

Agility

Living the Agility dream...

Supplied by Rosemarie Baker

Back in 2015 the decision was made by the gopher (John, my husband) and myself to live full time on the road with our six poodles — Cinderella, Touchaye, Smarty Pants (pictured below with Aprille in 2019), Fancy Pants, Cola and Evie — travelling the country with our ute and caravan (right) and attending agility shows. The poodles have coped very well with the confinement of our caravan, now our home.



During the past six years we have experienced all the trials and tribulations one could imagine.

The loss of Cinders (May 2019) and Touchaye (August 2019) within three months of each other was devastating to say the least.

We have travelled to two NZ Dog Agility Champs in the South Island — 2016 in Rakaia and 2019 in Cromwell. Shortly before our trip we introduced an eight-week-old poodle puppy who we named 'Class' aka 'the gorilla' who straight away settled into the nomad life like a dream. On the way down and on our return we competed at various shows. The most memorable one was at the Canterbury Canine Agility Training Society show where Smarty Pants picked up the final challenge we needed to give him his Agility Grand Champion title. I couldn't have been more chuffed!



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During this time we have become experts at using dump stations and laundromats, and, of course, finding veterinary clinics all over the country when needed. The most recent was Cambridge Vet Clinic when we lost our dear wee Evie.

Along the way we have seen and enjoyed such amazing scenery and places of interest that New Zealand has to offer and met some

awesome people that also are permanently on the road, some of whom have become friends who now travel with us at times.

While we do occasionally freedom camp, most of the time we like to stay in New Zealand Motor Caravan Association parks. Because parks are safe and secure we can leave the caravan and go off in the ute and explore. Periodically we return to the Kapiti Coast to catch up with our children, the grandies and doctor's appointments and so on and then take off again to the next Agility show.

Being on the road has its downfalls: COVID-19 lockdown... panic stations! All NZMCA parks were closed during lockdown which unfortunately left us in the lurch. Thankfully, dear friends in Taupo shared their bubble with us on their lifestyle property so we were safe and waited it out. Phew!

Agility training a young dog can be a challenge. I have had an issue with 'Class', aka The Gorilla, our youngest as far as training goes, and have found it extremely hard not being in one place long enough to train and run free.

However, where possible I take every opportunity I can to join in at a local club on their training night and also attend seminars to help him.

To be honest he has been a challenge but hopefully he will settle in time. Would we change being on the road? At this stage, that's a definite no! 🐾

Aprille McGee

