

# Breeders

## Ethical / Conscientious Breeders

- Strive in each and every breeding to achieve the highest quality possible relative to the breed standard for conformation, trainability and temperament, in order to maintain our breed's characteristics.
- Use only physically sound, mature dogs of stable temperament for breeding. These characteristics are rarely, if ever, determined before the age of two for females.
- Continue to educate themselves regarding genetic diseases pertinent to the breed including, hip and elbow dysplasia. Documentation of hip and elbow screenings should be available to prospective puppy buyers. It should consist of an OFA, OVC or Penn Hip report and/or a letter of evaluation from a board certified Veterinary Radiologist.
- Apply the same high standards to outside bitches sent to their stud dogs as they apply to their own breeding stock.
- Match each puppy's personality as carefully as possible with a compatible buyer/family. Temperament testing of a litter before puppies are offered for sale is encouraged.
- Take appropriate steps to have each puppy examined by a licensed veterinarian for general health prior to placement. Each puppy should be vaccinated and de-wormed by a veterinarian.
- Encourage buyers of pet puppies to spay/neuter. Methods should include written spay/neuter contracts, limited registration and/or spay/neuter rebates.
- Endeavor to gain personal knowledge of the temperament and health of every dog they breed, or to which they breed, in order to gather information on which to base future breeding decisions. They share this information fully and honestly with other breeders and with prospective buyers.
- Sell breeding prospects to knowledgeable, ethical and experienced persons or are willing to help educate and guide novices. They should at any time accept the return of any dog/bitch their breeding program produces and they should always help when relocation is needed.
- Do not engage in misleading or untrue advertising and do not use GSDCA membership as a marketing tool.
- Do not sell, supply, donate or surrender any dog for which they are responsible to a pet shop, catalogue house, wholesale dealer in dogs, Humane Society or to a laboratory. They should have reasonable assurance that each individual receiving a dog will provide a home with appropriate shelter, restraint, control and responsible care.
- Encourage puppy buyers to go to puppy obedience classes to help their puppies to become better canine good citizens. The achievement of a Canine Good Citizen certificate should be encouraged.

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## Will a Breeder Ask Me Questions?

Conscientious breeders want the best available home for their puppies. Expect them to ask you questions about fenced yards, and the type of work that you and/or your spouse do for a living. This determines the amount of time you will have available for your new addition. There are very important items that should be supplied by the breeder.

## Breeders will typically give you the following items:

1. A signed pedigree
2. A current Health Record; including de-wormings and vaccinations.
3. American Kennel Club registration papers or application
4. Sales contract. The type of contract varies and must be mutually agreeable to the breeder and buyer. Much depends on what you expect from the puppy (show, pet, or performance).
5. Feeding schedule including the type and amount of food.
6. Copy of OFA certification of sire and dam, if available.

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## Unethical Breeders

When you talk to breeders about their puppies, there are a few warning signs that you may be dealing with a disreputable, unethical, or irresponsible breeder:

*The “breeder” lacks knowledge about the breed and the Breed Standard*

*The “breeder” shows ignorance or denial of genetic defects in the breed.*

*The “breeder” has no involvement in dog sports*

*The “breeder” doesn’t let you observe the puppies or adults. (Since homeowners insurance and local laws vary greatly, a refusal to let you visit the kennels may not, in and of itself, be a bad sign. You should ask for and receive a satisfactory explanation.)*

*The “breeder” doesn’t ask any questions about you, your family, lifestyle or accommodations for a dog.*

*The “breeder” has no documentation of health testing and cannot provide a pedigree.*

*The puppies are not social or look sickly.*

### How to read those ads. A few more things to look out for.

“Champion lines” - look instead for Champion sired or Champion parents. “Champion Lines” means there is one dog somewhere in that puppy’s family that was a champion - it says nothing about the quality of the parents at all. Anyone can buy a puppy from a champion, but it does not mean that they have any other interest in the breed but to bank on the name and make money. The puppy may have been sold as a pet and an unethical person did not have the dog spayed/neutered and is still breeding puppies. Having a Champion in a pedigree is like having a billionaire relative. It doesn’t mean that you are rich unless each generation from that relative has passed down the money.

“AKC Registration” or “AKC Papers” - So what? AKC registration does not guarantee quality. AKC papers are much like the title of a car; papers are issued to the junked Chevy on blocks in your yard just as easily as they are on a brand new, shiny Jaguar. AKC does not control breeding, approve litters, or guarantee temperaments. Unfortunately, in the hands of some unethical breeders, it doesn’t even guarantee that the dog is purebred. AKC Registration is automatic if you buy from a reputable breeder - they will provide all necessary paperwork when you buy a puppy. It is not a selling point, and shouldn’t be treated as one.

Be wary of other “registrations,” as well. There are several groups that are registering dogs, even mixed breeds, for a fee. This registration means nothing, and is of no value to you. Not that AKC papers really mean much, either.

“Extra-Big”, “Extra-Small” - breeders trying for extremes are rarely raising healthy dogs, and any ad that has to stress the size and weight of the dog to sell the puppies is suspect. Usually, these dogs are outside of the breed’s norm and are subject to their own medical problems due to excessive size or lack of it.

“Rare” - Why? Are there too many defects for the animal to be bred? What kind of problems does this “rare” color or size entail? Medical? Behavioral? Shop with care.

“See Both Parents” - This is not usually a good thing. Rarely will a good breeder have the luck to own both dogs for the perfect litter. If you can see both parents, it may mean that the person had two dogs in the backyard and didn’t supervise them carefully enough, resulting in puppies, or that they bred to a dog of convenience they already owned.

There are some good and very reasonable reasons to have both parents on site. However, you need to ask the right questions and understand why this is true. If the breeder doesn’t have an answer, or the answer is something like, “Well, they were just such cute dogs . . .” or “We bought another dog so we could have puppies,” you need to evaluate whether this breeder is doing the right thing. They might be, they might not. It’s up to you to ask.

“Must go now!” - Why? Are they too big to be cute anymore? Need more money? Is there a problem? Usually because there are more on the way. Be very wary of this one.

*Last Updated on Sunday, 19 August 2012 18:02*

## Types of Breeders

In your search for a puppy, you will run across different types of breeders. It's important to be aware of the pros and cons of each. We encourage you to buy a puppy from a 'reputable hobby breeder' or 'experienced breeder' rather than a puppy mill, commercial breeder or backyard breeder. Here's why:

Trait	Puppy Mill	Commercial Breeder	Backyard Breeder	Reputable Hobby Breeder	Reputable Experienced Breeder
Motive for Breeding	To supply pet stores and make a profit.	To supply pet stores and make a profit.	To produce puppies for profit, or so their kids can experience "the miracle of birth," or to have another just like one of the parents.	To better the breed and continue a well thought-out plan.	To perfect a specific type to leave a legacy.
Breed Club Member	Hardly ever.	Has a network of business contacts instead.	May masquerade as a member.	Yes and extremely dedicated.	Yes and extremely dedicated.
Mentor	Not interested in breed improvement.	Does not specialize in specific breed.	Works independently, lacks guidance.	Invites knowledge.	Is a mentor, writes books or articles, conducts seminars.
Breeds to the Standard	Uses any available stock.	Focuses on general appearance.	May not even be aware of the breed standard. Breeds to any convenient dog.	Strives towards the ideal.	Often helps to define it.
Activity in dog related activities (shows/trials, rescue)	Does not need to promote establishment; sells to brokers, pet shops, etc.	Does not need to promote establishment; sells to brokers, pet shops, etc.	Often rescues only to attain more stock. Rarely attends shows or trials.	Shows and trials to objectively test breeding stock.	Often judges, provides seminars, writes articles, and willingly mentors serious Hobby Breeders.
Knowledge of the Breed	Often pretends to know some.	Claims that it's not important.	May share false or incomplete information.	Studies continuously.	Impacts the breed for many decades with knowledge of dogs over many generations.
Sells pets with spay/neuter contract and tries to stay in touch with new owners	Often issues papers via generic "registries" with less stringent requirements.	All pups sold have full breeding rights.	May charge more for "breeding" papers.	Yes, and diligently follows up on progeny.	Always differentiates breed/pet quality and insists on frequent updates.
Keeps up with health and temperament issues affecting the breeding and provides in-depth guarantees	No need to; mostly supplies brokers and pet shops.	Meets minimum standards as required by state law.	May refuse to acknowledge most problems. Considers shows and trials as too "political."	Goes above and beyond standard requirement.	Maintains a solid support system - accepts full responsibility for every puppy produced.
Performs health testing for all breeding stock for genetic diseases affecting the particular breed.	No interest, may offer papers as proof of quality. Papers alone are not proof of quality.	No interest. May provide undocumented paperwork for appearances sake.	Is unfamiliar with health testing usually statements of good health are stated to impress consumers.	Intensive testing always a priority.	Often initiates club sponsored seminars and clinics. Intensive testing always a priority.

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Maintains records on all dogs in gene pool including progeny.	Often supplies brokers and pet shops, records unavailable.	Dogs and puppies are often auctioned off in lots, records unavailable.	Focuses mostly on current dogs, no records or knowledge of genes.	Attempts to continuously track every puppy produced.	Bases entire breeding program on extensive gene pool data.
Clean environment always maintained	Minimum standards vary greatly in cleanliness.	Minimum standards maintained for state inspections.	Conditions may vary greatly depending on available income, usually makeshift accommodations.	Usually "home raised with love" and well cared for. Clean, healthy and mentally stimulating environment.	Clean, healthy and mentally stimulating environment.
Expected longevity with any particular breed	Will continue as long as the sales are coming.	Depends on popularity of specific breeds.	Unrealistic expectations - easily disillusioned.	On a mission-plans to stay for the long haul.	Involved with the breed / breeding for decades - makes a lifetime commitment.
Health guarantee provided	No, it cuts into profits.	7-day guarantee mandated by state.	No health guarantee beyond proof of first set of vaccines, if that. Not qualified to give advice if a problem arises.	Offers written guarantee and is available to answer questions to new owners. Good knowledge of history in dogs.	Extensive knowledge of health history, offers replacements to owners of genetically affected dogs.
Ability to meet the parents of the litter	If available, may be in poor physical condition.	If available, dogs are not used to contact with people.	May or may not be well loved and cared for companions, often unwilling to show entire litter or parents to buyer.	Shows friendly mother and entire litter in clean environment; stud dog too, if in residence. Helps buyer choose appropriate puppy.	Can explain how breeding was planned to emphasize specific qualities and can speak at length about how puppies compare.
What you can expect after purchase	Nothing, may not be able to contact at all.	No concern for dog after sale is final.	Tells you if you can't keep it to take it to the pound or shelter.	Available for questions, and wants to keep in touch. Will take back dog or puppy at any time.	After purchase will help with training and grooming, available for all questions and knows the answers.
Price	Lowest end of range.	Priced according to market, but is marked up from original source for profit.	Mid-range to move puppies quickly.	High end of mid-range.	Price will not reflect all that is invested.