

Travels with Cole & Cole



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Great Escape #123 (Annika is Gone)

A sad day in Pahrump, Nevada.

A Powerful Pup

Sometimes an event is so momentous and a life force so strong, you will never forget it. Almost 15 years ago, a tiny scrap of a puppy came into our lives and changed us forever. Her name was chosen on the drive to meet the Yorkie breeder. Annika, a Swedish name for a British dog to commemorate the fact that we are both half Swedish. Although she was only 7 weeks old and weighed just a pound and a half, she pranced into our house like she had lived there forever. No gangly puppy pratfalls for her. She was coordinated, confident, bold, intelligent, controlling, independent, and opinionated.



She claimed our Siamese boy cat, Thai, as her personal plaything and he couldn't have been happier. He became her champion and protector from all things he perceived as dangerous until he drew his last breath. Every time he came into the house, she rushed to the door to greet him by grabbing his whiskers as in the photo to the right. He would have to walk across the



room with a puppy hanging off his face. Even years after Thai's death, if we said his name, "Thai-Boy," Annika rushed to our sliding glass door to see if he was there.

Loved Motorcycles

Annika started riding motorcycles with us from an early age, sometimes even falling asleep with her head lolling to one side while her long, blonde hair whipped in the wind. Eventually, we found "Doggles" for her to protect her eyes from the sun, wind, and all that whipping hair. She was a traffic stopper on all her rides. We even had people racing next to us on the freeway at 75 miles per hour just to snap a photo of her. She was never one for riding in cars, didn't like them. But she was always up for a motorcycle ride.



Happiest at the Beach

When we started traveling in 2005, Annika enjoyed all the new experiences of walking in new locales. Her favorite locations of all were warm, sandy beaches. The moment she smelled the ocean breezes, she would tremble with excitement. Mexican beaches were her favorite destination. She knew that sandy beaches held her very favorite thing to hunt in the whole world... seagull feathers! The bigger the feather the better. She would walk for miles carrying her prize in her mouth. The photo above right was taken in Kino Bay, Mexico in December 2008 shortly before her 12th birthday. As you can see, it was a very successful hunt with not one prime feather, but two.



She was Failing

Although Annika's health throughout her life was remarkably good and veterinary visits were rare, old age began to catch up with her. A year and a half ago, the cataracts which had been forming for some time finally obscured her vision completely. That didn't slow her down much in the beginning. It just meant that she had to ask for help getting on and off furniture. But Annika didn't "ask" for anything...she demanded. "Pick me up. Put me down. Make me some lunch." Like some old people do, she became demanding and somewhat obnoxious as her dependence on us grew. Soon, her knees became loose and started giving her trouble and her hearing began to fail. The one thing she could not overcome with her strength of will was kidney failure. As her kidneys started shutting down and she became sicker and sicker, we had to act. On Wednesday, January 25th, Annika passed peacefully on a veterinarian's table with us beside her, holding her and talking to her.

One Door Closes...Another Opens

In the worst of situations, there is always opportunity. When one door closes, another opens. Intellectually and logically we know this to be the truth. But emotionally we are both wrecks. It is never wise to try to run from a bad situation. If you don't deal with the situation, it follows you wherever you go. We have taken a few days off work to concentrate on grieving and to begin looking for the new open door. In spite of the tears that only stop for very short periods, we can see the open door and it involves trips on the motorcycle and in the car. For years we have not been able to travel without the motorhome and the necessity to provide almost constant care for a small dog. In a sense, we are now free and we look forward to that freedom, but the price of this new freedom was so high that we would never willingly take it.

Our consolation is that we know in hearts and minds that we gave our darling little dog the best life we could provide and that we will never forget her.

Until next time, home is where we park it.

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