

A woman with red hair, Patricia Clark, is sitting on a light-colored sofa in a rustic wooden cabin. She is holding a mug. To her left, a small black dog is sitting on the sofa. To her right, a large black pig is lying on the floor. The cabin has large windows with curtains and wooden walls.

Patricia Clark of Serenity Equine Rescue in Maple Valley, with Max, a Scottish Terrier, and Miss Piggy, a rescued Vietnamese pot-bellied pig

unconventional pets

## BECAUSE WE FIND GOOD HOMES FOR ANIMALS WHO NEED THEM

For more than seven years, Patricia Clark has run Serenity Equine Rescue and Rehabilitation Center on her farm in Maple Valley. In that time, she and a group of volunteers have saved 146 horses, as well as a half-dozen pigs (including one who slept in Clark's bed). She currently has three pigs: Miss Piggy, Sophie and Peanut. Although she loves her rescue "piggies," she discourages people from getting them as pets, as their needs are often misunderstood and/or neglected in a domestic environment.

**Seattle mag:** Where did your pigs come from?

**Patricia Clark:** The little Vietnamese potbellied pig came from out of a barn in a seizure of about 60 horses, a pretty big [animal cruelty] case in Auburn. The other two pigs were rescued in Arlington. There were four of them about 4 weeks old, found on the side of the road in a

box. So myself and volunteers bottle-fed them for quite some time. Two were adopted, and I have the other two.

**SM:** What is the biggest misconception about having pigs as pets?

**PC:** That they're going to stay small. Pigs may start small, but even my little Vietnamese potbellied pig now weighs 123 pounds, and that's as small as they get.

**SM:** What do they eat?

**PC:** I make salads morning and evening for them, plus protein pellets. It's an unfortunate thing because people think it's cute for them to drink beer or eat candy. When Miss Piggy first came to us, she was so overweight that she could barely walk. They have very small legs, and it hurts them to support those pounds.

**SM:** How do your three pigs interact?

**PC:** Sophia and Peanut are brother and sister; they are joined at the hip. Unfor-

tunately for little Miss Piggy, she was almost 2 when I took her from the situation she was in, and she was by herself, so she doesn't have the same kind of socialization skills. Adopting a single pig is not a good idea; they should be in pairs so they can have friends.

**SM:** Do your pigs ever interact with the horses on your farm?

**PC:** Yes, they do, and it's really cute. Sometimes you see them nose to nose talking to each other, and they get along really well. They've managed to make relationships whether we think it's strange or not.

**SM:** Winston Churchill once said: "Dogs look up to man. Cats look down to man. Pigs look us straight in the eye and see an equal." Do you agree?

**PC:** Yes. My suspicion is that many of them are smarter than the people who own them, and I really mean that.