

CHOOSING A REPUTABLE BREEDER

(and this applies to BEING A REPUTABLE BREEDER)

Choosing a reputable breeder is very important. Since it would be almost impossible for you to know what the puppy you are buying will grow up to be physically and emotionally, you must rely on your faith in the person from whom you are purchasing your puppy. There are three options available to you in choosing this person.

Pet Shop or Dealer

The worst possible choice! The puppies are poorly bred and raised. They are thought of as merchandise to be sold for a high profit. The high profit results because little has been put into the breeding or the care of the puppies. Many are sickly. Pet shops rely heavily on impulse buying, which is not the way to choose a dog as an addition to the family.

Backyard Breeder

Also a poor choice. This is the person who owns one to 40+ pet quality Dachshunds and thinks it would be "fun" to have puppies, that it would be a great experience for the children, or that their female should be bred once before she is spayed. Even worse, perhaps, it's being done just to make money. Usually this breeder knows little about the Breed Standard or history of the breed, and still less about proper care. The casual breeder does not have annual eye examinations done by a Board-certified veterinary ophthalmologist (CERF) and does not do any other health clearances (such as patellas or thyroid). The backyard breeder is not aware of breed problems or doesn't care. Often the quality of the dogs being bred is poor. This person's only goal is to produce puppies and when the "fun" is over, sell them quickly.

Serious Hobby Show Breeder

The very best choice. The serious and dedicated hobby breeder regards his/her dogs as even more than a hobby, although the true fancier does not expect to make a profit. When someone is involved in dogs for the enjoyment of each individual animal, for participating in any of the many aspects of "dog sport," and for the challenge of producing the finest animals possible, the result is superior. These breeders acknowledge responsibility for each and every puppy produced, and stand behind every dog they have bred.

Unequivocally, your choice should be from the ranks of the SERIOUS HOBBY SHOW BREEDER. It is an interesting fact that poor quality puppies from pet shops and backyard breeders are often sold for the same price and sometimes even more than those purchased from the serious hobby breeder. The question is: How does one recognize the serious hobby breeder? Following is a list of requirements the breeder should meet before you consider purchasing a puppy. Don't be afraid to ask the breeder many questions. It is your right, and you can rest assured that the dedicated breeder will respond positively and with pride.

THE BREEDER SHOULD:

1. The Breeder belongs to the Dachshund Club of America, a local or regional Dachshund Club, or an all-breed club. Ideally, he/she should belong to all three; however, sometimes this is impossible. The reason for this requirement is that this sort of participation indicates depth of involvement.
2. Breeder is exposed to other points of view, learns more about the breed and modern breeding practices, and is kept up-to-date on AKC rules and regulations.
3. Breeder is involved in showing his/her dogs in the breed ring, the obedience ring, earthdog tests, field trials – or in a combination of all. The reason for this requirement is that it means that the breeder is not breeding in a vacuum.
 - a. The breeder who does not participate has no idea how good his/her dogs really are, and is deprived of the opportunity to share information and ideas with others. Showing provides the competition which encourages breeders to produce better dogs.

- b. The breeder who competes wants to prove how good his/her dogs are and is putting his/her breeding program on the line. This breeder is not relying on just a pedigree to indicate quality. Even if you do not want a competition animal, you deserve a pet that was the end result of a carefully planned litter; a puppy which received the same care as a potential champion.
 - c. The breeder who competes in organized activities is known by others and has a reputation to uphold. This breeder will be as careful and honest in selling you your pet puppy as in selling show.
4. The breeder will ask you what kind of dogs you have had in the past, and what happened to them; whether or not you have a fenced yard; and whether or not the dog will be allowed to be a house dog and member of the family. Sincere breeders will be a bit hesitant to sell you a puppy until they know more about you, what you are looking for in a dog, and what "life style" you have in mind for your dog. Having the best interest of the puppy at heart, to say nothing of yours and theirs, reputable breeders will take great pains to place puppies properly the first time around. A returned puppy is a traumatic experience for all concerned so the breeder who is always willing to accept a puppy back will try to make certain that a dachshund is the breed for you.
5. The Breeder will give you a period of time in which to allow you to have the puppy examined by a veterinarian to determine its state of health, so that both of you are assured as to the condition of the puppy at the time of sale. If a problem should arise, it can then be quickly resolved.
 - a. Be willing to answer your questions about any possible hereditary problems.
 - b. They should be able to explain the various screenings for the diseases which are most common in dachshunds and why they do or do not participate in regular testing .
 - c. Be able to show you a clean environment; healthy, well-socialized puppies; and a dam (and perhaps other related dachshunds) with a good temperament. **You should avoid:**
 - shy, whimpering, fearful puppies;
 - puppies with dull coats, crusty or running eyes, signs of diarrhea, rashes or sores on their abdomens;
 - signs of neglect, such as lack of water, pans of uneaten food, and dirty conditions;
 - a breeder who will sell a puppy under eight weeks of age, as early separation from the dam and litter mates can be very detrimental both psychologically and physically;
 - a breeder who lets you handle a very young puppy, as there is a real risk of transmitting disease before puppies are vaccinated.

A breeder will provide you with:

- a record of the dates and types of vaccinations and worming done
- a 3- to 5-generation pedigree
- a AKC registration application to apply for registration of the puppy in your own name with the American Kennel Club (AKC). Sometimes the "applications" are not available at the time you take your puppy home. If this is the case, have the breeder state on a dated, signed receipt of payment that the application will be sent to you as soon as possible. The registered names and AKC numbers of both parents, date of birth of the litter, and the puppy's color and sex should be indicated. You can then contact AKC with complete information should there later be a problem with the registration papers. Avoid any dogs or breeders that register with the CKC (This "registry" that will register any dog as a purebred animal based very loose requirements. Some individuals who use this and

- other less desirable registries because they have lost their privileges to register through the AKC due to rules violations.)
- Give you written instructions on feeding, training, and care. There are many books that are useful and many internet links have information, too.
 - Provide some sort of written contract and/or conditions of sale. Any warranty of quality or health of the dogs, and any warranty against development of hereditary problems or show-ring disqualifications in an animal intended for showing or breeding, should be in writing. The warranty should be absolutely explicit, and a signed copy should be provided to each party. Both pedigree and registration papers are provided by reputable breeders at no extra charge. The practice of charging extra for "papers" is forbidden by the AKC, and should be reported. This should not be confused with withholding papers until the dog has been spayed or neutered, which is how puppies not purchased for showing/breeding are sold by most reputable breeders.

A Breeders Responsibility is for the life of the dog...

A good breeder will make it clear that his/her responsibility continues long after you have taken your puppy home, and in fact as long as the dog is alive. Many dedicated breeders will ask that the dog be returned to them or placed with new owners who meet their approval, if ever for any reason you are unable to keep the dog. They will cheerfully be available for advice whenever needed, and can ease your way over many rough spots. If your breeder meets all of these requirements you are in good hands. If you find yourself with a negative response to any of these requirements, think twice and discuss the situation with someone else. Don't be impulsive and do ask questions.

PICKING A PUPPY

Once you have found a breeder that you trust it's time to think about a puppy again. Take your time. You might have to wait weeks or even months for the "right" litter to be whelped, and it can be well worth the wait. If you are fortunate, and more than one good litter is available at the same time in your area, you can compare puppies, pedigrees and parents. You may be asked to put a deposit of \$50 or more on the litter of your choice if the puppies are not yet eight weeks old. Good litters seldom go begging, and it is not uncommon for a choice litter to be completely spoken for by the time the puppies are eight to twelve weeks of age and ready to go to their new homes. Be sure that the breeder knows if you want the dog for a particular purpose other than a companion (such as show prospect, a competition obedience dog, and/or working dog), and have the breeder help with the selection of the puppy. Very few litters have more than a few real "show prospects" in them, but a "pet-quality" puppy from a well-bred litter has all the potential of growing up to be a sturdy, healthy dachshund of proper size and temperament.

Almost all dachshund puppies are appealing, but you need to look for more than "cuteness." They should be sturdy in build, with straight legs. They should feel firm and muscular, and be squirmy and active at first when picked up, but be willing to relax and accept being held and cuddled for a short time. Coats should be clean; eyes, nose and ears free of discharge or irritation; and the puppies should not be pot-bellied. Gums should be pink, not pale.

If the breeder offers you several puppies to select from, take each puppy you are considering away from the rest of its litter mates and observe its reactions to its environment and to you. Puppies at seven to ten weeks should be willing to explore their environment, and although perhaps a little bit cautious at first, they should investigate new objects and be fairly self-assured. Speak to the puppy and see if it will follow you as you move away. Roll a ball or other toy to see if it has any instinct to watch, chase, carry, or possibly even return to you with the ball. Most dachshunds do not have a retrieving instinct, but you should be wary of the puppy who does not show some interest in or awareness of a moving object. See if the puppy exhibits the type of personality you would want to live with. Perhaps the bold, brash puppy that never stops getting into things would be too much for you, and the more easy-going fellow who's agreeable and a bit

more receptive to your guidance would be a better choice. Again, the breeder can advise you. Remember, they have observed the puppy's personality over a long period of time, while you may only have done so for an hour or so. While observing the puppies, observe the dam as well. Any excessive shyness or aggressiveness on her part is indicative of a poor temperament, and the puppies might inherit these undesirable traits. A dachshund dam should be watchful and patient with her puppies, and should be happy to show them to you. If the sire is available, ask to meet him too.

CONSIDERING THE OLDER DOG

If you aren't prepared to go through the trials and training of a baby puppy, an older puppy or even a mature dog can be a good alternative, especially in households in which the family pet may have to spend much of the day unsupervised. The older dachshund who has been well socialized at the home of his breeder adapts to a new family readily. This is not a "one man" dog. A dachshund spreads his affection around to all the family members. There are many reasons that older dogs are available. Breeders often hold a puppy until it is old enough to determine its show or breeding potential; a female that has been bred once or twice is retired; or circumstances change and the breeder is helping someone place a much-loved pet they have had to part with. The reasons are myriad, but whatever they may be, the grown dog is available. He may be housebroken, knows many commands, and has formed many behavior patterns. If the dog has been loved and well taken care of, he will continue to give love and devotion to his new family. Never be hesitant to take an outgoing, good-natured older dog into your home. Although it may be confused at first and cause a few problems, patience, consistency, and reassurance are the key words. The dog's self-confidence will return, and it will adapt readily to your routine. Try to find out all that you can about the older dog that you are considering, so that you can determine if his temperament is compatible with yours. Learn as much as possible about his habits, daily routine, likes and dislikes, diet and past history. Be sure to find out if he is housebroken. It is important that all family members meet the dog before its adoption, and agree that this is the dog they want. It is best to acquire the dog when the household member with primary responsibility for the dog's care and training will be at home full time for the first few days. Time must be taken to make clear that the dog knows where it is to sleep, relieve itself, where and when it will eat, and what it can and cannot do in the house. In short, it has to learn the routine it will be following and what is expected of it. Give the dog a month or so to settle in to its new environment and gain confidence in its new owners before beginning formal obedience training. Even if the dog has had some obedience training, attending class is an excellent way to brush up on its training and help you understand its responses and personality more completely. You'll enjoy working together.

If you rescue a mistreated or abandoned dachshund through a Rescue service or a humane society, and give it your affection, it will reward you with eternal love and gratitude. These dogs may well be of unknown background, and bring you a few more problems than those with a more favorable history, but the rewards can be great.