



SWISSRIDGE

PAWSLETTER

JULY 2014

Welcome to the first SwissRidge Kennels newsletter!

I want to reach out to the many owners and fans of SwissRidge dogs with some updates about my breeding program, some information to help with your dogs, and of course, some of my favorite photos from the last year or two.

Did you know that SwissRidge is...

- Producing new variations on well-loved hybrids?
- Expanding our training programs and services?
- Finding new ways to communicate about our dogs and services with prospective and current owners?
- Hosting a reunion (AKA Doodle Romp) on August 23, 2014?
- Moving the entire operation to a new location?
- Welcoming lots of new puppies?

Read on to learn more, and I promise a surprise or two! Please stay in touch, and let me know what you might like to see in the next edition of this newsletter.

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Bernedoodles Online

Bernedoodle fans are spread across North America and beyond. Many of you will never have a chance to meet me or my partner, trainer Lucas Mucha, in person. It can be a long trek to Ontario to visit the kennel, pick up your puppy, and meet its parents. Yet I know it's a leap of faith to buy a puppy from a breeder and kennel so far from home.

That's why I've launched **www.bernedoodles.com**.

The new website provides comprehensive information about SwissRidge Kennels including: my history, experience and breeding philosophy, my amazing family and staff, our programs and services, extensive questions and answers, and wonderful testimonials.

Of course, the main event is my dogs! I want you to get to know the canine members of my family. The website provides detailed descriptions, health clearances and lots of photos of every breeding dog currently in my Bernedoodle program (plus some new talent waiting in the wings).

The website will be updated frequently to include new information, such as current and upcoming litters, and will evolve over time to meet your needs. One thing I'm considering is pulling some of the excellent owner advice from the SwissRidge Facebook group to include on the website. Please explore the new site and let me know if there's anything in particular you'd like to see.



Naturally, the Goldendoodle website will need a bit of a facelift to keep pace. While Bernedoodles have taken center stage lately, Goldendoodles are my first love, and remain very dear to my heart.





2nd Annual Doodle Romp

While I love hanging out with owners in our virtual meeting place on Facebook, getting together in person is even better because... I get to reunite with everyone who owns my dogs! Seriously, there is nothing better for a breeder than seeing happy families and frolicking dogs.

Last year, I worked with some fabulous volunteers to launch the annual SwissRidge Doodle Romp to bring owners together and raise money for a good cause. It was great fun, and attracted about 170 people and 65 dogs. In addition, the event raised \$8,000 for National Service Dogs, an organization that matches autistic children with service dogs.



Please visit my website to find a link to the video of last year's romp.



This year's romp will take place on August 23rd, 2014, and we expect an even bigger crowd. Once again, we have a fundraising focus. Earlier this year, I donated a Goldendoodle puppy to a Burlington family that has two young boys with significant health challenges. All funds raised at the romp will be directed toward the extensive and specialized training that the service dog needs. My hope is that Ollie, pictured below, will bring great happiness and value to this family.



Date: August 23, 2014
Time: 11- 4 p.m.
Location: 16195 12th Concession Road, Schomberg, Ontario
Price: \$15 per person
(children under age 12 are free)

WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Games, 'doodle races', tricks contest, and more
- Amazing auction prizes
- Food and drinks
- Pet vendors
- Professional photographer
- Caricature artist
- Beautiful walking trails and ponds
- Off-leash play yard for the dogs
- Scavenger Hunt in the trails

This event is open to all, and is an ideal opportunity for people who don't yet own a SwissRidge dog to meet some and speak to their owners. ***Please note, however, that only dogs born at SwissRidge Kennels are invited.***

While tickets are available at the event, we'd appreciate it if you purchased in advance so that we will have an idea of how many people are attending.

To learn more about the event, purchase tickets and see the charitable focus, please visit www.swissridgedoodleromp.com

 Making a Change in a Child's life



Bernedoodles: A Decade in Review

These days, my life pretty much revolves around Bernedoodles.

When I began breeding dogs 16 years ago, I realized that to do the job well, I'd need to focus in closely on one breed until I got it right. I call the first stage of my career "The Goldendoodle Years." During that stage, I developed a conscientious approach to breeding, built my lines carefully, and learned how to run a good business as well.

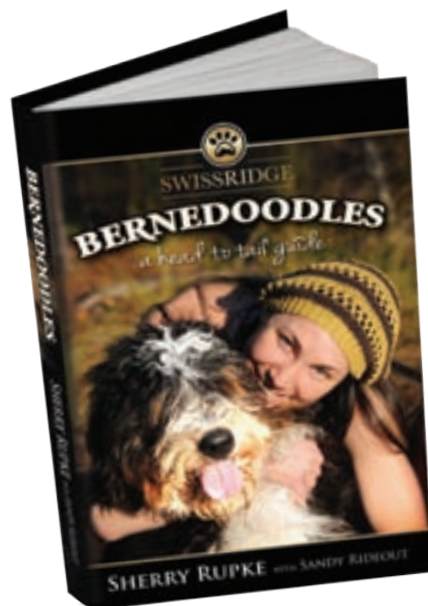
In 2003, a client suggested I begin deliberately crossing the Bernese Mountain Dog and the Poodle. I started slowly as I gained the knowledge and skills to build this more challenging hybrid program, and am now fully immersed in the second stage of my career, "The Bernedoodle Years."



I had no idea this hybrid would become so popular. My initial goal was simply to capture some of the best traits of my beloved Bernese Mountain Dog in a healthier, allergy-friendly package. The results have far exceeded my expectations: this is a very special hybrid.

Here are some key milestones from my decade-long journey with the Bernedoodle:

- Convincing my mother, Patricia Moor, of www.MoorsBernese.com to take over and build a breeding program that now produces some of the best Bernese in the world (in my opinion!), and provides much of my foundation stock;
- Figuring out how to pair the right healthy, calm Berners and Poodles to capture the best of both breeds in the Bernedoodle;
- Mastering some of the challenges inherent in breeding the Bernese;
- Expanding from Standard Bernedoodles to Mini-Bernedoodles, Tiny Bernedoodles and recently, Australian Bernedoodles.
- Determining how to produce more pups with the coveted tri-color coat without compromising health or temperament;
- Garnering rave reviews from owners, confirming that my ability to place the right pup with the right people continues to be effective;
- Publishing *Bernedoodles: A Head to Tail Guide*, which provides practical information on health, care and training for prospective owners of any pup, written with input on training from Lucas Mucha.



If I had to pick one photo to document The Bernedoodles Years, it would be this one:



The Waiting List

Why does it take so long to get a Bernedoodle?

It's a question I hear all the time, and now I can answer in detail.

While I am thrilled with the popularity of Bernedoodles, demand has far exceeded supply. The year-long wait for a Bernedoodle has become something of a SwissRidge rite of passage. I'm glad people have some time to consider their decision to get a puppy, but I also know that it's stressful for the arrival date to be a big unknown.

As I explained in my book, it takes time to create a solid breeding program. Excellent breeding stock is incredibly hard to come by, whether it's Bernese or Poodles of any size. There are no short-cuts. I have to track down breeding dogs with potential from reputable breeders, wait like everyone else for pups to be born, raise them, test them for health and temperament, and only then can I breed them. If a dog doesn't work out for any reason, it's back to the drawing board.

I'm always at the mercy of Mother Nature. Dogs come into heat only twice a year. Bernese are known for unpredictable heats and for failing to conceive when expected. Even when they do, their litters may be smaller

than hoped, and the sad truth is that they are not the best moms.

When a large litter arrives and thrives, I rejoice, but it may not produce exactly the pup you've requested. When your number comes up, if you've identified a tri-colored female with a curly coat and the litter hasn't produced one, you may be out of luck at that time.



Please keep in mind that a pup with the ideal temperament for you may come earlier if you are open-minded about gender, coat type and color. Many clients decide that black-and-white pups, fondly described as "Oreos," will suit them just fine and end up with a pup far sooner than if they'd held out for a tri-color.

So, while the wait may be long, I hope people understand that I am breeding the very best dogs I can, in terms of health, pedigree and temperament. All the time and work that goes into producing a quality pup will pay off when a client tells me their long-awaited pup is perfect for their family.

And the good news: this summer may bring a Bernedoodle bonanza! Check the new website for a list of upcoming litters. Several large litters have already arrived, with more pups to come. I expect to see a lot of happy families by early fall.

What's Next?

As my Bernedoodle program has stabilized, I can expand my horizons. While I expect to continue with my current breeds as long as owners love them, I am always on the lookout for promising leads to produce healthy, beautiful dogs that meet the needs of my clients.

After careful consideration and research, I have introduced two new hybrid variations:

Golden Mountain Doodle:

Named by the Facebook Group, the Golden Mountain Doodle is a cross between my two all-time favorite breeds, the Goldendoodle and the Bernedoodle. This pairing produced some utterly stunning dogs in 2013 who showcase all that's loveable in these 'doodles.



Australian Bernedoodle:

In Spring of 2014 I produced my first litter of Australian Bernedoodles, a **cross between a Bernese Mountain Dog and an Australian Labradoodle** (ALD). Australian Labradoodles are hybrids themselves—a blend of Labrador Retriever, Cocker Spaniel, Irish Water Spaniel and Poodle. Well-bred ALDs are registered through the American Australian Labradoodle Association (ALAA), which has strict standards for breeders, and requires health testing for all breeding dogs.

I decided to infuse Australian Labradoodle into my lines because I was becoming discouraged with the challenge of finding high quality Miniature/Toy Poodles that come from health tested parents and have the calm temperament I require. Generally speaking, an ALD has a similar temperament to a Goldendoodle—sweet, easygoing, intelligent, family-oriented and goofy.

My current ALD sire, Levi, is on the small side, as I want to produce small- to medium-sized pups. His Australian Bernedoodles will likely fall into the range of 30-60 lbs. Levi has a wonderful, loving personality and I expect him to contribute those traits to the Australian Bernedoodles. The first litter shows great promise, with more to come in 2014. Over time, and with input from owners of his pups, I will be able to decide whether or not to pursue ALDs further in my breeding program.



And it doesn't end here! While I intend to continue to produce Goldendoodles and Bernedoodles in all sizes, I am also slowly but surely developing a new hybrid line that will be unique to SwissRidge Kennels.



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It goes without saying that the SwissRidge Doodle will showcase all the traits my clients love in a gorgeous, healthy, allergy-friendly package. My own thoroughly-tested, long-lived lines should serve as a solid foundation for this special hybrid. I am making staged progress toward this vision, one exceptional dog at a time, and if all goes as planned, the first litter of SwissRidge Doodles will arrive in 2015.

Celebrating Ginger

This year, one of my all-time favorite dogs, Ginger, turns 17. This is noteworthy because Golden Retrievers are very prone to cancers and rarely reach such an advanced age.

It's also noteworthy because Ginger is simply a great dog. She came to me as an adult, and we had an instant connection, based on Ginger's amazing intuition, intelligence and eagerness to please. True to her breed, she has always loved water, and we've had more hikes together than I can count.

Ginger was a terrific mom to many litters, and by passing along her health and wonderful personality, she generated word-of-mouth and helped SwissRidge grow. I owe her a lot, and am so fond of her that I could not part with her when she retired from breeding long ago. She is enjoying her "golden" years, although our hikes are shorter now. I dread the day she passes.

Ginger's daughter, Lazeeza, a chocolate-colored Goldendoodle, inherited her mom's intuition and intelligence. She spent her first year living with my dad, who then moved abroad. When

he visited last year, they had a very emotional reunion; I was shocked she remembered him after so long.

Lazeeza has delivered consistently wonderful puppies, and when I decided to try creating a new hybrid, I knew she was the one to get me started. She didn't let me down: her Golden Mountain Doodles are beautiful, healthy, intelligent and loving. She's earned a wonderful retirement, starting this fall.

And now there is Willow, daughter of Lazeeza. Willow is one of the calmest pups I've owned, and I see Ginger shining through. Her sire, my Bernedoodle Henry, gave her the tri-color beauty of the Berner, and solid lines from my mom's breeding stock.

If all goes as planned, Willow will carry SwissRidge into a new era next year. With Ginger at the foundation of this evolution, I feel like I can't go wrong.



Left to Right: Willow, Lazeeza, Ginger

SwissRidge on the Move

As demand for both my dogs and services has grown, I've known for years that I would eventually need to leave my current home near Lindsay, Ontario and find a location closer to Toronto. After a four-year search, I finally found the perfect site in Schomberg, Ontario.

The property is ideal for dogs, with acres of beautiful trails and ponds. In the coming weeks, renovations will begin to convert an existing building into a state-of-the-art facility for my dogs. Another building provides indoor training space—a luxury that my partner, trainer Lucas Mucha, will truly appreciate!

If all goes as planned, the SwissRidge pack will migrate from Lindsay to Schomberg by early 2015, and we'll continue our expansion in the coming years.

Good Breeding is Only the Beginning

A well-mannered dog is a pleasure to own and welcome wherever you go. We want to give our clients the tools they need to raise good dogs—dogs that listen and obey. That's why we send every dog home with basic training information, provide even more advice in *Bernedoodles: A Head to Tail Guide*, and offer training programs and services.

We know that raising a well-trained dog is hard work, and that people are leading busy, stress-filled lives with many competing demands. Some may believe owning a dog isn't in the cards for them because they don't have time, energy or skill to get a puppy to the point where it is an obedient companion. Yet having a dog around—a good dog—enhances one's quality of life.



Research shows that owning a dog can reduce stress and improve health.

When SwissRidge clients began asking for training support at all levels, resident expert trainer, Lucas Mucha responded by developing a variety of packages designed to suit your needs.

- If you need a head start in the early days, leave your puppy for an extra month with one of SwissRidge's incredibly patient trainers as part of our popular Imprinting Program.
- If you need one-on-one lessons, Lucas is available in person, or by phone.
- If you need more intensive assistance, bring us your dog—and return to a model of obedience. (We can even pick up dogs from the airport.)
- If you want a perfect dog without doing any of the work, that's now possible too! We have begun training a few dogs to a high level of obedience before they ever leave our care. These "turnkey" dogs come to you fully obedience trained and ready to fit seamlessly into your life.



In short, whether your relationship with your dog needs minor tinkering, or a major overhaul, we can help. Our goal is to ensure that dogs from SwissRidge and beyond are never surrendered by owners because of behavioral issues. We see many dogs

that other trainers have already given up on; no problem is too big to handle.



Please visit www.bernedoodles.com for more information about our training packages and references. Note our special offer: You will receive a 15% discount on any training package if you pay in full before your puppy goes home at 8 weeks of age (*Excludes the imprinting program*).

The Puppy Vault

Members of the SwissRidge Facebook group joke that I hide puppies in a secret vault only to reveal them down the road. The "vault" probably isn't as deep as people think, but I do have a few gems stashed away.



A breeder has the prerogative to hold back a special puppy or two from a litter. Sometimes I exercise that prerogative by keeping a pup to evaluate for my breeding program. Other times, we see that a puppy has such a promising personality that we decide to hold it back for intensive training.

In each newsletter, I'll reveal one of my hidden gems. Today that honor goes to Rosie, a Standard Poodle with a storied past.



Rosie, you see, was an "accident." Naturally, with so many intact dogs on site and specific breeding strategy in mind, we need to be vigilant about keeping would-be lovers apart. But one day, we were foiled.

Rosie's mom, Paris, a dazzling Poodle, was destined for a Bernese match and was, in fact, bred multiple times to a Berner stud.

In due course, she delivered her pups. As they emerged one by one, I was perplexed: they didn't resemble Bernedoodle pups! A DNA test kit soon revealed Rosie's secret tryst with Valentino, her handsome kennel neighbor. We can only speculate about how he accomplished this deed with a fence in between. All I can say is that Valentino is more potent than a Bernese—and that he won't ever have that opportunity again.

On the bright side, while this litter wasn't in the plans it blessed me with some amazing puppies.

Their owners attest that they are smart, social, loving and awesome family dogs that have been very easy to train and a joy to own.



Avia featured above is also from this litter.

I hadn't planned to keep a puppy from this litter, but I had my eye on Rosie. When someone backed out at the last minute, I decided it was meant to be. She has grown into a stunning dog, who is gentle, goofy and full of life. If she passes her health clearances, she will contribute much to my breeding program.

It's ironic that I work so hard to find quality breeding Poodles, only to have two of my finest examples surprise me with this wonderful gift.

Learning and Growing on Facebook

I want to take a moment and celebrate the SwissRidge Facebook group, which has blossomed over the past three years to encompass 2,500 members.

This forum has become a wonderful community where SwissRidge owners share photos, advice and stories. It allows me to stay in touch with owners to see how their dogs are developing, and gives me a chance to weigh in quickly on questions people

raise about their pups.

Often, other members beat me to the punch! SwissRidge owners tend to be engaged, curious, and extremely well-informed, so there are some lively and helpful discussions on subjects ranging from nipping, to pool safety, car sickness, vaccines, training and far more.

Although I am very knowledgeable about dogs, I have to admit that I've learned a thing or two from my clients. In fact, many lively discussions about raw diets for dogs led me to question my long-held view that raw feeding was risky, especially for puppies. While my vets do not endorse a raw diet, I have been troubled by the fact that I am so careful to consume high quality, fresh, organic food myself, but was not providing the same to my dogs.

After a great deal of consideration and research, I recently began feeding trials with a raw diet—a change that necessitated the purchase of six freezers, not to mention a new regime at the kennel. All my adults and a few litters of pups will be eating raw over the coming months.

Years ago, there were negative reports of dogs failing to develop properly, or becoming sick from eating raw food. It's possible that in the early days, the Calcium to Phosphorous ratio was incorrect, vitamins and minerals were not balanced, or people failed to observe the correct protocol to prevent bacterial growth. But I believed that if done correctly, raw food could be the healthiest choice for dogs. Raw food contains vitamins and minerals in their natural state (i.e., not synthesized), as well as enzymes needed for digestion and nutrient absorption. And it doesn't contain preservatives

and fillers. The idea of feeding my dogs a fresh, unprocessed diet became very compelling.

I researched several companies and held minor trials with various brands before deciding to go with **Big Country Raw**, a small family-owned Ontario business. Their facility is immaculate and they use only locally-sourced, antibiotic and hormone-free meats that are human grade and approved by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The company's owners are extremely knowledgeable and helpful. The food is available in speciality pet stores, or can be delivered directly to Ontario residents.

My deep discussions with Big Country's owners have convinced me that their carefully balanced complete diets are the best approach to raw feeding. I am confident that these complete meals contain all the nutrients that dogs, and especially growing pups, need.

(Note: Big Country Raw will be at the doodle romp for those who want more information.)

I have heard that the following American companies provide high quality complete raw meals in the U.S.: Darwin's Natural Sections, Nature's Variety, Primal Raw, or Stella & Chewy's.

If you are considering raw for your dogs, I urge you to do your homework first. I share my vets' concerns that some raw feeders simply offer cuts of meat from the supermarket or butcher, which cannot meet all of a dog's nutritional needs. Too many fatty chicken backs, for example, can lead to Pancreatitis. An incomplete raw diet could seriously affect the development of a growing pup.

It's early days yet, and I will report back on these food trials in my next newsletter. I do believe that wherever possible, we should all be taking a natural approach with our dogs.

Ask Sherry...



Should I get a second dog?

I get calls, e-mails and Facebook questions on a huge range of issues, but this one is becoming increasingly common.



When I began breeding over 15 years ago, a single-dog family was the norm. Now, more and more of my clients have multiple dogs. It seems that people are busier than ever, and while they adore their dogs, they often feel guilty about the time the dog spends alone. Further, one SwissRidge Goldendoodle or Bernedoodle seems to induce cravings for more!

My short answer to the question is "Definitely." Dogs are pack animals and are usually happier in pairs. Watching two dogs play together is one of the great joys of life.

The long answer is more nuanced. First, you need to decide if you have the space, the energy, and the means to cover the costs of maintaining two dogs.

Many say that two dogs aren't much more work than one. But that really depends on the dogs and the training you put into them.

To me, training is a major deciding factor. Is your first dog so well trained that it can serve as a role model? Do you have the time to socialize and train a second dog, and negotiate the adjustment as they get used to each other?

If you already have a well-trained dog, it will make housebreaking a pup easier, burn off the pup's excess energy through play, and redirect much of the nipping you probably endured with your first.

If your first dog is not well trained, you could end up with double-trouble. Worse, if your first dog has any aggressive tendencies, getting a second pup could be very stressful for all concerned. A negative experience with an older dog can affect a pup's temperament for life.



A good breeder will help you find a puppy that suits your current lifestyle and adapt best to your current pack. I normally suggest waiting until your first dog is at least a year old, and well trained.

In general, 'doodles tend to get along well with other dogs. I have many clients who have two of my dogs, and a few have three or four. As someone who owns nearly 40 dogs, I have to admit a house would seem empty with only one!

Ask Lucas...



What collar is best for my pup/dog?

Choosing the right collar for your puppy can be daunting. There are so many to choose from and so many opinions on which is the best.

As far as useless training tools go, flat snap or buckle collars top the list. They can damage the throat of a dog that pulls and should never be used to give a correction. These collars apply pressure to the trachea, the weakest part of the neck, rather than distributing pressure around the neck like a martingale or a Volhard collar.

Harnesses may have a place in dog training for weight pulling, but they

provide even more leverage to a pulling dog. That's exactly what they were designed for. Unless you are training your dog for a weight-pulling competition or raising huskies to pull your sled for the winter... stay away!

I do not believe in using collars or harnesses that mask pulling either. They are a crutch and when taken away will present the symptom again.

My favourite collars for starting a puppy are the Volhard, a martingale, or anything with similar functionality. They are a great way to maintain control safely.

A dog who walks well on the leash understands that tension is not allowed. Doesn't matter if you give them a 20 foot lead or a 3 foot lead. Taking leash tension out of the equation can also solve other problems, like leash aggression.

Happy training!
Lucas Mucha

Notes from the Whelping Room

Love was definitely in the air at SwissRidge this spring, because summer has brought the bonanza of puppies I'd hoped. Right now I have litters of standard, mini and tiny Bernedoodles, and Goldendoodles, too. There are more on the way, because some of my girls are very full-figured right now!

I'd like to say that it's all peace and harmony in our whelping rooms, but nothing is easy when it comes to breeding Berners.

This week, some of my "moms" went on strike. Built for mountain life, they don't enjoy being under the heat lamps that new pups require to

regulate their body temperature. These doggie divas will put their own comfort above the health of their pups, so we had to find a compromise: the moms lie outside the whelping box for part of the day, and we ferry the pups back and forth to feed. Hourly! On top of that, like typical Berner moms, some don't have enough milk. Bottle feeding has become a full-time job around here.

It's a good thing these pups will turn into gorgeous, sweet Bernedoodles that bring joy to a lot of people, because they are hard work in the making. Goldendoodles are a breeze in comparison!

Enjoy your summer, and we'll be back with another edition of the newsletter in the Fall. Hope to see you at the ROMP!
Hugs
Sherry Rupke

Harley and Dizzy's Litter Tiny Bernedoodles



Zoey's and Dizzy's Litter Tiny Bernedoodles



Prada & Valentino's Litter Standard Bernedoodles



Hazel & Hayden's Litter Standard Bernedoodles



Carrie & Levi's Litter Australian Bernedoodles



Nell & Levi's Litter Australian Bernedoodles



Rogue & Levi's Litter Australian Bernedoodles



See more puppy pics on my new website: www.bernedoodles.com

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