

CHOOSING A DOG

the right companion for your family

Research Research Research

Research. All breeds have been bred with a specific purpose in mind. Make sure that the basic character of the breed you are interested in fits in with your lifestyle.

- Don't get a Mastiff if you run 5 miles every morning and want a companion!
- Don't get a Jack Russell terrier and wonder why he isn't a couch potato!
- Don't get a Greyhound and wonder why he wants to chase every squirrel in the park!
- Don't be surprised when your border collie starts herding your children!

Research the health issues for the breed you are interested in. Pug-faced dogs may have respiratory issues. Large and giant breed dogs are more prone to hip problems. Dogs with excessive skin wrinkle may be prone to skin issues. Understand these problems and what, if any, health test can be done to minimize the risks of these health issues. Some health test results are stored and searchable online at offa.org

Research breeders and meet the dogs in person. Attend dog shows so you can see many dogs in one place. Visit infodog.com to find a local dog show. Go to akc.org to get the names, addresses and websites of breed clubs. These clubs can help point you in the right direction of a reputable breeder. See if there is a Yahoo! list where owners and breeders of the breed you are interested help each other. These lists can be a great resource.

Pet Store vs Breeder vs Shelter/Rescue

When you buy a dog, you are looking to add a new member to your family. A pet who will, hopefully, be part of your family for many years to come. You want a dog whose breeder considered health, temperament and breed type before doing any breeding! It can be guaranteed that puppies sold in pet stores were bred first and foremost to make money not improve the breed. Any reputable breeder who has taken the time and effort to health test and do all the work necessary to breed healthy, well-tempered pups that are good representatives of their breed would NEVER sell to a store. The breeder would have no control over who bought the pups. A reputable breeder wants to be sure that the pups go to good homes, that they will never end up in shelters and a good breeder is there for the owners throughout the dog's life.

There are many dogs in shelters — many of these are even purebreds. Every AKC breed has a rescue group which can be contacted through the breed's parent club. For people who want to give a dog a second chance at a happy home, or don't want to go through the puppy years, rescuing a dog is a great option. Families have found fantastic lifelong companions this way. Many dogs have been put up for adoption through no fault of their own. They may have been the wrong breed for the family or perhaps the original family had a lifestyle change. Search shelters via petfinder.com or find the breed's rescue contacts through the breed clubs listed at akc.org

Purebreed vs Designer Dogs vs Mixed Breed

Pure breed dogs have been bred with very specific tasks in mind and each breed has a standard that every breeder strives to conform to. There is consistency within these breeds. This consistency applies not only to looks but to temperament as well.

Designer dogs are mixed breed dogs with fancy names and price tags. These are not recognized by the AKC. There is no consistency in breedings in type or temperament. There is no guarantee when crossing breeds that you will get the best of both breeds, you may wind up with the worst characteristics of both breeds.

Take the puggle for example. What would the purpose be to cross the pug and the beagle? To create cute puppies? All puppies are cute. What you may wind up with here is a dog who will catch a scent and be gone and cannot take the heat. Or the American mastiff. This dog is a mix of the Anatolian shepherd, a fiercely loyal dog bred to protect its family and very suspicious of strangers, to a mastiff, a giant dog with significant mass and strength. According to the breeders you get a dry-mouthed dog but is that worth the possible disastrous temperament mix of these dogs?

The designer dogs are rarely health-tested. They are sold for as much as, if not more than, a purebred dog. You may as well go down to your local shelter and give a dog that is desperate for a home a good life. Put that extra money towards obedience training!

Prepared by Mastiffs Unlimited New York.
Contact us at: www.mastiffsunlimited.org

For information on other breeds go to: akc.org
For information on shelters go to petfinder.com

After You've Chosen Your Dog

After you've brought your dog home, keep in touch with your breeder, visit the vet regularly and take the time to go to positive training classes. You and your dog will benefit from a long relationship based on trust, understanding and undying loyalty!

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