

DREAM COME TRUE




Member
Lamar Braithwaite
waited his entire life to
own a dog. **Jasmine**,
his new **GOLDENDOODLE**,
doesn't disappoint.

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Lamar always loved dogs. The problem was, his mom and sisters didn't. In fact, for no special reason, they were terrified of dogs. So growing up, Lamar had to be content with a turtle and a fish.

When it was finally time for Lamar and his partner, Dale Curtis, to start talking about getting a dog, they knew that not just any dog would do.

Dale wanted a goldendoodle because they don't shed and they have great personalities. He wanted something smaller than the Labradors he'd had before; something more manageable in size. That's when the computer came out and the search began.

The pair investigated goldendoodle breeders from two states before deciding on The One.

"We really liked the questions she asked. She was really looking to find the right dog for the right person," recalls Lamar.





To **wait** or **not** to **wait**. **THAT WAS THE QUESTION.**

Lamar and Dale chose their special goldendoodle from photos online and arranged a pick-up date with the breeder. A special trip, however, threatened to destroy their timeline.

“Dale had a trip to Italy planned with his sister,” says Lamar. “I was back home getting ready for the puppy to join us. When Dale got back he felt like it was a little bit rushed and we should take a little more time.”

“But I really wanted a dog, never having had one before, and really had my hopes up. We talked about it. I might have shed a few tears. In the end, the tears were for the best because otherwise we wouldn’t have gotten her. We would have gotten another dog.”

A name befitting a princess

By the time Lamar and Dale decided to make the drive to pick up their new dog, they already had a name picked out and a collar made for “Teddy.” The only problem?

“When we got there and looked at her, we said she didn’t look like a Teddy,” says Lamar. “So we went home and she was nameless for a day while we tried to figure out what to call her. The next day we got up and, since I’m a huge Disney buff and like Disney movies, I said ‘What about Jasmine?’”

“Princess Jasmine!” Dale chimes in.

“She is the princess,” agrees Lamar.

Parents in training

As Lamar soon found out, and as many pet owners know, puppies are a lot of work!

“This being my first dog, it was very different. It’s nowhere near like having a child, but a puppy relies on you to train her, and make sure she goes out. I took the first few days off of work because we really didn’t sleep. Every three hours we were

taking her out. Sometimes at two o’clock in the morning, sometimes at five a.m. That wasn’t something I expected.”

“I want a dog to be well trained and well behaved,” says Dale. “We put her on a leash and puppies just run all over the place because they’re just so interested in everything. I would get uptight about it, so we decided to go to a professional trainer.”

“It was a great thing for her as well as for the two of us because it got us on the same page as far as how to treat and train her. She really learned very quickly at that point.”

“We realized the trainer wasn’t for her; the trainer was for us,” says Lamar.

“One thing the trainer emphasized that was new to me was always be quieter and gentler and softer,” says Dale. “I used to be the type who yelled ‘SIT! HEEL!’ But she responds so much better with a gentler tone.”



‘Oh, pet insurance’

Until Jasmine came along, Lamar and Dale weren’t familiar with the idea of medical insurance for pets.

“About three years ago, my employer sent out a mass email to all our employees letting us know that we now had pet insurance offered through Nationwide. I kind of chuckled and said, ‘Oh, pet insurance,’” Lamar recalls.

“I had never heard of pet insurance,” says Dale. “I thought it sounded odd and thought, ‘Oh, that’s an expense we don’t need.’ But it’s not that much money.”

“When we decided to get Jasmine,” Lamar says, “I called and talked to our human resource department to get the details. It’s deducted right out of my paycheck and it’s very easy and very simple.



“You never know what’s going to come up or what accidents are going to happen. We have insurance for ourselves; why not insurance for our pet?”

Protecting Jasmine

Puppies need lots of shots and Lamar and Dale made sure Jasmine got the ones she needed. That’s when pet insurance from Nationwide came in handy.



“That’s pretty much what we’ve used it for,” says Lamar. “When I called Nationwide, they were able to walk me through it and really find the best plan for the first year of having her.”

Even the claims process is easy, says Lamar. “Whenever we go to the vet, we walk in and they know we have Nationwide pet insurance. They already have the claim forms in her file. They take care of all that for us.”

“Knock on wood, we’ve had no claims thus far out of the minor routine check-in,” says Dale. “But it’s good to have it because you never know.”

Expanding the doghouse

“Maybe in six months to a year, we’ll be ready for Jasmine to have a little brother,” says Lamar. “No need to shed tears—I think it’ll be pretty easy.” 🐾

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