

What it's  
like to be a

# Hollywood Animal Trainer



When Andrea first found Benny at a shelter, he was really timid, but after a year and half of training, he's become a lot more confident! He was even brave enough to be in Meghan Trainor's "Like I'm Gonna Lose You" video.

*Animal Tales* went behind-the-scenes of this awesome job to learn how an animal becomes a movie star!

**D**o you ever watch movies or T.V. shows featuring cute critters, and wonder: *Could my pet become an actor?*

Professional Hollywood animal trainer Andrea Ver Meer gets to scout out pet talent and teach all sorts of different animals how to become camera ready! Andrea works at Boone's Animals for Hollywood training facility (it's actually a ranch!), where they raise and train animals to become Hollywood stars. She's been on the set of movies, T.V. shows and even a Meghan Trainor

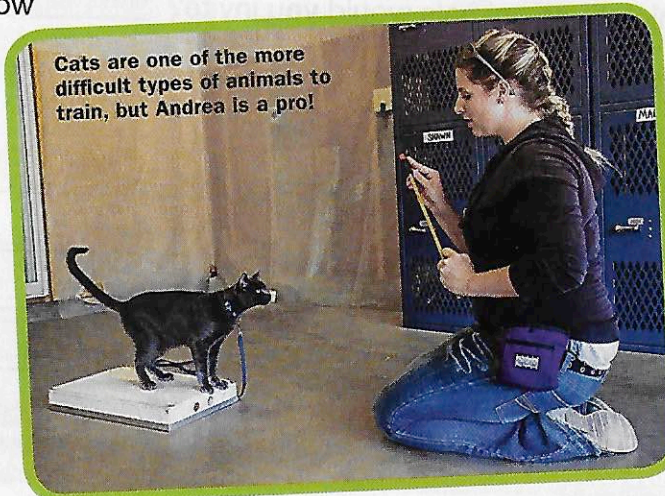
music video with her animals!

No day at work is the same for Andrea. Some days, you can find her on the training ranch, teaching one of their 25 dogs, 20 cats, three birds or other tiny rodents new skills and tricks. Other times, she's

on the set of a big-time movie or T.V. show, coaching one of her animal actors to perform while the cameras roll!

## The Search for Pet Stars

Andrea's job starts with being able to spot young animals that have star potential. "We find a lot of our animals at a shelter or a rescue home," Andrea tells us. So when Andrea is looking for a new animal to train, she'll go to a shelter and keep her eyes peeled for a few key personality traits: "We want to see if they're friendly and outgoing. If they like to be pet



Cats are one of the more difficult types of animals to train, but Andrea is a pro!

and play with their toys, those are signs that they'll be easier to train!"

Once Andrea finds the perfect animal, she starts showing him a lot of love right away. "Building a relationship with the animal is the most important thing," she tells us. These close bonds help make sure that the animals follow her instructions and trust her to keep them safe. That way, when they're ready for their starring roles, they won't get any stage fright!

## Training Time

With a tight bond formed, it's time to bring the animal to the ranch and teach him or her some tricks! "We can get a dog from the shelter ready for the silver screen in just four to six months!" Andrea says. That means, during those months, the pup is learning different commands that will

be useful in a movie. "The most common command they have to learn is called 'mark,'" Andrea explains. To "mark" is to show a dog where he needs to stand, sit or lay down in a certain scene. They also learn how to bark on command, walk alongside human actors and carry things in their mouths. And of course, lots of treats are involved! "The animal is always watching you for their next cue," Andrea explains. "They know if they sit and speak as instructed, they'll get a treat to reward them for a job well done!"

## Camera Ready

Once the animal has learned all of its tricks, it's officially show time! When they're on set, Andrea's

animals know it's time to focus and do their job! "If you've got a well-trained animal, they'll usually do their command right within the first couple takes." That means that when the director yells "Action!" they are ready to perform, just like they were taught.

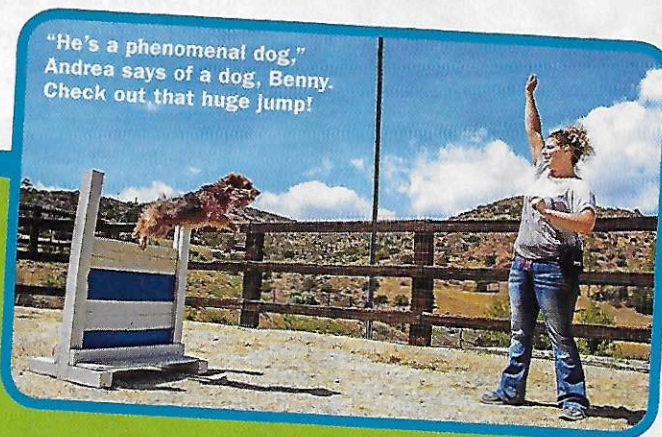
## How to Get Started

If you want to train animals to become actors one day, you can get started right now! Like Andrea explained, bonding with animals is the most important part of doing her job, and that's a skill you can learn at any age. "The more time you spend around an animal, the more comfortable you are with reading their body language, how to interact with them and how to

care for them," Andrea says. So if you don't have a pet of your own, see if you can spend time cuddling with your neighbor's or even visit a local shelter with your parents. Then, read our advice on the left to learn how to train any animal to become a movie star! 🐾

## Unlock Your Pet's Star Potential!

- Show your pet lots of love! This way, he'll be more likely to trust your guidance and follow your commands.
- Practice makes perfect! Decide on the trick you want to teach your pet, and then repeat it over and over. It may take a while for him to get the hang of it, but keep at it — he'll pick it up eventually with enough practice.
- Find ways to motivate your pet! Take note to what he likes and use it as a reward. So if he has a favorite snack, give it to him each time he follows your commands correctly.
- Always compliment your pet on a job well done! So when they try really hard, say "Good job!" If they see that you're happy, they'll know that their



Turn the page to learn more about your favorite animal actors!