

Introduction

My first Bernese Mountain Dog Andi came into my life in 1987, and since then I have always shared my life with two or three Berners.

In those years they were still not popular, the few Berners in Italy were mainly imported from Switzerland and there was a complete lack of information about the breed.

Being interested in the history, in conformation and in breeding I started reading and studying everything I could find on the breed and it became immediately obvious that there was much more literature in German, one of the languages of the Mother Country of the Berner, than in any other language. Particularly there was such an enormous amount of information in the famous book by Margret Bärtschi and Hansjoachim Spengler published in 1992 which had sadly never been translated into another language.

I decided to find out as much as I could about this extraordinary breed and make this information available in Italian and also to add my own personal experience with these amazing dogs. The result of this was a book in Italian published in December 2004: "Il Bovaro del Bernese ieri e oggi".

Writing this book was a fascinating experience during which I learned so much and met so many interesting people from countries all over the world who were involved with the Bernese Mountain Dog in different ways, and here I would like to thank all those again who contributed and helped make a success of that first publication. I would particularly like to thank Margret Bärtschi and Hansjoachim Spengler for allowing me to use so much from their book including the drawings and the diagrams. They were always ready to help generously with any information and sources I needed.

People told me that it was so important that all this information was available in English too and all of them kept asking me why I didn't have my book translated into English.

Pat Long was the first person I asked whether it was worthwhile translating my book into English and whether she thought people would be interested in it. She answered "Definitely yes", and has continued to support me all the way through this difficult venture. Margret Bärtschi also encouraged me to bring out my book in English, remarking that several people had attempted English translations of the book she co-authored with Hansjoachim Spengler, but each had given up because they had found the task too difficult.

In this new book about the Bernese Mountain Dog in the English language, I am very pleased to make that long-awaited translation into English part of this book, by including a wealth of material from this classic work which remains invaluable after the passage of almost 20 years, while adding my own updated material. English readers will here find easy access to large portions of the

Bärtschi/Spengler book particularly the chapters dealing with the history of the breed, the Standard and conformation traits; plus the latest research findings and practical experience, bringing the story into a new century. I believe that combining the enduring wisdom of Bärtschi/Spengler with the best current information will help readers to love and appreciate this breed more deeply, and with their new-found knowledge, help their Berners and themselves share a healthy, happy, and satisfying life together.

There were many new people who were such a valuable help and without whom this book would not have been possible.

Rossella Di Palma did a preliminary English translation from the original version of my book in Italian, thus enabling Lindy Kunz and me to be able to work together. Lindy and I seemed to infect each other with enthusiasm and we decided to completely revise and expand the original Italian book, adding much more information and many more new photos and bringing it right up to date. We were very excited about the idea of putting the first translation of Professor Heim's book, "Die Schweizer Sennenhunde", at the back of the book as an appendix; and Margret Bärtschi wrote very interesting explanatory notes to make this book, which was published in 1914, clearer to the readers of today. I am also very proud that a recognized expert in canine orthopaedics like Dr Massimo Petazzoni agreed to write the last chapter on orthopaedic diseases. Both in his veterinary practice and in his research he has had much experience with the Bernese Mountain Dog and has given us the benefit of all this experience in this chapter. Dr Petazzoni has published many articles on canine orthopaedics and been asked to speak at Congresses all over the world.

Apart from those already mentioned I would also like to thank Marco Leonardi who is the best professional dog photographer I have ever known. He understood that I wanted photos showing Berners with lively expressions being active joyful companions as they are in my life.

Also many thanks to the many Bernese Mountain Dog friends who sent me information and photos from all over the world.

My very special thanks are due to Lindy Kunz, not only for being an extraordinary translator but also for sharing with me the same love for the Berners and every single word of this book. We became a good team and started one of the most valuable things in life: a true friendship. I will miss the many hours exchanging e-mails with her late into the night, discussing every statement, every reference and every little thing in search of the most accurate expression.

Without her I could never have published this book in English.

Lindy says she will be eternally grateful to these people:

Christine Matsakidis Blaser, a true child of Emmental, who guided her through the perils of Heim's German and never tired of explaining to her what he meant, Ann Milligan who knew what even the most obscure parts of the canine anatomy

were called in English, and Pat Long just by being Pat and by always being there with moral support and a good idea when she needed one.

The Bernese Mountain Dog is very fortunate to have an open data base in which there are over 71,000 Bernese Mountain Dogs entered from all over the world (as of June, 2010). This is of enormous importance to the breed and therefore I will be making a donation to Berner-Garde Foundation for every copy of this book that is sold.

Silvana Vogel Tedeschi

www.bernertenno.it



*My first two Bernese Mountain Dogs.
From left Hexe vom Eichert called Tuca (*1992) and Andi von der Kaiserburg (*1987)*