



Evan Keats with Sarg.

Rehoming stories

Story and Photographs by Lisa Jaques

Evan Keats is a Senior Developer for Taska Prosthetics; a prosthetics company specialising in creating robotic hands for amputees. I sat down and had a chat to Evan about what inspired him to adopt a retired Greyhound and how his experience has been so far as an owner.

Evan - when did you first adopt your Greyhound, Sarg, and where did you adopt him from?

I adopted Sarg about three years ago from Greyhounds as Pets (GAP).

What inspired you to adopt a retired Greyhound?

My stepson was involved in socialising the retired greyhounds that were brought through, we went up there for a visit and Sarg sort of picked me out. I'd never actually seen a greyhound up close before, he had a very friendly and curious personality. We weren't looking to adopt then as we didn't have adequate fencing at our current residence so Sarg was adopted out to another family. A few months went by and we moved into a more dog-friendly residence, as it happened, Sarg's adoption didn't work out so he had become available again - my wife and I thought it was fate.

How did you find the adoption process?

It was pretty straightforward, from memory someone came to check that the property was secure and up to standard, then he was delivered to us shortly afterwards.

How did Sarg transition to home life?

He transitioned really well to home life, he was about two years old when we got him. From the information we were given he was a few months into his racing career but had little interest in racing, which is why he was retired. My wife and I provide him with lots of exercise and aside from that he's very happy to lounge around all day! He never barks and is great around young children, he gives them a bit of attention and then quietly hides away in our room.

Has Sarg developed any cool little quirks?

He's become a creature of habit. He's got a favourite rug which he drags it to the middle of the lounge while we're out, he likes to sunbathe on the back doorstep whenever we have nice weather, and his favourite time for a walk is first thing each Saturday morning. He definitely likes routine, and heaven forbid if that



Evan and Sarg with one of the robotic hands manufactured by Taska.

routine changes! As I said before, he seldom barks. One Saturday morning, I was too sick to take him for a walk, he became so frustrated at what was taking me so long that he came into the room, guns blazing barking at me to hurry up. I had to laugh at that.

He sounds like he's got quite a personality, do you have any other stand out moments?

About a year and a half ago my wife and I went to Russia for a month. The first day we were back, he went into a big sulk and completely ignored me, to show me how upset he was that we'd left him. He likes to know where his domestic staff are at all times!

He loves walking. Where we live we have quite a few places where we can let him off the lead, he does a couple of fast laps sprinting backwards and forwards to us so when he gets home he's absolutely pooped. There are a couple of houses that back onto a reserve where we let him off the lead, one has a small and particularly yappy dog. Sarg likes to go up to one corner of the dog's section then sprint across to the other side to get the small dog to chase him backwards and forward. He's a bit of a rascal!

One last question, your job sounds absolutely fascinating and very cutting edge, could you tell me a bit more about the company and how the hand works?

The hand has over 25 built in grip functions, plus the ability to configure custom grips. It is controlled with myoelectric sensors; sensors which when taped to skin detect underlying muscle activity. In brief, the hands are controlled by flexing muscles. We export our hands to Australia and the US and we have customised a version for research hospitals. We've just started selling our hands to Germany which gives us great confidence, as selling robotics to Germany is like selling coals to Newcastle.

What an amazing industry to be involved in. Thank you so much for your time Evan and best of luck with Taska and your greyhound, Sarg.