

JAX TAKES TO THE SKIES!

by Allison Kozak

What's a dog to do when he needs to get from San Francisco to New York City? Jax, a 3-year-old GSRNC rescue, found himself in that very situation recently.

The options seemed to be limited with each one more undesirable than the next. The first choice, of course, is flying. However, this would mean spending 7-8 hours kenneled in the cargo hold of the plane while his human flew in the cabin. That didn't seem quite fair. Of course, Jax could ride in the cabin if he pretended to be a service dog, but being a well-behaved, honorable dog he would not stoop to taking advantage of a flawed and much-abused system.

Driving cross-country could be considered. However, since



the only license Jax has is the one issued by San Francisco Animal Care and Control, he would have to rely on a human chauffeur. That would mean a four plus days' drive, a grueling trip to be sure. Also, if his humans didn't have that kind of time, they would have to hire someone to make the trip for them. These kind of transport folks are easy to find but trusting a stranger for a cross-country drive would be scary for both Jax AND his

people!

There must be a better way.... A little research uncovered dog-centric airlines! Yes, this is really a



thing! These airlines are specifically for dogs and their humans. This is a growing industry but, currently, there are only a few in operation. Jax was lucky enough to travel on Bark Air, which was started by the founder of Bark Box, the first company to offer dog subscription boxes.



On the big day, Jax & his mom took an Uber to a private airport in Oakland where they met up with the pilot and the six other dog/human passenger teams. Jax happily trotted up the stairs



into the wide-bodied business jet. After being harnessed to his mom's seat, he settled in for takeoff. Once airborne, the dog stewardess came through the cabin to offer ear rubs and thunder shirts.

The dog stewardess was the best! She delivered lots of pets and bowls of water. She even came through with a puppuccino for everyone (whipped cream with liver treat crumbles on top) and afterwards a bowl of Chompagne (diluted chicken broth), delivered from a fancy bottle! The human passengers got a delicious meal, too.



For the most part, Jax and the other canine passengers were a quiet group. At one point, there was a short chorus of barking, which was discouraged, and everyone settled down again. Bags of treats were everywhere to keep all the passengers happy. Dogs were free to roam the cabin but Jax, in typical GSD fashion, was content to stay at his mom's feet, snuggling with his pitty-mix seatmate, Figgy.

The dogs even had their own potty station (a tray with copious pee pads) next to the human restroom. At one point, the co-pilot had to use the lavatory and it was fun to watch him tip toe through the snoozy dogs sprawled all over the floor and aisle. Dogs take top priority on Bark Air!

In no time at all, it was time for touchdown. The flight was more than an hour shorter than a commercial flight because of the speed and altitude of the smaller jet, and landing at a private airport eliminates those post-flight annoyances (like long walks from the gate). Good boy Jax was even awarded a wing-shaped charm for his collar as well as a Pup Passport with his photo and a stamp for his destination, the Big Apple.



Every dog should be so lucky have this kind of adventure!

