

Tips for Buying From a Breeder

As a Pit Bull advocate, I do not endorse the breeding of dogs. There are way too many dogs in shelters, foster homes and being euthanized every day to justify the need for the breeding of more dogs. If you are really interested in getting a dog, and feel you must have a puppy, your first try should be a rescue organization or your local animal shelter. Your local breed-specific rescue can be a great resource for puppy adoptions, and if you let them know of your interest they will often add you to a waiting list and conduct any pre-adoption house checks/paperwork before a suitable dog has even arrived. Puppies are usually not that hard to find, but be prepared to deal with some serious scrutiny. Good rescues will not allow great pups into the arms of a potentially horrible owner.

Despite all of these great arguments for steering clear of breeders, I know that many people out there will still want to purchase a puppy from a breeder. Here are a handful of tips to consider when buying a dog from a breeder. I would suggest the breeder meets all of the criteria on the checklist before you go ahead with buying, and definitely head for the hills if at least 8 out of the 10 are not met.

Responsible Dog Breeders:

They will want to meet you and your family. A responsible breeder will show genuine concern for placing their puppy in your home. Do not be surprised if a breeder wants you to come by their property more than once and asks to schedule a visit to see the home where their puppy will be living.

Do genetic testing and do not breed dogs that have not been completely tested and shown free of common defects. Testing for hip dysplasia and other genetic and hereditary disorders should be done on both parents prior to breeding the dogs. Any breeders that does not perform these tests is not looking out for the best interest of the animals they are breeding and is most likely just looking to make some extra cash, instead of breeding great dogs for great people.

Only breeds proven, stable, mature dogs. No dog under the age of two should ever be bred, under any circumstances. This can lead to problems with not only carrying the puppies, but also during the weaning period, as the mother may not be mature enough to understand her new role as mother. Make sure you see both of the parents and confirm their ages with written documentation provided by the breeder.

Breedings are planned 1 to 2 years in advance and they rarely breed. Rare means one every one to three years. It is inhumane and cruel for female dogs to constantly be carrying puppies, in addition to the medical risks of multiple, close pregnancies.

Will have a list of reputable references. If they can not or will not provide you with at least 5 or 10 references, leave. And do not just go by what it says on their website, anyone can post a bogus comment on a website and make it sound like a wonderful reference. You should have the ability to contact these people and find out their experiences with the breeder, as well as how their dog is doing.

Offer continued help with their dogs. A real breeder that cares about their animals will consider their pups to be part of their family. They will want to know how their dogs are doing and will offer their assistance for any problems, questions or issues that may arise in the future. If you have a question, you should be able to pick up the phone or email to get an answer.

They are knowledgeable about every aspect of breed, including health issues/defects; they research genetics and health issues when choosing their breedings. A good breeder will know their dogs inside and out, and should speak that way.

Support their local rescue. This is a big one!! If they don't support rescue directly or the idea of rescue, they need to really look at why they are breeding.

Their pups' pedigrees are filled with dogs who have obtained show titles/working certificates. They will never breeds dogs without "papers".

They will be "Into" Dogs. In other words, they actually do something with their dogs. They don't have them tied up or has house pets. Their dogs are show dogs, sport dogs, etc... and they have titles to prove it.

