



Dalmatian Club of America

Questions to ask a Breeder...

After deciding to buy a pure bred puppy, the next big question is “Where do I get one?” The answer is “From a good breeder.” Information on how to identify good breeders can be viewed from the “Find a Dalmatian” button on the Dalmatian Club of America website homepage, select “Good Breeder 101” and take a moment to familiarize yourself with the qualities of a dedicated and knowledgeable dog breeder. Once you begin to inquire about puppies, and find one you want to know more about and meet, it will be important to know what questions to ask the breeder to determine whether your future puppy has been carefully bred and cared for.

The following are some questions to ask, a little information about why the questions are important and answers good breeders are likely to give.

How old are the parents?

It is important to give a dog time to mature into young adulthood, both physically and mentally, in order to determine whether or not it should be part of a breeding program. A bitch should not be bred until she is 18 months old and a dog should not be used at stud until he is 12 months old. Puppies should not be having puppies.

Do both dam and sire have a CHIC number? Will you provide me with copies of the dam and sire’s health clearances?

It is very important to breed only those dogs who are healthy and have been screened for, and deemed free of, certain genetic disorders.

After the appropriate (breed specific) health screenings are done and the results are submitted to the Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) database, a number is issued. A good breeder will be able to provide you with the results of the health tests performed. Many good breeders test for other conditions as well. Results can be viewed by anyone on the CHIC website <http://www.caninehealthinfo.org/>.

Do both dam and sire have a conformation title? If not, why?

A breeding dog should have a conformation title- a championship (CH) in conformation. A dog considered for breeding should be a sound, stable and structurally correct representative of its breed capable of easily being amongst and around strangers, noise, crowds and other dogs. Earning a CH (by competing in dog shows) is one way a dog will demonstrate it has these important qualities and should be considered for a breeding program. On occasion, there can be exceptions to the rule. If either dam or sire does not have a CH title, or if you notice a dog or two in the pedigree without a CH before its name, ask why the breeder did not “finish” or earn a CH title, before the breeding. A good breeder will have a good reason.

Why did you decide upon this particular breeding?

The decision to breed should never be taken lightly. There are many dogs in this world. It is very important for a breeder to have a goal in mind when deciding to produce a litter. A good breeder is always trying to improve on his or her current generation and produce pups that are better than their parents. The following responses indicate you are not dealing with a good breeder:

- “We thought it would be a great experience to raise a litter”
- “We love our dog and just wanted one of his/her babies”
- “We did not plan on the litter, our intact male got to our young female by mistake”
- “Our friend/neighbor knows a lot about dogs, he/she owns the father/mother of the litter”

Can you tell me about the health, temperament and longevity of the dogs in the 3 generation pedigree? Will I receive a 3-5 generation pedigree?

A good breeder will have years of experience breeding, caring for, showing and competing with their dogs. They will know the health and temperament history behind a puppy and will be able share specific information about the generations that came before. A good breeder will be able and likely proud, to provide you with the pup’s pedigree.

How are your puppies raised? What kind of socialization have they had?

The importance of this question cannot be overstated. It is vital that a breeder introduce every pup to the world- many objects, sounds, people and places as well as other animals at the appropriate age. Once a litter is old enough, socialization is one of the most important responsibilities a breeder has. A good breeder will give you plenty of information on what a pup has experienced so far, and provide advice on how to continue a pup’s socialization.

What is a temperament test? Why may I not be able to choose my puppy?

As a litter develops and matures, individual personalities will start to blossom. One pup may be very active, grab the toys, jump, run, twist, turn, and tackle the others. Another pup may be sweet, silly, cuddly and playful. It is important to assess a puppy’s temperament- its personality, innate behavior trends and activity level. A good breeder will evaluate (temperament test) each pup and strive to match up the pup with a home that will be a good fit for both.

Are your puppies sold with a written contract?

A written contract serves to support and protect the buyer, the breeder, and most of all- the puppy. A good contract will affirm certain things- like a health guarantee that states the puppy is healthy, free of communicable disease and current on immunization. The written contract may include spay/neuter requirements appropriate to your puppy as well as an agreement to provide appropriate care (good food, training, exercise and veterinarian care). A good breeder will always take back a dog if the buyer becomes unable to care for it.

Can you provide references from previous puppy buyers?

All breeders should be able and willing to provide references. Most good breeders stay in touch with owners so they may continue to assist, inform and support anyone who has one of their pups.