



Puppy Buying Guide:

Choosing Pedigree Puppies for Sale

Pedigree dogs make up 75 percent of the 8 million strong dog population in the UK and there are lots of reasons why they are so popular. First among these it that pedigree dogs are predictable in terms of their size, grooming, training and exercise needs, which are all important considerations when choosing the right dog for your lifestyle.

Health information & concerns

Just as pedigree dogs have predictable care needs and characteristics, we also know, because there is data about their health and ancestry, which inherited problems individual breeds might be more likely to encounter. Whilst many dogs will lead very healthy lives you want to make sure that you buy from a responsible breeder, who has taken all of the steps that they can to minimise the risk of inherited conditions and who have tested their dogs for common conditions associated with the breed.

Scientists at the Kennel Club's Genetics Centre at the Animal Health Trust develop DNA tests that help to give puppy buyers and breeders the ability to test for common conditions and the Kennel Club runs health screening schemes in conjunction with the British Veterinary Association. The Kennel Club Assured Breeder Scheme outlines the tests that are recommended and required for different breeds and you should check to ensure that your breeder is using these on their dogs before they breed. Armed with knowledge about the parents' health you will maximise your chances of getting a healthy puppy. It is no less important for crossbreeds. You need to insist that the breeder shows you the health test results relevant to the breed of each of the parents before you buy a puppy.

Choosing the right breeder

Finding the right breeder is just as important as finding the right breed. The breeder you choose will ensure that your puppy has the best possible start in life, and will be less likely to suffer from health and behavioural problems.

Kennel Club Assured Breeders have all agreed to follow responsible breeding practice. Breeders who are part of the scheme are the only breeders in the UK who agree to follow good practice when breeding their dogs and to have a Kennel Club inspector check their premises, to ensure that they are upholding the scheme's standards. The Kennel Club has UKAS accreditation for certifying breeders on the scheme, which means that it is recognised by the government's sole national accreditation body as being a reliable and robust assessor.

Kennel Club Assured Breeders will give the dogs they are breeding from the required health tests for their breed, keep them in clean and comfortable whelping conditions, socialise their puppies and offer a full after sales service. However, not all breeders choose to be part of the scheme so it is important that you do your homework when you are buying a puppy, as it can otherwise be incredibly difficult to separate the good breeder from the bad.

Puppy farming

It is estimated that as many as one in five people could potentially have bought their puppy from an irresponsible breeder, or puppy farmer, who breed purely for profit and who do not care about the health and welfare of their pups or breeding bitches. These breeders will not take any steps to protect the health and welfare of their puppies and may keep the breeding bitches in cramped and filthy breeding conditions.

Puppy farmers will often operate through dealers who will sell the puppies from internet sites, or pet shops, for example. So it is essential to see the puppy with its mum, in its home environment and to check the breeder's credentials before you buy.