

THE OUTSIDE DOG

Many potential adopters ask "Is a Dane an 'Outside' dog?" Our answer is, "Not anymore." We only place Danes with people who understand the need of this unique breed to be a part of the family.

Even thousands of years ago when man and all animals lived "outside", there was a cave or den for shelter, and man and dogs lived in small groups or "packs."

The truth is, times have changed but we and the dogs haven't. Both humans and dogs are "pack" animals; we do not tend to be solitary. Domesticated, companion dogs no longer have packs of other dogs to live with, so dogs now need to be members of human families or packs.

Furthermore, both people and dogs are "den" animals. This is the reason that dogs can be housebroken. Dogs want shelter in a safe, secure den – your home - and they want their den to be clean.

Obviously dogs can be forced to live outside, alone and away from their families. But to force this kind of life on a Dane is one of the worst things you can do to him. Such a life goes against a dog's two most basic instincts: the pack and the den. Danes are "people-dogs" and need to be a part of their human family.

If you have any doubts about these ideas, think of the entire whining, nuisance barking, clawing dogs you have seen tied up alone outside. Dogs trying desperately to get their human families' attention, and then just giving up to become hyperactive, listless, fearful, destructive or vicious when the stress of enforced solitude becomes too much to cope with.

It becomes a vicious circle-the dog's behavior, due to neglect, becomes impossible to deal with, so he is isolated even more from his humans.

The rationale given by people who permanently keep their dogs outside is that they will spend time with the pet outside. Even the most well meaning pet owner does not spend significant time outside, particularly when it is raining or cold.

Consequently, under the best of circumstances for the outside dog, a bowl of food and water hastily shoved before him, a quick pat given, and his owner, his WORLD is gone, leaving the animal to spend another 22 or 23 hours alone.

Additionally, a Dane is not physically equipped to deal with wet, snowy or cold weather. They simply do not have enough coat or body fat to keep them sufficiently warm in bad weather.

A dog brings you the gifts of steadfast devotion, abiding love, and joyful companionship. Unless you can responsibly accept a dog's offer of these great gifts, please do not get a Dane. If you already have a dog, perhaps this article will help you to see things from his point of view, and possibly motivate you to change your relationship with him. A sad, lonely, bewildered dog, kept outside, wondering why he cannot be with his family, brings only sadness and unhappiness to the world. No one wants to go through life alone.

Original text by Michigan Humane Society
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