

Big Dogs of Katy

A humorous look at extra-large canines that have plenty of love and laughter to give

Written by Kirsten Cornell

Most large breed dog owners will tell you they frequently hear the question, “Do you have a saddle for that horse?” But these families wouldn’t have it any other way. They shared with us why they chose their particular breed of gentle giant, their funniest moments, and what makes their furry family members extra special.



Ben requires eight cups of food a day

Name: Big Ben
Breed: Great Dane
Age: 6 years old
Weight: 150 lbs.
Funniest moment: Ben teethed on the wood siding of the garage

Big Ben

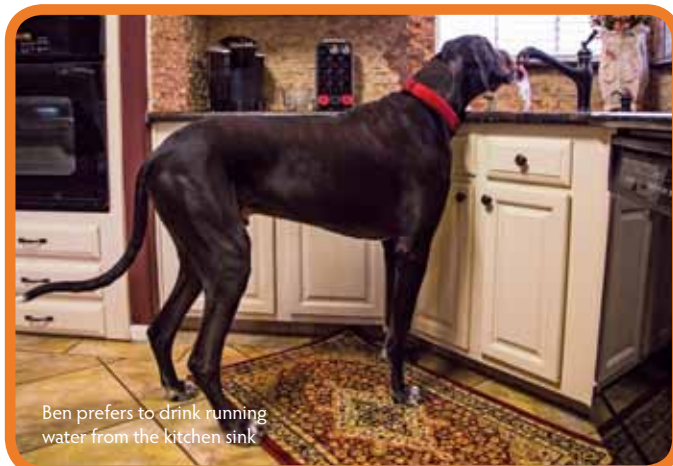
The Wallace family had always had labs, but after interacting with a friend’s Great Dane, they fell in love and decided to get their own. “We took our family trick-or-treating at a friend’s house, and they had a Dane named Smoochie,” recalls Anetrius. “Within three days, we found our Ben. He was 10 weeks old.”

Ben loves watching animal shows, and his favorite is *America’s Funniest Videos*. “When he sees another dog on TV, he gets excited and leaps off the floor into the TV,” Anetrius laughs. “He really has a wonderful personality and is a lot of fun.”

The Wallaces do alert new large breed dog owners that feeding your pup will be your largest expense. Ben eats at least eight cups of dog food every day. But if you are considering a Great Dane, be prepared to be loved unconditionally. “Great Danes are courageous and loyal, making a great watch dog. They are also playful and patient with children and love to be around people,” adds Randall Wallace.

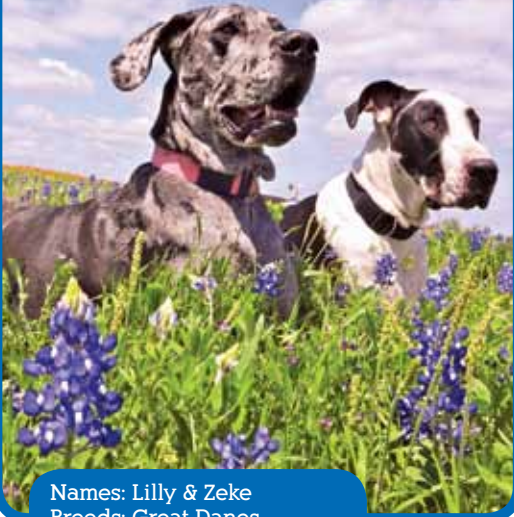
“Great Danes are courageous and loyal, making a great watch dog.”

– Anetrius Wallace



Ben prefers to drink running water from the kitchen sink

The Sinclairs describe their Danes as friendly, devoted, laid back, hard-headed, and smart



Names: Lilly & Zeke
Breeds: Great Danes
Ages: 5 years old
Weights: 130 lbs. & 160 lbs.
Funniest moment: We blamed each other, but Zeke woke us with his snoring

Lilly & Zeke

Ever since Bonnie Sinclair was a little girl, she has longed for a Great Dane to call her very own. When she and her husband Aaron purchased their first home in 2008, they decided to make that dream become a reality. “We found Lily online and fell in love instantly,” Bonnie recalls. “She was transported via airline from Oklahoma to Houston. She was 10 weeks old and weighed 33 lbs.” Five months later the Sinclairs fell in love for the second time, and Zeke became a member of their family.

The Sinclairs noticed shortly after Zeke arrived that he was hearing and visually impaired. “Realizing this did not change the way we felt about our sweet Dane boy, just how we interacted with him,” says Bonnie. Since they had already begun verbal training commands with Lily, they decided to utilize her as their assistant. “We gave Lily the verbal command and Zeke the sign command at the same time,” Bonnie explains. “Zeke copied Lily and came to understand what we wanted with each hand movement.” Both are now wonderful 5-year-old Danes who love anything that squeaks, rolls, bounces, or lights up.

“Great Danes are truly a great dog breed in every way. They are amazing with other pets and kids of all ages,” Bonnie says. “I wouldn’t give anything for either of my giant lap dogs.”

Kona

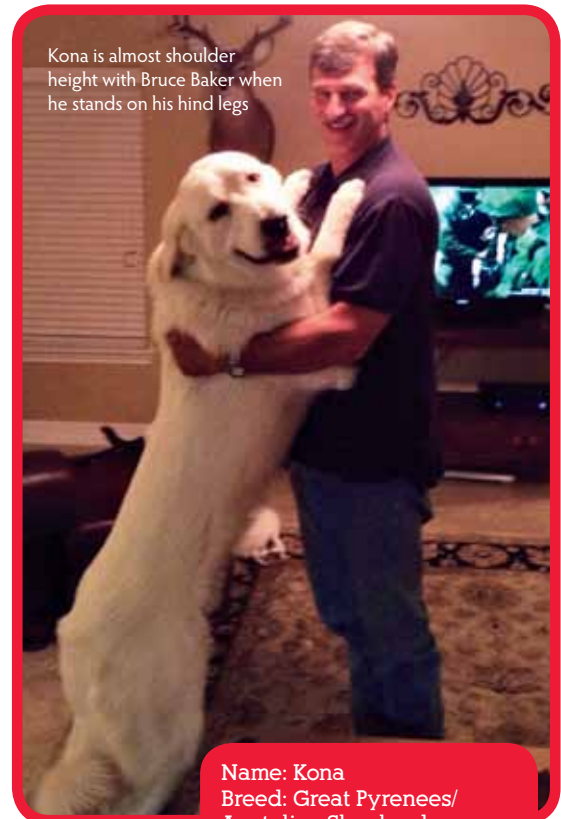
Bruce and Terrie Baker have always loved Great Pyrenees and when they lost theirs a few years ago, they began looking for a new furry member for their family. “We noticed on Facebook that a friend of ours had puppies so we jumped on it immediately,” recalls Terrie. The Bakers adopted Kona when he was 7 weeks old.

Kona lives up to his gentle giant title and is very noble and protective of his family. “He is also incredibly handsome,” Terrie says with a grin. “It doesn’t matter where we are, people always tell us how beautiful he is.” Even a four-foot-high gate won’t stop Kona from getting attention where it is due. “He would walk up to it, get on his hind legs, and hang his head over the edge sideways for us to pet him,” she says.

Terrie tells others not be alarmed by larger breed dogs or their size, and that they are actually known to be very loving and calm.



Kona likes chewing on rawhides or pieces of firewood



Kona is almost shoulder height with Bruce Baker when he stands on his hind legs

Name: Kona
Breed: Great Pyrenees/
Anatolian Shepherd
Age: 1 year old
Weight: 118 lbs.
Funniest moment: He will paw you until you pet him

Roxy loves playing ball, going on walks, and playing with neighbor dog friends



Name: Roxy
 Breed: Bouvier des Flandres
 Age: 2 years old
 Weight: 85 lbs.
 Funniest moment: She would always "herd" our children at the park



The Remlingers have four children so they knew they wanted the family dog to be a protective breed but also unaggressive and patient with small children. "I fell in love with the breed the first time I saw it," says Mary Remlinger. "It was challenging finding a breeder and they were very picky about whom they were willing to sell to." Through a chain of events, and a breeder in Michigan, the Remlinger family met Roxy.

Although Roxy is always ready for a good cuddle, she is very protective of her home and family. "Her size, look, and big bark are enough to give strangers pause when they come to the door," Mary laughs. "But she is very gentle and sweet with people with whom she is familiar." Mary recalls Roxy being particularly watchful over their youngest, Jonathan. "Any time we were playing outside and he would wander away from us, she would follow him - just to make sure he wasn't running away from the pack," she says.

The Remlingers can't leave home without receiving comments on their "black bear look-alike." Though large breed dogs can mean a lot of maintenance, their family agrees they wouldn't have it any other way.

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“Any time we were playing outside and our son would wander away from us, she would follow him - just to make sure he wasn't running away from the pack.”

- Mary Remlinger



Roxy with her family, Jonathan, Jacob, Wade, and Claire Remlinger



Jacob loves taking his "black bear" dog to the park

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Lambeau's full name is Lambeau Curly Machart



Name: Lambeau
Breed: Labradoodle
Age: 2 years old
Weight: 65 lbs.
Funniest moment: Greeted guests by burying his nose between their knees

Lambeau

Derek and Monica Machart knew they wanted a large breed dog that was friendly - and didn't shed too much. After a little research, they decided that a labradoodle was an excellent choice for their family. Lambeau's very sweet, gentle, and easygoing personality was a perfect fit.

"Large breed dogs are great because they are loyal to their families and provide a sense of security," Monica says. "But be prepared to walk. Lambeau relishes his long walks along the greenbelt. He loves to get out and explore the world with his nose."



Lambeau loves ice cubes, and will come running when he hears the sound of the freezer opening

Cleo

When Hannah Owens first met Cleo, the Dane was 4 months old, had a broken leg, mange, was underweight, and had a rubber band for a collar. "When we picked her up, she was in the parking lot of her previous owner's apartment complex eating rocks and gravel and her name was Reign of Terror," recalls Owens. "Eventually we learned that anything edible or that she could fit in her mouth, Cleo would eat. Meat, cheese, bread, soda, ink pens, golf balls - it really didn't matter."

Owens admits that Cleo can still have a bit of a "drama queen" personality and is often caught rolling her eyes at them and huffing in an unsatisfactory manner. "She is like having a 130-pound 2-year-old who is more than happy to throw a hissy fit when she doesn't get what she wants the moment she wants it," Owens laughs. "But she loves to be held or sitting on someone's lap."

Owens describes Cleo as an over-sized, four-legged child who spends all day waiting just to spend time with her. "Just make sure to love and adore them as much as they do you," she warns. "Because the bigger the dog, the bigger the eyes and cold nose that stare you eye-to-eye daily, telling you that you are their everything and they love you more than the Beggin' Strips you're planning to give them later." **KM**



Cleo has a habit of hiding food wrappers in the couch cushions when she has stolen goodies from the kitchen

Photo by Fotos Bl Le

Name: Cleo
Breed: Great Dane
Age: 8 years old
Weight: 130 lbs.
Funniest moment: She would steal Yoo-hoo chocolate drinks



KIRSTEN CORNELL is the lead associate editor of Katy Magazine, and has her own 14-pound Chihuahua mix who thinks he's a Great Dane.