

American Dog Wows 13 Million in Germany

Herder mix becomes an overnight celebrity with unusual trick.

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Sweet Pea, an American mutt from Illinois, has become an overnight celebrity in Germany after she trotted up and down a flight of stairs while balancing a glass of water on her head during a televised German game show last weekend.

The newly minted celebrity, a Border Collie-Australian Shepherd mix, was featured on Germany's most popular game show, "Wetten Dass...?" ("You Bet?"). Contestants vie for cash prizes by betting on the outcomes of unusual stunts.

Sweet Pea is owned by Alex Rothacker, a professional dog trainer who lives in Illinois. "I spent two to three hours a day working with Sweet Pea" in anticipation of the show, Rothacker told a German newspaper. "We worked with different staircases and in various locations. I also got her to balance other items on her snout – things that were harder to balance than a glass of water." He has also trained Sweet Pea to walk up and down steps on her hind legs.

The Monday after the game show aired, a German newspaper ran a story about the "super dog." The headline read, "Can I teach my Dachshund to do that?"

Sweet Pea's appearance drew an estimated 13.5 million viewers.