

How to find a puppy from a reputable breeder

As a veterinarian, I see a lot of new puppy exams. I also breed/train/show dogs. I can think of ONE client who brought me information on a dog and asked if I thought it was a good choice before they purchased the dog. Most of you (the generic "you") buy a puppy because it's cute, bring it to me, and I get to tell you good news (looks like a sweet, healthy puppy, have fun with him/her!) or bad news (fearful puppy -- that is going to be a problem, or health issues eg retained testicle, heart murmur, eye abnormalities, etc).

I also see a lot of adult dogs with health issues that could be prevented by getting a puppy from a reputable breeder. I would do a lot less vet work if y'all (generic "y'all ;-)) would just buy healthy puppies from good breeders that are the right fit for your lifestyle/activity level, feed them appropriately, don't let them get fat, train them, and keep them from getting hurt (hit by cars, etc).

So -- how do you find a good one?

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- [1. Figure out what breed is appropriate for your lifestyle.](#)

There are several tests you can take to help determine what breed would be a good fit for your family.

<https://www.akc.org/dog-breed-selector/>

<https://www.iams.com/breedselector/>

<http://www.animalplanet.com/dog-breed-selector/>

<https://www.purina.com/dogs/dog-breed-selector>

Please be realistic with your expectations -- if you live in an apartment in Florida, a Husky is not the best choice. If you like to ice fish all winter in Alaska, a Mexican Hairless Dog is not going to be a good fit. If you like to run marathons with your dog, a Pointer would be better than a Bassett Hound. If you've never owned a dog, you'd much be better off with a Golden Retriever than a Belgian Malinois.

- [2. Breeders come in several categories.](#)

Puppy mill. They have lots of dogs, which isn't bad in itself, but they are typically not well taken care of, bred every heat cycle, no regard to pedigree or health testing, no competition record, and the only goal is turning out lots and lots of puppies for lots and lots of money. Puppies or parents may have undisclosed health defects. They often sell to pet stores. Do not buy a puppy from a puppy mill (or a pet store - EVER!). This is a supply/demand problem -- purchasing from a puppy mill encourages them to produce more puppies.

Backyard breeders (BYB). They have a dog. Maybe a couple dogs. Their dogs may or may not be registered. They want one litter of puppies so their kids can see the miracle of birth, or their dog can experience having

puppies (I doubt the dog really wants that), or their friend/cousin/neighbor can have a puppy. They have no to minimal health testing on either dog and they have to search for a half a day to find either parents' pedigree (and they often own both parents). Do not buy a puppy from a BYB.

Reputable breeder. They might have one female or they might have 10. They usually have a litter or a couple a year or every other year. Their dogs are registered with a reputable registry. They compete regularly in performance and/or conformation events. They do all the recommended health testing for their breed of dog. They have a goal for every litter (tweaking the temperament, or conformation such as ear placement or tail set, or improving a performance characteristic). They care about where the puppies go. You will pay a lot (though less than a pet store, oddly enough), because it costs a lot to produce good puppies. This is who you want to buy a puppy from.

There's usually a variety of breeders between BYBs and reputable breeders -- e.g. the folks that compete a little, do some health testing but not all of it. Do your homework and ask for proof of health clearances (they should be posted on the OFA website). Ask lots of questions (we'll get to that later).

3. You can locate a breeder several different ways.

National Breed Club (type that and the name of the breed you're looking for into a Google search)

Example: <https://thelabradorclub.com> or <http://www.theyorkshireterrierclubofamerica.org/>

Or many direct links are available here: <https://webapps.akc.org/breeder-referral/>

Local Breed Club (may be found on the National Breed Club website, or by typing your state into a Google search, or by looking places like AKC, UKC, ASCA, ACBA, or CKC (Canadian Kennel Club, not Continental Kennel Club) websites).

Example: <http://www.dpccharlotte.org/>

Local Performance or Conformation Clubs (may be found on websites as listed above for breed clubs, or a Facebook search -- many have their own Facebook pages)

Example: <http://www.nwrrc.net/>

Google search (type in your breed name and state and see what comes up)

Facebook search (type in your breed of choice and see what comes up)

Good Dog or other similar sites for breeders that meet certain requirements

Example: <http://www.gooddog.com>

AKC Marketplace <https://marketplace.akc.org/>

Please note! The ONLY thing you are assured of on the AKC Marketplace is that puppies are AKC registered. It does NOT mean they have any health testing or titles or are from a reputable breeder. "Registered" does not mean they are good quality dogs.

Some breeds have websites dedicated to litter listings of working/performance dogs, eg Working Aussie Source, Hunting Lab Pedigree, etc.

Example: <https://workingaussiesource.com/>

4. Screening a breeder's website or Facebook page

Good breeders have pictures of their dogs doing something -- herding cattle, running agility or flyball or lure coursing, competing in obedience, standing in the conformation ring or with ribbons (win pictures), mid-air dock jumping photos, etc. If all they have are dogs sitting in the house or wandering around sniffing the grass or pictures of each dog behind a fence or kennel, just move on to the next website.

Good breeders usually have health clearances posted. Depending on the breed, they should say things like OFA Hips (Fair, Good, or Excellent result) or PennHIP, OFA elbows, OFA cardiac (echo or auscultation

depending on the breed), OFA thyroid, and maybe shoulders, patellas, dentition (teeth), or hocks. They should have genetic testing done, and depending on the breed this might be EIC, DM, HNPk, IVDD, CNM, PRA, MDR1, CAE, VWB, etc. In order to find what is required for your breed of choice, go to either the National Breed Club and find their "health" page, or go to the OFA website and click on "diseases" then "browse by breed."

Quick link: <https://www.ofa.org/browse-by-breed>

Good breeders have their dogs' registered names listed. As breeders, we put a lot of thought into the names we attach to our dogs. We are proud of their names. Sometimes we have a lot of fun with them. Off To See The Lizard, Everything You Ever Wanted, Girl On Fire, Adrenaline Rush, All In A Day's Work, U R My Search Engine, etc are all names I've seen. If the breeder doesn't have the name listed, they usually aren't a good breeder.

Side note -- If they have the name listed but no health clearances, you can go to the OFA website (www.ofa.org) and type the name in to the search bar to see if any health testing was done.

Good breeders compete with their dogs. Those names should have titles listed before or after them. Titles are things like CH, GCH, WTCH, HRCH, MACH, OTCH, FC, NAFC, CD, NA, OJP, UD, RE, OTDdc, RATN, TKI, OGM, RN, MH, GRHRCH, QA2, AX, etc. If the breeder doesn't DO anything with their dogs, how are they expected to make good breeding choices or help you evaluate and get the right puppy for your family? Competition helps us as breeders stay unbiased about our dogs. In general, a CGC (Canine Good Citizen) is nice to see on a dog (friendly/safe around other people and dogs) but if that is all they have on their dogs, please move on to a different breeder.

Please note: "Championship bloodlines" mean absolutely nothing -- you want titles on parents, not great grandparents. How similar do you look or act to your great-grandparents?

Good breeders do NOT have a Paypal/Venmo/Zelle link where you can pay for a puppy without talking to the breeder first. Good breeders screen their buyers. If no screening is happening (phone call, email, application, etc), please move on to the next option on your list.

5. Talking to a breeder

This is a tricky subject. Many dog breeders are eccentric old women (I will probably be one someday!), receive dozens of puppy inquiries every week, and they don't appreciate or respond to emails that don't follow certain social guidelines. In order to have the best chance of getting approved for a puppy, you need to follow a few rules.

- A. Read everything on their website first, and don't ask questions that are already answered on the website. Major faux pas!
- B. Introduce yourself in your email - name, location, a little about your family, what you are looking for in a dog (color, sex, temperament, activity level), and what your goals are (pet, hunting, herding, competition, hiking or camping buddy, etc).
- C. Never ever send a one-line email that just asks "how much?". Those usually won't be given the time of day.
- D. Some breeders really resent initial inquiries that ask about price.... but as a buyer you do want to know whether you're talking about a \$1000 puppy or a \$5000 puppy. If in doubt, ask in a second email when the breeder has said they actually have pups available in the litter or in the future, and say something like "What price range should we budget for?" Some breeders are also really weird and don't like revealing price until you've committed to a puppy -- it's OK to move on to the next breeder if you find one of them.

E. If they don't have pups available, ask if they have recommendations for someone else. Also realize some breeds (or breeders) have really long waitlists, so you may be waiting anywhere from a couple months to 2-3 years.

F. Educate yourself -- good breeders don't sell dogs to people who won't take good care of them or who want a puppy that isn't a good fit for their home (eg someone who works 60 hours a week wanting a Malinois puppy in their high rise apartment).

G. Don't be high maintenance!

6. Questions to ask a breeder

Health:

- Ask about health testing on parents. "My vet said they are healthy" is NOT acceptable health testing. They need OFA/PennHIP and genetic testing as recommended by the breed club, and you need to see proof.
- Ask about their health guarantee. It needs to be more than a 1 year guarantee against the genetic diseases they tested the parents for (eg EIC, MDR1, CAE, DM). If both parents are genetically clear for disease X, of course your puppy will never get X. It's like guaranteeing that your male puppy will stay a male puppy, or your Dalmatian puppy will stay a Dalmatian. It's a worthless guarantee. A 24 month guarantee is standard if a breed that develops hip dysplasia, because 24 months is the minimum age that final OFA hip/elbow radiographs can be taken.
- Ask about their puppy health schedule eg vaccinations, deworming, vet check up. They should get all of those before leaving the breeder. If their vet finds a heart murmur, then I or my colleagues won't have to have awkward conversations about your pup with a murmur when you bring it to our clinic.
- Ask if the puppy gets any special health testing. Some toy breeds should have bile acid testing done (to check for a liver shunt). Some breeds should have BAER hearing tests done. Some breeds should have OFA eye exams done before leaving the breeder.

About the breeder:

- Ask about their puppy placement -- do they pick the pup or do you pick the pup? Are pups chosen in order of deposit received? Most good breeders pick the puppy for each home.
- Ask about location and transportation/pick up options if you aren't local.
- Ask how many litters they've bred (usually it takes a lot more than one to get good at making breeding choices and picking puppies!).
- Ask how they raise the pups. Do litters live in a box in the garage from 0-8 weeks of age? do they take pups places? have visitors over? do brand-name programs like Puppy Culture or Early Neurologic Stimulation?
- Ask when puppies can go to their new homes. Generally large breed puppies go to their new homes earlier (8 weeks) than toy breeds (12 weeks is not uncommon). Retriever people like the magic "day 49" number but pups should not ever leave before 7 weeks, and 8 weeks minimum is better. Also realize 8 weeks is the legal minimum in some states like Florida.
- Ask if they take deposits, when, how much they are (anywhere from 10-50% of total price is common), and if they are refundable or non-refundable. Some breeders take deposits before the litter is born, some not until pups are born and a certain age (my preference).
- Ask if they have a first-right-of-refusal requirement and what it entails. Good breeders will always take their pups back if the buyer cannot keep them.
- Ask if they allow buyers to come to their house. Some breeders do, some do not for safety reasons.
- Ask for references from past buyers -- and call/email them.

Parents of the pup:

- Why did they pick that sire for that particular female? This answer will generally reveal how much thought they put into the breeding. You want a breeder that has higher standards than simply local availability. I routinely ship semen across the country to find the right stud for each litter.
- Ask about their goals for the litter. What type of adult dogs do they expect these pups to grow into?
- Ask about the temperaments of the parents. "Protective" is not usually a good descriptor unless you're buying an IPO or police dog candidate!
- Ask if the parents, siblings of parents, or offspring of parents have any of the other things we can't test for -- hypothyroidism, allergies, cruciate tears, seizures -- and if a breed known to get cancer (eg Golden Retrievers) ask about longevity in the pedigree and incidence of cancer.
- If they have bred that female before, ask about pups from previous litters. If they have used that sire before, ask what he has produced (temperament, trainability, conformation, health, etc).
- Ask to see the pedigree. Pedigrees are not state secrets. All registered dogs have pedigrees. Good breeders are proud of their pedigrees. If they can't find it, need half a day to find it, refuse to show it to you, or reading it reveals they unknowingly bred half siblings or father to daughter, please pass on the litter.

Miscellaneous important details:

- Ask if pups are sold on full or limited registration. Most reputable breeders only sell with full registration to people who currently compete.
- Ask if they co-own pups. Some breeders co-own everything (make sure you ask lots of questions about what that means as far as ownership if you do that).
- Ask if they have a spay/neuter requirement and when the earliest/latest age is.

Lastly:

ASK FOR THE CONTRACT AND HEALTH GUARANTEE AND READ IT CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU PUT A DEPOSIT DOWN ON THE PUPPY. Yes, that is in all caps. I cannot emphasize it enough. Some breeders have some really bizarre requirements. The dog can only have raw chicken its entire life. The dog can never receive any vaccinations. The dog has to be spayed by this date/cannot be spayed before this date (which sometimes is appropriate, sometimes not) or you get a financial penalty of \$15,000 or a similar astronomical number. The dog has to be on this supplement (usually a multi-level marketing scheme and sold by the breeder or the breeder gets kickbacks) or your health guarantee is void. Please READ the contract and make sure you are OK with what you are agreeing to!

7. Stuff you should avoid.

Guardian homes. The type where you pay for the puppy but the breeder gets 4 litters back, you cannot make any health decisions about the dog (vaccinations, food, flea/tick/heartworm preventative), you have to raise the litters, pay for csections, and you get no financial compensation -- please avoid those at all costs. The co-owns or guardian homes where you have full control of the health decisions about the dog and get a puppy back, or reimbursement for litters or stud service may be a different matter.

Puppies with severe health defects. Many litters will have some very minor imperfections in one or two pups if enough searching is done (eg undescended testicle, slight overbite, kinked tail, etc that won't affect a pet pup), but if the pup is missing an eye, has a heart murmur, is smaller than all its littermates, is lame, has a cleft palate and had pneumonia 4 times already, or anything else with similar problems -- DO. NOT. BUY. THE. PUPPY!

Fads. Every breed has poor quality breeders who breed for colors that are not accepted by their national breed club. Examples are parti Yorkies, merle Frenchies, silver Labradors, white Dobermans, and miniature Australian Shepherds (though the latter was resolved by the creation of the "miniature American Shepherd" breed). Do not buy from a breeder who breeds for fad colors or sizes. If you want something rare -- get a well bred dog (I see so few well bred dogs at the clinic!), or better yet, get a well bred dog of an endangered breed (some have less than 800 individuals).

Scams. There are lots and lots of scams out there right now. If you find the breeder through a breed club, they should be legit. If you find them anywhere else, you may need to:

- Ask for pictures of the puppy with a paper with the current date or your name written on it.
- Facetime/Zoom/Skype with them and see the litter.
- Ask for videos of the parents working/in competition.
- Look on their Facebook page (if available) for pictures of other litters, postings that go back several years, reviews going back years, etc.
- Google search the breeder and look for competition records to prove they are a "real" person.
- Google search their dogs' registration names for competition records to see if they exist. However, realize this can be challenging if the dogs are named after a famous person or place.
- Join one of the Facebook groups for asking opinions on breeders. Search the group for their kennel name/ask for input about the kennel.

8. Sample pedigrees

Good example #1:

This is an Australian Shepherd pedigree, so some of these titles are AKC, but most are ASCA titles (WTCH stands for Working Trial Champion). There are multiple titled dogs throughout the pedigree starting with the 1st generation. The dam is not titled, the sire is, but both parents and all grandparents have health clearances. Notice that there are some "missing" clearances such as elbows and eyes in the 2nd generation. Some breeders do not submit eye clearances to the OFA database, so you should ask for a copy of the eye clearances if that's the story you get told. Some older dogs do not have OFA elbow clearances (eg the sire's sire was whelped around 1995), and some breeds do not require elbow clearances. You'll have to decide what is important to you.

You will usually have to look up the dogs on the OFA website because not all breeders provide a nice pedigree with health clearances laid out like I've done here.

Kisawa All In A Day's Work UDX OM1 GO VER RE OA OAJ ACT2 CGC TDI ASCA-CD Hips OFA Good, elbows OFA Normal, eyes OFA normal 11/2017, HSF4, MDR1 clear	PLH Montana Red Bear Hips OFA Good, eyes CERF normal	Zephyrs Will Penny	WTCH Las Rocosa Charlie Glass CD RDx Zephyr Tiki
	Birch Hollow's Speckled Robin STDcd Hips OFA Excellent, eyes CERF normal	Brewers Blue Lucy	Hangin Tree Buddy Powers Leiseths Jody
		Ruff Stock Grey Badger	Hangin Tree Huck Finn OTDs RD ATDcd Ruff Stock Warrior Princess
		WTCH Birch Hollows Red Hot Cinder RTDcs PATDcs	WTCH Hangin Tree Dude PATDcs RD RTDcs Holmbergs Prairie Wildfire OTDcds RTDs
Sage Creek Red Rita Hips OFA Good, elbows OFA normal, eyes OFA normal, HSF4, MDR1, CAE clear	HOF WTCH Hullabaloo Beau Billy by U Hips OFA Good	HOF WTCH Choctaw Frisky Inspirator	HOF WTCH Crownpoint Inspirator Bar L Rossys Fisky Daisy
		HOF WTCH W Lazy J U Betcha	HOF WTCH Crownpoint Red Baron W Lazy J HOF WTCH Lor A Golden Zephyr of J
	Sage Creek Boots On STDcsd Hips OFA Good	HOF WTCH Misty Ridge Spur of W Lazy J	HOF WTCH 45 Ranch Wind Wolf PATDcs RTDcs HOF WTCH Bar LW Miss Red Spur RD
		WTCH W Lazy J Inspired Spook RTDcs RD	HOF WTCH Rockngs Kodiak Bear RTDcs HOF Crown Point Millisa W Lazy J STDds

Good example #2:

- Titles on the parents and on multiple generations. This is a lovely field trial pedigree. There are only 2 dogs in the entire 4-generation pedigree who do not have titles, and they are in the 4th generation.
- Health clearances on parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. The health clearances go further back too, there just isn't room to include them in the 4th generation.
- This litter is line bred on FC AFC Dare to Dream, who shows up in the 2nd generation and several times in the 6th and 7th generation, and FC AFC Yellowstone's TNT Explosion, who shows up in the 4th and 5th generation (I know this because it's a Labrador pedigree I'm very familiar with). That's a totally acceptable distance to line breed.

FC Truline's Just Floyd Hips OFA Excellent, elbows OFA normal, eyes OFA normal, EIC/CNM/PRA/RD/SD/HNPK/DM clear <u>Full siblings</u> - 1 OFA Exc, 3 OFA Good, 1 OFA Fair. 4 QAA. Full sibs and littermates have 114 derby points.	FC AFC Valtor's Hayseed Kid Hips OFA Excellent, elbows OFA normal, eyes OFA normal	FC AFC Hilltop's Hayseed Hips OFA Good, elbows OFA Normal, eyes CERF normal	FC AFC Black Gold's Kates Rascal	
		Valtor Pete's Jackie QAA Hips OFA Good, eyes CERF normal	Candlewood's Divine Ms M QAA	
	Sealock's Sky Wilder Hips OFA Good, eyes OFA normal	FC AFC Riverrun's True North Hips OFA Excellent, elbows OFA Good, eyes CERF normal	FC AFC Valtor's O C Pete Rockypoint Goodhearted Woman	
		FC AFC Sealock's Seaside Stella Hips OFA Excellent, elbows OFA normal, eyes CERF normal	FC AFC Yellowstone's TNT Explosion JH Riverrun's Dream O'Dunkellin	
				NFC FC AFC Clubmead's Road Warrior Contenders Dora MH QAA
Duck Buster's Hotshot Holly CD SH OJP OAP CGC Hips OFA Excellent, elbows OFA normal, eyes OFA normal, heart OFA normal (echo), EIC carrier, CNM, PRA1, PRA4, RD/OSD, SD, DM clear <u>Full siblings</u> - 5 OFA Exc, 2 OFA Good. 1 MH, 1 QAA, 1 QA2/MH, 1 SH, 3 JH titles. <u>Offspring</u> - 1 OFA Exc, 1 OFA Good. 1 MH title.	FC AFC Dare to Dream Hips OFA Excellent, eyes CERF normal, EIC carrier	FC AFC Wilderness Harley to Go Hips OFA normal, eyes CERF normal	FC AFC Itchin To Go	
		FC AFC Fishtrap Aggie Hips OFA Excellent	AFC Black Gold's Candlewood Kate	
	HRCH Bally's Best Blonde Joke MH (8 derby points, Qual 3rd, 4th, JAMs) Hips OFA Excellent, elbows OFA normal, eyes OFA normal	FC AFC Trumarc's Hot Pursuit Tory's Queen Bee QAA		
		FC AFC Jet Black Bustin Thru The Brush MH Hips OFA Good, eyes CERF normal	NAFC Candlewood's Ramblin Man HRCH Berry Ridge Black Gold Fever	
		Automatic Det-a-nator MH QAA Hips OFA Good, elbows OFA normal, eyes CERF normal, EIC clear	FC AFC TNT's Det-a-nator One Shot Tali SH	

Good example #3:

- Titles on the parents and on multiple generations. This is a nice show pedigree (all the CH and GCH titles).
- Health clearances on parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. The health clearances go further back too, there just isn't room to include them in the 4th generation.

CH Van Dalen IBIM Northern Fling Hips OFA Excellent, elbows OFA normal, eyes OFA normal, heart OFA normal (ausc), EIC/CNM/PRA/RD/SD/HNPK/DM clear	GCH Casbar's A Hart Act to Follow JH Hips OFA Excellent, elbows OFA Normal, eyes OFA normal, heart OFA echo normal, EIC/CNM clear	GCH Casbar's Hart to Hart CD JH BN RN TDI CGC Hips OFA Good, elbows OFA Normal, heart OFA Normal (echo), eyes OFA Normal	CH Casbar's Mister Debonaire RN CGC Princess Anabelle Ravine	
		Casbar's VH Daydream Believer Hips OFA Good, elbows OFA Normal, heart OFA Normal (echo), eyes OFA Normal	CH Casbar's Von Hausman Blitz Kreig Yahoo Casbar of Brownbank	
	Van Dalen Winter is Coming Hips OFA Good, elbows OFA normal, eyes OFA Normal	CH Sher-mi Front Runner SH Hips OFA Normal, elbows OFA Normal, heart OFA Normal (echo), eyes OFA Normal	CH Lockbriar Journey O'Briargin JH CH Sher-mi Random Hearts	
		GCH Elhid Hello Beautiful Elbows OFA Normal, heart OFA normal (ausc), eyes OFA Normal	CH Danbridge Indiana Jones WC Elhid's Needs a Spanking	
	Honadore Chivas Regal CD RN NJP NAP TKN CGC (2 JH passes) Hips OFA Good, elbows OFA normal, eyes OFA normal, heart OFA normal (echo), EIC/CNM/PRA/RD/OSD/dilute clear	Am/Can CH SHR Summerset Buoy's Nite Out WC CGC Hips OFA Good, elbows OFA normal, heart OFA normal (ausc), eyes OFA normal, EIC clear	Can CH Chablais Ouzo Elbows OFA Normal	Can CH Tabatha's Hunterleigh Gaudy Multi BISS Am/Can CH Chablais Olivia
			Can CH Summersets Sea's The Day Hips OFA Excellent, elbows OFA normal, heart OFA normal, eyes CERF normal	BISS Am CH Lubberline Martingale Honadore's Holiday at Summerset
Can CH Honadore Martini Hips OFA Excellent, elbows OFA normal, heart OFA normal (echo), eyes OFA normal		BISS Am CH Lubberline Martingale Hips OFA Good, elbows OFA normal, heart OFA normal	CH Hunt Club Clayview Funny Bear CH Hennings Mill Lubberline Jib	
		Can CH Beechcroft Ambridge Emmy Hips OFA Good, elbows OFA normal, heart OFA normal, eyes CERF normal	BISS Am/Can CH Beechcroft Study In Black McNeil Ambridge Regal	

Bad example #1:

Red flags -

- The first health clearances are the great grandparents, and only 3 of the 8 great-grandparents have ANY health clearances.
- There's only a couple titles in the entire pedigree, and while they're "good quality" titles (field champion titles, stuff on the front of the name), they are all 3rd and 4th generation.
- This litter is line-bred on an untitled dog with no health clearances. Notice that "Willie Drillit" shows up in the second generation (grandsire) and third generation (great grandsire) of this litter. Line breeding on good dogs is fine, it's how we develop consistency in a "line" of dogs or a specific breed, but line breeding on untitled dogs with no health clearances is how we end up with genetic disasters. Most likely this line breeding was not deliberate, it was simply done by a breeder using a local stud dog who didn't compare pedigrees before breeding.

Brutis XXI	Golden Rustic Rusty	Willie Drillit	FC AFC Lakeridge's Magnum Mike
			AFC Daddy D's Rotgut Booze
		Honey Bells Victoria Sayde	Koda Oso Grande
			Sable Ladys Honey Belle
	Ponderosa Golden Lady	Bing's Golden Buckskin	Vals Yellow Prince
			Samantha Lightfoot II
		Lu-Ra Goldilocks	Raffie 1 Gold
			Lynns Lady Julliette
Brown-Eyed Josie Girl	Willie Drillit	FC AFC Lakeridge's Magnum Mike	FC AFC Candlewoods Magnum Force
		Hips OFA Good, eyes CERF	Lakeridge Matilda
		AFC Daddy D's Rotgut Booze	AFC Yello Sprig
		Hips OFA Fair	Sha-Dee's Shasta CD
	Market Lake Miss Cissie	Buff the Boastful Boozer	Gandalf the White Wizard
			Lady Pitch of San Elijo
		Maggie of Penny Acres Hips OFA Excellent	Dillon Duke of Trout
			Bullets Sugar Plum

Bad example #2:
Red flags-

- There are no health clearances anywhere in this pedigree.
- There are no titles anywhere in this pedigree.
- This is a Labrador pedigree, and I can tell this litter is bred for a "fad" color because of all the dogs named "silver" throughout the pedigree. Reputable breeders don't breed colors that are not approved by the national breed club, and silver is not accepted by the LRC. This litter pedigree is full of "dilute" dogs. I would guess that other breeds with similar unaccepted colors have poor quality breeders who like to include their dog's color in its registered name (eg white Dobermans).

Pleasant Valley Classy Smokin Cub	Millen's Silver "Ranger"	Willow Brook's Silver S Slater	Silvertone Quincy of Willow Brook
			TNT's Allie of Willow Brook
	Matilda Millen Black Beauty of Silver Squaw	Sweet Gator Girl of Adel Baby	Silvertones Rezod
			Kyrie's Gator
		Sam Beau Hines	The Poncho Mandingo
		Sara Lee Hines	The Bella Mia
		SR Smokey Rein	
		Keiko Lynn	
Classy Silver Ziva	Classy Shacks Silver Bullet	Hi Shack	Silvertones Polished Ruger Tio
			HG's Sweet Joria Peach
	Classy Dukes Silver Girl	Hi Mandy	Pinyan's Silver Duke
			Humphreys Ace in Kami
		Pinyan's Silver Duke	Gunner Silver King
			Magge Silver Queen
		Hi Shooting Star	Humphrey's Silver Bullet
			Humphrey's Katie

9. Costs

Producing good quality litters is expensive, and the price of the puppy will reflect that. I'm usually 1500-2500 into the litter by the time the breeding is done, no puppies confirmed, and that does not include competition expenses, professional training/handling, health clearances, or the remaining balance of the stud fee (due when puppies are born).

Expect to spend 1000-3000 for a well bred large breed dog. Small breed dogs may be 2000-4000 simply due to smaller litters (good breeders don't usually make money, but we try to break even on our hobby). Popular breeds (eg Frenchies) may be substantially more. However, please note that puppy mills, designer breeds/mixed breeds, fad colors, pet stores, and backyard breeders will all charge this much or more (5000 for a pet store mixed breed fluffypoo puppy, 20,000 for a merle Frenchie, etc).

You can get a well bred dog cheaper than a poorly bred one in many cases. People make impulsive decisions (how much is that cute puppy in the window?) and pay far more than they should because a payment plan is available (pet store) or because of good marketing (gorgeous puppy pictures online). Don't be one of them!

Realize that you can pay for a good quality dog up front, or you will pay for it in vet bills and health care. Save up for the right dog if you need to. I always recommend buying a quality puppy to have the best chance of avoiding hip dysplasia, allergies, eye defects, bleeding disorders, and a variety of other genetic diseases.

10. Summary

- Health testing on both parents per the national breed club or OFA recommendations.
- Competition history/titles on at least one parent in performance and/or conformation.
- Expect some type of application or questions by the breeder.
- Ask questions also -- it's a two way interview!
- READ THE CONTRACT.
- Look at the pedigree.
- Don't be afraid to walk away from a litter.
- Be prepared to wait for the right puppy. Don't settle -- you will hopefully have him/her for 10-14 years.

Good luck in your search!

C. Klatt DVM

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