

## ADOPTING IVAN!

Adopting an older dog takes as much planning and preparation as adopting a puppy, but both take a slightly different form because you'll be avoiding certain behaviors (all that puppy chewing, nipping and hopefully piddling too!).

Here's what I had on my list during my fairly recent visit to the City Pound....

- A mid-sized dog, NOT a large or extra-large breed. *I LOVE big dogs (Rottweilers are my absolute favorite) but I'm not physically as strong as I was when younger, plus our house is already pretty crowded.*
- A male dog. *We already have two very bossy female dogs, so adding another to the mix would have been asking for trouble!*
- Housebroken or partially housebroken. *He would be living indoors with us and although I work full-time from home, I didn't want to be going outdoors every 30 minutes for a potty break, or have to watch the newcomer like a hawk 24/7.*
- *A friendly dog who could get along with other dogs, and preferably one who was familiar with, or at least not apt to eat, cats. As a multi-pet home this is important.*
- Preferably a dog who NEEDED me, or one who was having extra trouble being adopted. *I have a soft-spot for the under-dog and if I was going to adopt a needy dog, I wanted to be sure and pick one who might be overlooked for whatever reason.*

The two days I spent at the Pound paid off and I brought home a dog who fit every part of my wish list.

He's a Great Dane/Basset Hound mix which is as odd as it sounds, Great Dane head (albeit scaled down a bit) and Basset Hound body and legs. The result is a medium sized dog with a big cuddly head. My daughter says he was made especially for me :)

His slightly odd appearance, combined with the fact that he was also suffering from Cherry Eye (read about his surgery and recovery on [this page](#)), ensured that everyone passed him by.



He'd been in the shelter for over a month (including the pre-Christmas and post-Christmas rush) and even on local TV, but no takers.

Although lots of people looked at him, they all walked away, some laughed others were kinder, but you could see the hurt in his face and the droop of his ears and tail each time (I know because I watched him for hours).

The staff were pretty sure he was housebroken.

If a dog keeps his pen clean whenever he can and tries to 'hold it' until his twice-daily trip to the big outdoors, then they assume he's potty trained.

And he was so gentle and friendly with everyone (human and canine).

I walked him around the cat rooms and although he looked at them, he didn't seem inclined to chase them and was more interested in the people and other dogs.

Plus, everyone - and I mean everyone - at the pound loved him and knew him by name.

When I went up to the front counter with his paperwork in hand everyone cheered and before he left he got a lot of hugs and kisses (yes, the staff at these organizations are amazing!).

Although there were half-a-dozen other dogs on my shortlist, I kept coming back to Ivan. I had a feeling that if I walked out with any other dog I'd be haunted by the memory of him sitting quietly in his pen. I also had a feeling that he'd be there a LOT longer, and even if adopted he may never get the treatment he needed for his eye.

Bottom line is, I'd checked all the boxes on my list so I'd honored the logical side of the equation, the rest of it came straight from the heart.

And I have to say I'm so grateful every day that I chose Ivan. He's the best boy in the world and we're inseparable (he's lying by my feet as I type this). He doesn't chew stuff up, or scent-mark indoors. He loves his bed, his toys and my daughter's big fluffy orange cat. It's great!

Of course there were a hiccups. A couple of housebreaking 'mistakes' during his first week with us, and our Olde English Bulldogge wasn't in love with him at first, but as long as we supervised carefully and limited their interactions to begin with (which is what you want to do when you bring a new dog/puppy home) things went fine.

The surgery for his eye cost a bit more than I was expecting, but it's totally worth it to see both his vision no longer obscured by a big, pink swelling.

Other than that he's been a dream and I hope that if you're thinking about adopting an older dog my experience helps fuel that fire.