says Wilkinson-Kenner. Alternately, nix the tube and read Gerilyn Bielakiewicz's *The Only Dog Tricks Book You'll Ever Need*.

CONSIDER AN ADULT RESCUE DOG

If you can't devote time to training and house-breaking a puppy, then a more mature dog from a rescue organization might be the way to go—although, she warns, "People who think of dogs as fashion accessories should definitely not get them."
—Margaret Bauer

THE CASE FOR THE CAT

A guy's perspective on living with a feline

It was her idea. The cat needed a place to live, and my girlfriend declared us its saviors. The problem? I lived alone. At the time, I was a single guy with a truck and a male-dominated job. What kind of dude owns a cat? Unspeakable.

Naturally, I resisted.

For weeks, she begged me to reconsider, but I made my case: I wouldn't be around, it would make a mess, friends would refuse to visit. But in the end, I caved. I made the two-hour journey to pick up the bipolar beast and lugged it back to my apartment. Returning home, I opened the carrying-case door, and it slowly emerged, its marshmallow paws tentatively taking one step after another, its nose glued to the ground.

White Sox—that was her name. The year I got her was the year the team won the World Series. Being from Chicago's South Side, my girlfriend labeled it fate. I labeled it something else.

Yet over time, the cat wore me down. Reading at night, I'd feel her brush against my book's binding. I'd pull in the drive, and she'd be standing at the door to greet me. Other times, the cat showed an air of independence, going long stretches on her own, often gazing outside as if she had dominion over the other animals on the block. I came to appreciate her self-sufficiency, too proud to beg or roll over.

So when my girlfriend returned to Chicago and took the cat with her, I suddenly found the apartment without life. Somehow, I'd developed an inexplicable fondness for the creature.

Today, friends occasionally ask about the cat. I tell them, "She's just fine."
—Jarrett Medlin

