



Rallydog



RALLY DOG TIMES

June 2024

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IT'S A KIND OF MAGIC

INTRODUCING OUR REIGNING CHAMPIONS OF THE RALLY DOG NATIONALS 2024 - THE ONE AND ONLY, MAGIC! HIS REGISTERED NAME IS EUROFIRE WILD LOVE, AND LET IT BE KNOWN, HE LIVES UP TO THAT NAME WITH HIS WILD AND LOVING NATURE.

Editor **CHANTAL ROSS-GERMISHUYS**

Born on the 12th of February 2021, the same day as his Mom's (human) sister, it's a date that his Mom, Michelle will never forget.

Magic is a Eurofire Border Collie, carefully chosen because of the incredible effort the breeder, Shannen, puts into selecting breeding lines for health, working abilities, and overall balance, as well as the time she puts into preparing her puppies for their future homes and lives. These dogs are not only great pets but also have a strong work ethic and have demonstrated performance in a wide

range of disciplines.

Michelle admits that she always admired Border Collies from afar but thought their energy levels would be too much for her. However, as she got to know more of them through other handlers, she realized she might just be up for the challenge. Now, she won't pretend that she has Magic completely figured out yet. There are still some sensitivities and situations that can be a bit overwhelming, but overall, she is thrilled to have him as her loyal companion in life's adventures.

Oh, and did we mention he has a

few nicknames? Well, besides Magic, they also call him Magi (pronounced like Maji) or M-dawg when they want to keep their conversations about him a secret. He's quite the character, always thinking that whenever his Mom says, "good boy," it's directed at him, even though it could be the cat or someone else's dog.

Michelle shares an incredibly special bond with Magic. She adores him wholeheartedly, and he reciprocates that love by staying by her side, snoozing under her feet while she works at her desk, and faithfully following her wherever she

Rally Dogs Have More Fun...

All Rally Dog events are held under the Rules and Regulations of Schedule 5T of the Kennel Union of South Africa

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goes. However, unlike his sister, Magic is also content with his own company and doesn't experience anxiety when Michelle is away.

As a puppy, Magic was a bundle of energy! Right from day one, Michelle had to work tirelessly on teaching him calm behaviours and self-control. He was all about instant gratification and jumping around everywhere. Especially in the evenings, he would get really wild when they were trying to relax on the couch. This is when Michelle had to come up with tricks to keep his mind busy so

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everyone could finally settle down. It was a bit overwhelming at times, but he was so adorable and eager to learn. Eventually, they made progress.

Generally, Magic exhibits a gentle nature compared to many other dogs. He absolutely adores physical touch and being gently brushed. He's soft and sensitive, and usually handles new experiences well. He loves playing tug and chasing toys. He is very gentle with puppies and tends

to be submissive in dog interactions. Magic has a deep (and incredibly noisy!) affection for his Dad and a select few other individuals. He also gets along well with the family's cats. Although he and the youngest feline used to engage in wild play sessions, after a few too many incidents where the kitten accidentally hurt Magic

by nipping his ear or paw, they've decided to refrain from playing together.

When it comes to being restrained, Magic isn't particularly fond of it, especially during visits to the vet. Additionally, Magic becomes quite distressed when he hears someone swear, mistakenly believing he has done something wrong, even if it's just because they accidentally stubbed their toe. Michelle has to make sure to keep a positive and upbeat attitude when training him, especially during lower-energy activities like Rally Dog, as he can pick up on her mood.

Magic thoroughly enjoys engaging in activities such as playing tug-of-war or embarking on exciting hikes in the great outdoors. When it comes to training, Michelle opts mainly for kibble from their meals to ensure they maintain a healthy weight. However, for those extra special 'jackpot' rewards, Magic's taste buds lean towards softer meat-based treats

like liver bread or dehydrated options such as those from Pawsome Raw or Absolute Dogs' ostrich flat strips. Interestingly, fish-based, cheese-based, or vegetarian options don't seem to tickle Magic's fancy as much.

Winning the Rally Dog National Champions 2024 title feels surreal! It all happened so fast. Michelle was going through a tough time with her mom's passing right before the Nationals, so she wasn't in the best state of mind on the day. Despite this, Magic, who is her baby (youngest) dog, performed exceptionally well.

Michelle and Magic mainly compete in Agility but also enjoy Rally Dog and Obedience. They both find great joy in participating in Rally Dog, which Michelle describes as being “a delightful combination of trick training (with plenty of rewards!) and obedience”. This activity keeps both Michelle and Magic motivated and thoroughly entertained. They've also noticed that Magic performs better in Agility when they focus on Rally Dog training. It helps him stay focused and controlled, preventing his wild side from taking over. Participating in multiple events can be chaotic, but they manage to make it work.

Maintaining a balance between training Magic and his sister, and other aspects of her life is a constant challenge for Michelle. She has been fortunate to work mostly from home, allowing her to dedicate a significant amount of time to Magic's training (especially while he was a puppy), even incorporating short training sessions during meal times. However, as her work has become busier, she has had to find ways to balance her commitments. Unfortunately, this has caused her training routine to slip a bit in recent months. Nevertheless, Michelle always strives to stay ahead and find ways to manage her time effectively, ensuring that Magic receives the attention and training he needs.

Michelle is an avid reader, constantly seeking ways to improve their performance and acquire new skills. She values the knowledge she

gained from reading and watching Susan Garrett's free content on dog behaviour and training methods. This content taught her the importance of positive reinforcement, setting boundaries, and being consistent and clear, which are applicable not only in dog training but also in various aspects of life. Michelle finds the OneMind Dogs content particularly valuable. However, she doesn't limit herself to just one source of information. She enjoys observing and learning from other handlers, always striving to find her own unique approach. While she has wonderful trainers, she isn't afraid to do things her own way if she feels that the more traditional methods don't align with her dogs.

When it comes to competitions, managing stress can be quite challenging for Michelle. She prefers to have some quiet time with her dogs before the event, rather than engaging in conversations about the course or her dogs' performance. This helps her stay calm and focused.

Michelle's pre-competition routine involves playing with her dogs, warming them up, and getting them excited and happy to be at the show. This includes playing with toys, running around, and having fun together to warm up

their bodies and brains. Once in the ring, she tends to be less stressed, but it's the stress beforehand that she struggles with. Lately, she has been reminding herself to approach competitions with the mindset of having fun, rather than taking them too seriously. After all, having fun is the whole reason we participate in dog sports.

Michelle has come to understand that when it comes to dog sports, it's all about you and the specific dog you're working with at that moment. In her case, she has two dogs who

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and enthusiasm, while the other dog requires a calm and soothing approach. It's crucial to truly know your dog and figure out the best way to bring out their optimal performance in the sport you're engaged in.

Interestingly, Michelle has also learned a valuable lesson from her experiences in Rally Dog competitions. Sometimes, even if she makes just one small mistake, she tends to feel like the whole performance was a disaster. However, she has realized that

have completely different needs and preferences when it comes to Rally Dog and Agility. One dog thrives on high energy, excitement,

this is not an accurate reflection of reality. It's important not to let one mistake define the entire experience. Instead, she advises to embrace the mistake, stay positive, and keep moving forward. Who knows, things might not turn out as bad as they initially seem.

On a lighter note, Michelle has discovered that Rally Dog can also be a fantastic party trick! People are often amazed by the precision and skill displayed by dogs in this sport. It almost seems like magic to them...

Congratulations to Michelle & Magic on their incredible achievement! We at Rally Dog National are extremely proud of you. Your dedication and success serve as an inspiration to all of us. Keep up the amazing work!

