



SELECTING A BREEDER



530-477-5683

561 IDAHO-
MARYLAND RD.
GRASS VALLEY
CALIFORNIA
95945

Contact the National (insert breed name here) Club or (insert breed name here) Club of America. They can advise you on the breed standard, suggested health testing and direct you towards resources to locate breeders, i.e., websites, etc. Presumably the breed clubs will not recommend a breeder that is not a member of their organization, and in this case (or in addition to), using breed forums is a great idea. Not being a member of a breed club doesn't mean a breeder is substandard.

Things to look for in a reputable and/or responsible breeder:

The breeder should display a lifetime commitment to their breed and puppies. This means the breeder will take their puppies back should the purchasing owner run into any problems down the road.

The breeder's sole source of income may or may not be puppy income.

The breeder has relatively clean and appropriate facilities taking into consideration that they probably have a lot of dogs. Shelter should be appropriate for the climate and the breeder's individual circumstances, in other words, a breeder working from home may not have a lot of shelter outside if they bring their dogs inside during poor weather conditions.

There should be no obvious cages, filth, etc. Keep in mind that crates and x-pens are often used and are helpful tools with multiple dogs and litters of puppies. Cages are in reference to rabbit style hutches/cages often found in puppy mills. If dogs are crated while you are there, question why – are they aggressive, in heat? Do they have toys and mental stimulation, blankets, etc.?

Dogs should all appear healthy, active, have good coats and bright eyes and be socialized appropriately for their age. Clearly dogs that are outside/playing and active will likely be somewhat dirty, so use common sense when evaluating the dogs' hygiene. Avoid dogs with skin rashes, goopy eyes, and miscellaneous discharges. These symptoms should serve as a red flag.

Chilled and frozen semen are often used in modern day breeding, therefore the old concern to be sure that both bitch and stud are present on the property is no longer valid. It actually may serve as a warning if both the bitch and stud are on the property. In the event that both bitch and stud are located on the premises, it might be helpful to ask if the bitch has ever been bred to an outside dog and if not, why? At large breeders with several studs and bitches we could expect that the breeder is only using their stock on hand, not outside sources, but that would not be as large of a concern.

A reputable and/or responsible breeder should not do a 1st breeding under 18 months of age for males and under 2 years of age for females.

The breeder should have a good relationship with a good veterinarian who keeps detailed records. We feel that the breeder should make records of the bitch and stud available to the potential buyer if requested. The potential buyer will likely need to have the help of their veterinarian to interpret the records.

General health testing is provided through the Orthopedic Foundation of America (OFA) and should be pursued (easily looked up) for the bitch and stud of the prospective puppy. The organizations name implies that only orthopedic (bone) diseases are tracked in the database, however the database actually covers diseases of the eyes, heart, ears, thyroid and more. A responsible or reputable breeder will gladly guide a prospective puppy purchaser to that information. Keep in mind it is common practice to NOT post failures, so if you see a dog posted with hips and not elbows, it *could* be an indication that elbows failed, or vice versa.

Ask the breeder what health issues they are trying to minimize in their line or why they bred a particular pair and how/why that pairing might improve upon the breed.

Read the Breed Organization of America's Code of Ethics. Be sure to insert your breed name to find the correct breed organization.

A reputable/responsible breeder will ask a lot of questions of a potential puppy buyer and likely will require a home visit to meet your family and additional pets. They don't mind answering questions about their breed or educating people about their breed. A breeder of this caliber will also be happy to talk about their dogs, the good, the bad and the ugly. They will also determine if you are a good fit for their dogs given breeds and individual personalities.

In short, the best bet is to pursue a breeder that does health testing and their dogs fit the breed standard and have the temperament of the original breed.

Some red flags to be aware of:

Multiple breeds at the same facility and/or producing multiple litters per year should elicit concern.

Internet purchases* - if a breeder doesn't require any contact with you and is willing to take your money and ship you a puppy (as easily as a pair of pants from Old Navy), we recommend you pass.

*A reputable/responsible breeder may be located via the Internet, however they will require further contact with a potential puppy buyer to ensure you are a proper fit for their puppy and vice versa.

If you are looking JUST for the breed standard (a great quality home pet), pursue a breeder that shows their dogs and has champions (proving unbiased confirmation of the breed standard). These dogs do not necessarily have to be AKC registered.

AKC registration is *only* useful for tracing pedigree and AKC registration qualifies individual dogs to be shown. If you plan on showing a dog you'll need to buy a puppy that is or qualifies for AKC registration. AKC registration does **not** mean the dog conforms to breed standards. AKC registration does not prove a dog is a well bred dog. Keep in mind the AKC database of information is provided by the breeder and papers can be "scalped" by over-registering litters.

Remember, it is the responsibility of the puppy purchaser to research the breed and learn as much as possible before diving head first into a breed that may or may not be right for you. A breed that is adorable may not fit your lifestyle and you need to do your homework before bringing home any dog.

Please call us if we can be of any help in your search for a new family member.