

## Dogs Are Goodwill Ambassadors

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Bandit in Solvang Over Memorial Day weekend I took a short vacation to California's Central Coast. My friends and I drove up to San Simeon, stopping on the way in the quaint city of Solvang. After three and a half hours on the road, we were ready for a break to stretch our legs.

We stopped for lunch and then checked out several of the cute stores in Solvang. Imagine my surprise when we walked inside a women's boutique and I spotted a Chihuahua pup. I immediately went up to the owner who was holding him, and asked if I could hold the puppy. Bandit came willingly into my arms and gave me bunches of puppy kisses. I left Solvang in very happy spirits because of Bandit's attention.

We spent the next two days touring Hearst Castle and visiting the seashore where the elephant seals congregate. There were lots of dogs visiting the seals with their owners. I got to pet a few and was impressed by how well behaved they all were.

When we left San Simeon, we decided to stop in Santa Barbara, one of the most beautiful cities on the California coast. We parked on Stearns Wharf and walked to the arts and crafts fair that takes place every Sunday.

Santa Barbara is a very dog-friendly city. I lived there for almost nine years and I was always impressed with the number of dogs and how well cared for they were. People are even allowed to take their dogs into department stores. Restaurants have patios and people often take their dogs with them to dine.

That day was no different, and at the art fair, there were dogs everywhere. Having been away from my own pets for several days, I was in heaven because I got to pet so many wonderful doggies. I met a Mini Aussie, which I had never seen before. There were Pugs, a few Chihuahuas and several Labs. All of the dogs were friendly and their owners even friendlier. I always ask before I approach a dog, and have found that paying attention to a dog is a great way to connect with their owners, too. Sharing a love of dogs seems to really bring people together and makes most experiences more enjoyable.

I hope you and your dog also serve as goodwill ambassadors whenever you have the opportunity.

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