

The Golden Retriever

With its winning smile and versatility, it's no wonder this Scottish creation stays an American all-star year after year.

Jan Mahood

"I know of no breed of dog that supplies a better companion for town or country," stated purebred dog writer and judge Hugh Dalziel. It was true when he said it in 1870 and it's true today, according to AKC registration statistics that have put the Golden at or near the top of the charts year after year.

Zack the Golden epitomizes the sweet nature that makes the breed a favorite. As the sun slips toward the horizon viewed from North Captiva Island off the west coast of Florida, friends and neighbors gather on the beach to mark the passing of Jeff Cowan, who built one of the first homes on this sandy key. Zack gazes into his owner Zeke McDonald's face as the tall, rangy island resident joins the others in reminiscing about their departed friend.

When Jeff's widow Sandy bows her head in sadness, Zack instinctively moves to her side and sits beside her. The setting sun splashes molten gold and magenta on the wet sand at the edge of the darkening sea. Zack's barks accompany the strains of "Amazing Grace" carried on the Gulf breeze as he repeats a scene played out over two centuries, the intuitive response of a gentle-natured Golden to a person's need.

Want to read the full story? Pick up the March 2008 issue of DOG WORLD today, or subscribe to receive the best dog articles, dog news, and dog information every month!