

THE ART OF BUYING A PUPPY (or LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP)

DO YOU REALLY WANT A DOG? Adding a dog to your life will be a daily responsibility for at least 10 years. Take this quiz to examine your motives for wanting a dog.

- 1. WHAT WILL BE THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THIS DOG?**
Will the dog be a one-person dog or will the dog coexist with several others of various ages and personalities?
What size and shape of dog appeals to you?
Is anyone residing in your household allergic to pets?
- 2. WHAT OTHER EXPECTATIONS DO YOU WANT THE DOG TO FULFILL?**
Will the dog be used for breeding, dog shows, field trials, obedience, therapy work or other special purposes?
Will your dog be your companion, protector, status symbol or surrogate child?
How active is your lifestyle? Do you want a dog that can share in your athletic activities or be a couch potato?
- 3. HOW MUCH TIME CAN YOU DEVOTE EACH DAY TO A DOG?**
How much active time can you devote to the dog (training, grooming, walking, playing, health care)?
How much casual time can the dog share with you (companionship)?
Would you enjoy spending time grooming a longhaired dog, or is wash and wear your style?
Does your job demand extensive travel or a lot of overtime?
- 4. CAN YOU AFFORD TO TAKE CARE OF A DOG ON YOUR BUDGET?**
How much disposable income can you devote to a dog?
What are the expenses likely to be?
- 5. WILL YOU BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE HOUSING THROUGHOUT A DOG'S LIFETIME?**
Does your current housing permit pets?
Are you settled, or are you likely to change jobs or relocate within the next few years?
Are you willing to make extra effort to find suitable housing to accommodate a dog?
Is your neighborhood suited for dog ownership, or do particular neighbors or conditions exist that make dog ownership challenging or impossible?
Can you safely contain a dog that may like to jump fences or could push out a screen?

WHICH BREED IS FOR YOU

You may already have a breed in mind, one which attracts you because of its beauty or personality. Examine your lifestyle and circumstances. Are you good with your hands and would you enjoy the extensive grooming required by some breeds? If not, can you afford to pay for professional grooming? Do you have a large exercise area for a very active dog?

Suit the temperament of the breed to your own. Each breed was developed for a particular purpose and has a temperament suited to the work it was designed to do.

How do you find out about the various breeds? The American Kennel Club's "THE COMPLETE DOG BOOK" is usually found in libraries, as are breed specific books. Contact local dog clubs and meet owners and breeders. Go to dog shows and events to see dogs in action. Talk to local veterinarians.

BREEDER SELECTION

Now that your homework is done, where do you find this special pup? Commercial establishments (pet shops) are out to make money. You will not be able to see the parents of a puppy or know anything about its lineage. Local dog clubs and veterinarians can help you

find a breeder. Some breeders have several brood bitches and others may have only one or two. The breeder may keep a stud dog or may choose to send the bitch to another breeder's stud to be bred.

How can you evaluate the breeder? Both breeders of large and small dogs can provide you with a fine specimen or can sell you a poor one.

1. Visit the kennel. Is it clean? Do the dogs have water? Are the dogs friendly? Same applies whether they are in a kennel or are raised in the house.
2. Good breeders will ask you lots of questions before they agree to sell you a pup, such as questions about your lifestyle and how and where the pup will be kept. Some may even insist that you have a fenced-in yard before they agree to sell you a pup. Be prepared to answer lots of questions. A good breeder wants his/her puppy to go to a good home.
3. Ask to see and visit with the parents of the pup you want to buy. The sire may not be on the premises. What is the temperament of the mother and of any relatives that are at the kennel? Are they shy, aggressive, hyperactive? What is the physical condition of the parents?
4. Ask to see the pedigrees of the breeding stock. Ask the breeder to explain the pedigrees to you. Are there any working titles or champions in the lineage?
5. Read the various breed books for common genetic defects in the breed (i.e., hip dysplasia in large dogs; eye problems in Collies and Poodles). Ask if the sire and dam's eyes have been examined by a veterinarian Ophthalmologist. Ask about elbow and hip x-rays and the dog's CERF certificate. If the breed is genetically predisposed to any other defects, ask about that. Does the breeder offer a guarantee? If so what are the usual terms?

PUPPY SELECTION

You have decided on a breed. You feel you have found a good breeder. You may have to wait for that ideal pup. Dogs do not produce on demand. A well bred, healthy, well socialized pup is worth waiting for. Here is what to expect from the breeder:

1. Socialization of the pup: exposed to common household and outside sounds and sights, different people and to children.
2. The pup will have been wormed and have had at least one immunization shot (depending on age). A health/medical record should be given to you.
3. The pups will have been examined by a veterinarian and have a certificate of health.
4. Written care and feeding instructions; a small supply of food.
5. Copy of pedigree and pup's registration form.
6. Some breeders insist on a spay/neuter contract and will not give you the registration papers before this is done. Sale contract is signed by both you and the breeder.
7. Most contracts allow you to take the pup to a veterinarian within a specified time (1 week or so) to validate its health.
8. Encouragement and help during the adjustment period and when problems may arise.
9. **A HEALTHY, WELL BRED, SOCIALIZED PUP, 7 WEEKS OR OLDER.**