

10 Tips on Where to Buy a Purebred Puppy

Buying a purebred puppy is like marriage or any other long-term commitment -- impulse or convenience shouldn't determine where you do your matchmaking.

The pup you buy should be a quality companion that looks and acts as a fine representative of his breed. Considering the source of the pup is the first step of the smart buyer.

Rate your prospective pup's origin with this checklist and be sure to check out our [Breeder / Buyer Guide](#).

| Reputable Breeder | Casual or Backyard Breeder | Pet Shop |
|---|---|---|
| 1.) Dedication to producing quality dogs is serious avocation. Has so much invested in dogs that struggles to break even, not make profit. However will only sell pups to approve buyers. | 1.) Motive for breeding: "fun", "good for kids", or make money. Doesn't screen buyers and seldom refuses to sell. | 1.) Sells pups as merchandise to anyone who will pay. Doesn't screen buyers and will sell to inappropriate homes. |
| 2. Can explain how planned breeding to emphasize specific qualities through linebreeding, outcrossing, or more rarely, inbreeding. | 2. Breeds family pet to any convenient pet of same breed just to have purebred puppies. Has no concern for genetics, bloodlines, or breed improvement. | 2.) Obtains stock from sources who breed for profit, often from puppy mills or local people who mate inferior specimens to sell at low cost. Reputable breeders never place in pet shops due to Point #1 above. |
| 3. Has breeding stock x-rayed for hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia, checks eyes and tests for other genetic faults. Can produce certification to prove claims. | 3. Though pet may be well-loved, it wasn't x-rayed for hip dysplasia nor checked for other inheritable problems. | 3. Pups often from breeding stock that has had poor health care and/or living conditions. Breeding stock not screened for genetic problems. |
| 4. Commitment to replace a dog with proven genetic faults or to help owner deal with problem. | 4. Offers no health guarantees beyond proof of shots. Unqualified to give help if problems develop. | 4. Health guarantees are minimum prescribed by law. Sales personnel unwilling or unable to discuss diseases or genetic problems a breed may be prone to. |
| 5. Loves breed and can talk at length about its background, uses, and ideal type. | 5. Seller has little knowledge of breed history or AKC breed standard. may claim this doesn't matter for "just pets." | 5. Sales staff often doesn't have in-depth knowledge of all breeds sold. |
| 6. Has a serious investment in dog equipment such as puppy pens, crates, grooming tables -- and knows how to use it. | 6. Pups raised in makeshift accommodations indicating lack of long-term investment in breeding. | 6. Pet shop display limits the socialization, exercise, and affection individual pups need at a critical point in development. |
| 7. Is member of local or national dog club, indicating a love for the sport of dogs. Exhibits own dogs as an objective test of how stock measures up. | 7. Even when selling "just pets". may produce AKC papers or "championship pedigree" as proof of quality. Yet seller doesn't increase own knowledge through participation in national or local breed club. | 7. Pet shop offers AKC registration papers as proof of quality. Doesn't mention that AKC accepts registrations without checking if breeding stock is sound and true to type. |
| 8. Shows off litter and dam in sanitary environment. helps buyer evaluate and choose pup. Explains criteria for "show picks" versus "pet picks." | 8. May be unwilling to show entire litter or to introduce dam of litter. Can't/won't critique puppies or puppies' ancestors. | 8. Pet shops unwilling or unable to produce pedigree, or name, address, and phone number of breeder prior to sale. |
| 9. Prices will be at high end of local range, not cut-rate. Price won't reflect all that's invested in the pups. | 9. Prices at low end of local range since has to move pups rapidly. | 9. Price at high end of local range for what are usually generic specimens and may be breed deviations. |

10. After purchase, will help with grooming or training problems. Will take back pups you can't keep rather than see it disposed of inappropriately. Sells pets with spay/neuter agreement or AKC limited registration for welfare of the breed. Reputation based on your satisfaction.

10. No concern for individual pup's and breed's future. Doesn't use AKC limited registration or ask for spay/neuter contract to guard against breeding of substandard pets. if you can't keep the pup, tells you to take it to the dog pound or sell it.

10. Pet shop owner doesn't care about welfare of pup after purchase. If, after some time, you have training or health problems with the pup, you're on your own.