

FOREVER HOME

STORIES FROM RESCUE

Written by Joan Mann

COCO



In 2014, Susie contacted Sandy Bustin, the PBGVCA's Rescue Southeastern regional director, to inquire about the possibility of rescuing a PBGV. Sandy explained that not too many PBGVs come into rescue, but that she would keep Susie in mind if one became available in the future. Susie remembers: "At the time, we were very content with the two wonderful dogs we had, and I knew the chance of adopting a PBGV through rescue was not very likely. So, I put my hopes of a PBGV on the back burner."

Susie was already very familiar with the Basset Hound breed, and her curiosity about the PBGV grew over time, and she eventually met one in person. The family had moved into a new neighborhood and met Madison, a middle-aged PBGV with personality plus. At the same time, her daughter met Max, a PBGV who makes regular visits to her middle school in Mount Pleasant. Susie did some research, and realized there were not many breeders near Charleston, and knew from talking with Sandy that the likelihood of ever finding one that needed to be

rehomed was very slim."

Susie said, "The story of how we came to adopt Coco began a year and a half ago, but the desire to own a PBGV began long before that. Before I even knew what a Petit Basset Griffon Vendéen was, I was the proud owner of many Basset Hounds. When my husband and I married in 1999, it was a two for one deal;" I joined him with my beloved and ornery Basset Hound, Hanna. Two daughters and a few years later, we became a regular foster family to many homeless hounds through Carolina Basset Hound Rescue (CBHR). Hanna did not mind the various shapes and sizes of all the low riders to stay with us. We eventually "foster-failed" and adopted Clementine, who was a senior hound with a heart of gold. We grew so fond of the Basset personality, but after Hanna and Clementine passed away, we somehow talked ourselves into the newly popular non-shedding breeds. We are currently the proud owners of a senior Golden Doodle named Henry and a Cockapoo, Cooper. Henry is trained as a Pet Therapy dog, and makes regular visits to a downtown Charleston hospital. Cooper had a rough start in life, but

has blossomed into the most loyal pet anyone could ask for. Despite the fact that Henry and Cooper do not shed, and are well behaved and loved by everyone, I could not help feel that something was missing. I realized that they were so obedient and willing to please that there was no "Bassetude!" There was also no snoring, garbage eating, or clown-like antics! Although I love Henry and Cooper, I knew in my heart that I would return to owning Basset Hounds,



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or more correctly speaking, enjoy being owned by a hound."

A year and a half after her initial conversation with Sandy, Susie received a phone call about a PBGV in Georgia who potentially needed a new home. A six year old female, named Coco, had many medical problems and was in terrible condition. She had a large mass on her side, multiple infections, kennel cough, and much of her fur had fallen out. She had absolutely no hair on her tail end. Coco's previous owner loved her, but neglected to provide necessary medical care. Coco's owner eventually relinquished ownership to the Atlanta rescue, Furkids. Due to the 5 hour driving distance from Charleston, South Carolina to Atlanta, Georgia, the [redacted] were unable to foster Coco while she received medical care but still put in an application to adopt her. Coco spent many weeks in the shelter showing little improvement. At times they were not sure she was going to survive at all. Susie continued to communicate with the Furkids rescue coordinator during Coco's stay, never really understanding why she lost so much fur. They could not believe that she was so anxious to adopt a hairless PBGV, (who could be snappy at times) and might be plagued with expensive medical care. They were not sure if she was dog-friendly and she was undoubtedly not housebroken. Susie hoped that she was grouchy only because she felt miserable, and kept her fingers crossed to eventually bring her home.

After Coco spent many weeks in the shelter, Susie was wondering if she would recuperate better in a home environment and offered to adopt her immediately, despite her



unresolved medical issues. Furkids agreed to the adoption, and so Susie's husband, two teenage daughters, and dogs Henry and Cooper all made the trip to Atlanta. They were all so excited and nervous to meet Coco!

From Susie: "And so our journey with our first PBGV, Coco, began! We traveled back to Charleston with her to continue her recovery and get to know her better. And what a mischievous clown she has turned out to be! She grew her fur back, learned the house rules, and settled in wonderfully. Potty training was a little challenging at first, but she now uses a wireless doorbell to let us know when she needs to go out. Guests can't believe it when they are visiting and Coco rings that doorbell! She is so smart, and responded quickly to training.

"As her health improved, we also got her into "shape." At first she could not walk around the block without stopping every few steps. Now she easily trots around the neighborhood, keeping up with the other dogs. Originally the pads of her feet were as soft as a puppy's (for a six year old dog). We guessed she only walked on carpet inside, and possibly used a doggie door to potty in the yard. I doubt she ever walked on pavement. I'm certain leash walking is a new phenomenon for her altogether. Unfortunately, we have found her only downfall is her strong desire to eat poop! She turns her frequent walks into poop-seeking missions."

"Although she is more active now, she still has her curvy, pot belly pig-like figure. She has a pronounced underbite, causing her tongue to mostly protrude. She has had a few ear infections re-occur as well as a UTI. The only diagnosis that she has been given is hypothyroid. My veterinarian is not sure if that alone contributed to such severe hair loss, or just poor living conditions and neglect. We are just so glad it all came back!"

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Coco at time of rescue



Coco now

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Living the High Life!

“All in all, our family is so in love with our first of hopefully many PBGVs. The breed is similar to the Basset Hound, just busier (and with a few more antics!). She gets along with everyone, and makes us laugh all the time. She loves both of her four-legged brothers, and believes that Cooper’s docked tail is a chew toy made just for her! I can’t thank Sandy Bustin enough for connecting us to her.”



You can help. To make a difference in a PBGV’s life visit the PBGVCA’s rescue page: www.pbgv.org/BreedInfo/rescue/shtml and consider making a donation to the rescue effort. No amount is too small, and every donation is appreciated.

If you’ve added a PBGV to your family through Rescue, please consider telling your story. You can send text and pictures to Joan Mann at jmannsox@gmail.com or JMann17307@aol.com