

This Boa's For You!

By Kristin Van Alstine

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Damian is no longer allowed to watch City Slickers. A couple of years ago, as I still often do, I found myself once again browsing the reptile category of pet supplies on eBay. I came across another great find from the reptile kingdom, similar to finding my leopard geckos. A seller in a nearby city was auctioning off a large custom made cage, an aquarium and its current inhabitant. Amazed at my luck, I discovered that it was a 1 ½ year old red-tailed boa!

I had five days before the end of the auction, so I started asking many questions and talking back and forth with the seller to find out as much information as I could. He gave me all of the precise details that I asked for and answered all of my many questions. I was then satisfied that I had found a trustworthy snake owner and the right snake for me.

The end of the auction came and I was the highest boa bidder. We made arrangements and he brought my new boa buddy and his cages right to my door the very next morning. I decided to store the massive cage in my garage, for when he outgrows his aquarium at a later date.

One of the numerous questions that I asked was what the snake's name was. He told me it was Damian. So my new snake wouldn't be any more confused or traumatized, I decided to keep his name the same. I also didn't want him to harbor any resentment towards me later on for changing it.

I soon noticed that Damian's sense of decoration was a bit strange. His living space was decorated with sand, a rock and several animal skulls. All that was missing was a cactus and some tumble weeds. I wasn't sure if he was trying to convey that these were his previous victims and I should watch my back, or that he was a Wild West snake outlaw of some kind. I had never seen a snake of his species housed in that manner, as he was pretty far from being a desert snake. So, for his own good, I switched out the sand and redecorated his cage with more appropriate substrate and surroundings.

Years later, Damian is still vibrant and healthy, and has a great appetite. So far, he's never met a rat that he didn't like – and then devour. He is feistier than my ball python Xiaoyu, but he is still fairly well-mannered and has never tried to bite me. He has also been a perfect addition to my "Ark."

I have failed to fill my home with "two of everything" yet, which is probably a good thing. Snakes are like a gateway drug ... er, animal ... leading to the obsession of collecting more and more snakes. What's next? Any suggestions? Perhaps a Kenyan sand boa, or a carpet python, or a rainbow boa ... somebody please stop me!

-The Toad Talker

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