Puppies Unveiled

Helping you Navigate the World of Breeders to Ensure the Health, Ethics, and Quality of Your New Pet

The Freckled Paw LLC

Getting you on the Right Path From the Start!
If I could scream one thing from the rooftops to anybody who is wanting a dog it would be;
“ALL DOGS ARE NOT THE SAME”
When it comes to dogs, the breed and genetic background factor into personality and behavioral traits. A breed's traits are based on what the dog was originally bred to do. Herding dogs have an innate desire to work all the time, retrievers always need to run and want to hold everything they find in their mouth, and terriers will chase everything that moves. By expecting these breeds to be anything other than what they were bred for you are doing yourself and your dog a disservice by setting yourself up for unrealistic expectations. You are looking for a companion for the next 15 years. Make sure you begin with getting a good match.
This series is going to walk you through all the questions you should ask yourself and your family to be sure that you are making a great choice in finding a puppy! The most important thing is to be honest with yourself when deciding what breed you would like to live with.
One of the biggest misconceptions when people are looking through breed characteristics is they think anything that says “good family pet” is going to be as friendly as a Labrador. All dogs can be a good fit for some family, but not necessarily yours. Let's take a look at what some of those characteristics actually mean and the expectations to have with your new pup.
Aloof With Strangers

This typically means your dog will only care about the people who work to develop a relationship with them. When a lot of people see this descriptor they automatically think that means they’re more likely to be aggressive towards people, but that’s not necessarily the case! These are the dogs who are NOT super excited when people come over to the house, with that super wiggly butt that is just dying for attention but would they would rather continue with their own thing instead. While out on walks, they’d be much happier just walking right past the other people on the road rather than wanting to run up for pets. These breeds can create amazing bonds, it just takes a little bit more work and you shouldn’t expect them to want to be best friends with everyone who comes by.

These breeds will also require more management and training to make sure they are comfortable with the situations they are in. Once they establish who is in their “circle of trust” introducing new people into that circle can take time and effort for everyone involved.

Affectionate With People

Jumping, jumping, and more jumping. These guys are the ones you see who are always excited by people, want to greet everybody at the door, and are dragging you to go say hello to every person they see. It can be great to have that super bubbly and outgoing personality, but you have to make sure boundaries are set with these guys early on, otherwise they will get much bigger and that cute over excited puppy is now fully grown and able to tackle people. Being a little friendly can be great, but make sure they know the rules and learn how to appropriately interact with everybody they meet.

These dogs often demand attention from anyone available and need to be taught to wait their turn and to settle when friends and family are near.

Highly Trainable

This sounds like a great trait to have in a dog, to learn things very quickly, and they 100% do. The flip side of this trait is that generally this dog will be smarter than you. If you are not committed to keeping their brain engaged and challenged, they will find challenges all on their own, and most the time these are activities that you do not agree with them doing. These are the dogs who want to constantly be active and engaged.. They love puzzles, games and often excel in different dog sports. If you are looking for a dog who is satisfied walking around the neighborhood, this is not your dog.
Intelligent and Alert

I will put money down that these dogs are going to bark at stuff. Not just specific stuff, like all the stuff. Even stuff that has no need to be barked at. That alertness will ensure they are always on the lookout and will notice every single thing around them. This is a trait of most of the herding type dogs. That intelligence and alertness is specifically bred to help them keep livestock together and moving in one direction. In a home or apartment, they need to be exposed to the sights and sounds of everyday life to understand what is important and what should be ignored. If you have not lived with this type of behavior before, make sure you employ a trainer and keep your dog in lessons to learn how to deal with it early on.

Needs early socialization, Protective, Loyal

These characteristics are most often used to describe livestock guardian dogs or working breeds who were developed for protecting their environments. This means you need to have a socialization plan in place as soon as you bring this puppy home, and that plan needs to continue throughout the dog’s life. These breeds need to start understanding their role in your life as soon as possible, leave these dogs inside the house until they finish their puppy shots and you are going to be in a world of barking and lunging. You will also find these are dogs who typically bond to one person even if you are in a large family. This needs to be considered if you have a large family or extended family who visits often. From day one you want to start practicing exposing them to lots of different sounds, environments, and people. Puppy classes and training are a must until these dogs are at least 2 years old.

Independent

This guy does not care about what you think in the slightest. Creating a bond or relationship with these dogs is going to take time and effort. Really they are more like roommates than companions. Like the guy that you lived with in college that didn’t go out with you, but you still checked on every day to make sure they were drinking enough water. You co-exist in the same space, and interact occasionally. Often, these breeds are described as cat-like and judgemental. Training is less like teaching and more convincing them that you have a good idea. These are often the sighthounds like Rhodesian Ridgebacks and Whippets but can include many other breeds. Training with these dogs is going to take lots of effort and awareness to achieve “well behaved” status.
Energy and Exercise

Every breed has different levels of energy, while some breeds are more laid back who are happy to just lay down on the couch with you, others are constantly moving and always need something to do. In some breeds a short walk here and there is enough, while in others they need walks in different environments such as parks and trails every week or even daily to meet their exercise requirements. High energy breeds will require up to 20 hours of “work” each week. That needs to be physical and mental exercise to keep them satisfied. Be honest about the amount of time you want to spend walking, training, and exercising your dog. Be ready to change your lifestyle to meet those needs. That might mean giving up your Saturday mornings to attend training classes, or getting up earlier so you can get a long walk in before work. If you are looking for a Netflix buddy, make sure you find an appropriate breed to match that need in your schedule.

Grooming Needs

When it comes to grooming, look into the needs of their coat, are they a seasonal shedding breed who needs deshedding treatments a couple times a year to prevent impacted coat and hotspots, or are they a breed who needs regular brushing and haircuts to prevent matting. Even short coated breeds need to be desensitized to the concepts of bathing, brushing, and drying to keep their skin and coat healthy as well as messing with their ears, face, tail, and paws so they can be properly handled by vet staff when needed. Be prepared for the amount of time you will need to spend on grooming. Larger dogs are going to require more time and cost more at the groomer if haircuts or brush outs are necessary. Double coated dogs like Pomeranians or Samoyeds are going to require daily brushing to keep their coat healthy.

Doodle Disclaimer

Poodling any breed does not automatically make them “a good family pet.” I have nothing against doodles of any flavor but take a look at what you are getting with each breed in the mix. Each of the breeds involved have their own unique traits and reasons for being developed. By mixing the two, you could get any degree of traits from either breed so be prepared to bring home anything. If you have your heart set on a doodled breed, please take into consideration the traits of both breeds in the mix, and be prepared for anything.
Importance of Breed Research

None of these traits are “good” or “bad.” Educating yourself on what these traits mean can help you make a better decision for your family. Some breeds might have any number of these traits in combination and they can create a wonderful companion, but it is best to be sure you know what you are getting into! If you are not sure what a trait means or you would like more information, reach out to the Freckled Paw. We work with different breeds everyday and can give you some insight on the temperament of certain breeds and help you make an educated choice.

![Image of a puppy]

![Image of a puppy running]
Now that you have settled on a breed, let's talk about how to find a reputable breeder. Remember, you are trying to find a breeder who is going to give you the best possible companion for the next 15 years. Many people think that just because they find a purebred dog that means it is going to be a well bred dog. That could not be farther from the truth! In this post we are going to uncover some of the important things that your well-bred dog’s breeder will be doing that a more unscrupulous “breeder” would not be doing. The proof is in the product in this case.

I recommend people look for a puppy from a breeder who shows their dogs or has put some sport titles on the parents. Even if you have no sport or showing aspirations, the breeder is being judged on the product of their breedings by people who do not know them to evaluate the quality of their breeding stock against others. Responsible breeders spend so much of their own time and money to ensure all the puppies from their breeding stock are of high quality. They will be agonizing over their matches, studying genetic testing, and planning 3 and 4 years down the road to make their next perfect puppy who will continue their breeding programs. Most litters do not have only one puppy, and the puppy that the breeder will keep (if they keep one) will be the most perfect for their needs. The other 5–8 puppies need to find perfect homes like yours.

Once you have found the person who checks all these boxes, there are always questions you should ask to make sure the pup you take home will be the right choice.
In some breeds there can be huge variations in temperament between different lines, which is why it is always important to ask about the activity level of the parents. If your last labrador was a couch potato, and you’re hoping for another, then ask if the parents are show lines or field bred. A field bred lab will not be a couch potato, it is going to want to find birds all day. Show lines, or bench bred dogs will generally be easier to get along with if you are not into training and/or a marathon runner.

With more stoic breeds, who require quite a bit more early socialization, you might ask how the parents are when strangers are around. Do the owners typically put the dogs away when the repair man shows up or can they be left loose? If you plan to have a family or have small children around, this is a serious concern. This is where any good breeder will typically be brutally honest with you, whereas one who is just looking to make a quick buck is going to tell you what you want to hear. If you are looking for a guardian breed but like to have house parties every weekend, a good breeder will ask you to reconsider your choice of breed. Just because your friend/relative/guy you met at the bar had a social dog of the same breed does not mean the line you are choosing will be a good fit for the environment you have in mind.
“Do I pick a puppy or do you pick a puppy for me”

The breeder should be asking you what you want in the puppy you bring home. Good breeders spend an extraordinary amount of time with the babies and know their personalities as they begin to develop. They will know who every puppy is and what kind of home they will thrive in. Often breeders will have a 3rd party come to evaluate the puppies around 7 weeks with either a Volhard test, or the AVIdog assessment. This helps the breeder determine what type of home will be best for each puppy.

With my malinois I was very honest that I was not going to pursue bite sports even though both their parents are from high achieving lines in protection sports. This information helped the breeder choose a puppy that would fit my needs. Tower failed all of his bitey things tests, and he would have been a terrible puppy for a bite sport home, but that made him a good fit for my needs.
If your breeder says anything less than 8 weeks, run and do not look back. Recent scientific studies have concluded that puppies learn most of their social skills from their littermates between 6 and 10 weeks. If your puppy is leaving the litter before they have that chance to learn how to act appropriately, then you are setting yourself up for some serious problems. Early exposure to novel stimuli before 16 weeks creates a resilient dog. Now after 8 weeks to 12 weeks, when you get your puppy home, it is up to you to socialize your puppy. But before then they need to be left with their mother and littermates. Your breeder should also be to tell you of what exposure work they have done with the puppies and already be on the road to setting them up for success. Those early exposures cannot be replicated after that “socialization window” closes. See our Early Socialization section for more information about this topic.
“If something happens will you take the dog back?”

Good breeders have poured their heart and soul into these puppies. They should be of the mindset that they will take back their puppy if you have had him for 10 minutes or 10 years. Dogs from reputable breeders do not end up in shelters, and if they do, the community is bending over backwards to get them out. Our shelter systems are overwhelmed by backyard breeders, and puppy mills who only want to make a quick buck on their dogs. Do not contribute to that nonsense.
Be prepared for the breeder to ask you as many questions as you ask them. They also want to make sure the puppy they have brought into this world is going to a perfect home. There will most likely be an application process and an interview. Be patient in waiting to hear back, your breeder is busy doing the good work of keeping healthy dogs and studying pedigrees creating the perfect puppy for you. Often you will not hear back in a timely manner.

Don’t get upset if they don’t have the puppy for you, or they are not telling you what you want to hear. These people know their dogs better than anyone else and want what is best for their puppy and you to live your best life with the dog you imagined you would get. Remember this is a 15 year commitment. Take the time to find the right puppy for you and your family.
EARLY EXPOSURE AND ENRICHMENT

You’ve decided on a breed and you have interviewed breeders, you have answered your questions and you like their answers. You get the next available puppy right? No. Before you fully commit to this breeder we need to take a look at how the puppies are being raised.

That time between birth and the 8-12 weeks when you get your puppy is critical to their socialization period. Most trainers harp on socialization when you get your puppy, but that window is almost closed when your puppy comes home. What your breeder exposes your puppies to until the day you take them home will help create the resilience we want to see in adult dogs for the rest of their lives.

Many reputable breeders will begin their puppies socialization as soon as they are born. Starting day one they will begin to weigh them regularly, and practice holding them in different positions to help them get accustomed to handling. They will also begin to expose them to novel feelings like q tips on their feet as soon as 3 days old.

Around a week old, they will begin to introduce new scents like peppermint or lavender to help them realize their world is going to change regularly. At this age the only senses that are working are touch, taste and smell. Those are the things that keep them safe and fed at this point.
Once the babies are around 3 weeks, they are beginning to move around and explore their whelping box a bit more. Around this time novel things will get added to the box; these are typically things with textures to introduce more novelty to the puppies’ lives. Every day they are still being handled and weighed by the humans in the house.

Around 4 weeks is when the fun really begins. At this point their ears and eyes are open and the breeder will really start to see each puppy’s individual personalities start to emerge. They will start to be exposed to different sounds such as doorbells, knocking, and household appliances, often muffling them at first. They will bring them to areas with different surfaces such as tile, carpet, wood, and other textures. Lots of different toys will be introduced to the whelping box.

Breeders will also start having friends and family interacting with them. While working on exposing them to as many new things as they can, the breeder will pay close attention to the puppies, taking note of who investigates the novel items first, who has to be in the middle of the playtime, and who is more of a wallflower.

These traits help the breeder choose which puppy will be the best fit for you and your lifestyle. Each day the puppies are exposed to more and more random things so that by the time they end up at your house, they are unfazed by most everyday things.
EARLY EXPOSURE AND ENRICHMENT

The goal for most breeders from 4 weeks to the time the puppies leave is to create confident resilient puppies. A confident and resilient puppy, does not have as many behavioral challenges down the road. This in turn means that you, as a pet owner, have a dog who is more than capable of adapting to any life changes or circumstances that might be thrown at them.

Finding a breeder who already shows or competes with their dogs lends themselves to always having a puppy appropriate place to take the babies for early socialization. They are going to the show or trial with their other dogs, and it only takes a little bit of effort to set up a pen for the little ones.

This will allow the babies to watch all the other strange dogs and people walk by, and help expose them to many of the different things they need before they head off to their new forever home with you. Offering the babies additional life experiences is built into a reputable breeder’s lifestyle and plans from the very start, while most “pet breeders” will not have those opportunities or think to get the babies out and about safely.

So the next time you are looking for a new family member, keep in mind how much work and effort your breeder is planning to put into your pup before they even come home. Go over everything with your potential breeder before you make a final decision. I know I’ve said it before, but it really is important: this is a companion you will have in your life for the next 10-15 years, make sure you’re doing everything you can to ensure they’re starting off on the right path.
At this point we’ve gone over a lot of really important things to ask and look for that show signs of a good breeder. There are very noticeable differences between a reputable breeder, who is breeding for quality and to improve the breed, and a backyard breeder who is breeding to push out puppies and get as much money as they can.

While asking all of the questions we’ve previously discussed are extremely important, there are still some red flags you can keep an eye out for to ensure you get a high quality companion. Looking for these red flags before you even start asking questions can often save you a lot of time and hassle, but they can appear at any point in the process. Let’s go over several red flags to look for!
Breeding For Color

What is Merle?

How cool is it to have a neat looking dog! Colors are so pretty to look at and might give you an interesting looking pup, but often those colors come with hidden dangers. Each breed has a standard set of colors and patterns that they should come in. That varies from breed to breed, but that doesn't mean that all dogs should come in all colors. The color of a dog’s coat comes strictly from their genetics, and if any dog comes out a different color then the breed standard, they have to be adding in a different breed to their genetic line to get those unique colors.

One of the most common color types getting advertised by backyard breeders is Merle coats. Merle or dapple coloring is the irregular pattern of a darker color on top of a lighter coat color. This usually comes in the form of “blue merle” which is a black pattern on a gray coat, or “red merle” which is a darker brown pattern on a tan coat. While the Merle pattern is absolutely beautiful, there are only certain breeds that should be able to display this colorful pattern and even then there are risks associated with these colors.
Breeding For Color

Risks of Merle

Did you know that breeding two dogs that carry the Merle gene, also known as double dapple or a Merle to Merle breeding gives a significantly increased chance in producing blind and deaf dogs? This is a well known problem that any breeder should be aware of and a quality breeder would ensure to never breed two Merle dogs to get a “prettier” litter despite the risks. How frustrating would it be to spend so much money on a dog who after a few days of being in your home you realize cannot hear you, or cars, or any other dangerous things that could cause them harm.

In some breeds this pairing also gives the inability to process certain common drugs and anesthetics used in common veterinary procedures like spays and neuters. So by not doing basic genetic testing, your poor puppy could die under anesthesia because someone was more concerned about color than healthy puppies.

Many backyard breeders are known to not disclose these health problems in their puppies, and would continue to breed the parents despite concerns for future offspring.

Whereas with a high quality breeder, they would have done the genetic testing to prevent hearing and vision problems to begin with, and wouldn't be breeding two dogs that carry the merle gene. Now even then, sometimes odd genetic things do happen, even when doing all the right things. Should any single puppy have health problems a good breeder will re-evaluate the pairing and potentially pull the breeding parents to prevent future puppies having the same problems.
Breeding For Color

Should it be Merle?

French bulldogs have recently become one of the most popular breeds and we’ve unfortunately seen a huge increase in backyard breeders. Merle Frenchies did not exist until recently. That means that color is not naturally occurring in their gene pool. In order to get a Merle color French Bulldog, someone had to breed another merle dog into their lines creating a mixed breed. What was that dog? Australian Shepherd, Cardigan Welsh Corgi, Great Dane? Who knows?! Was it health tested? Probably not. No responsible breeder would ever let their dog be used to create a color like that. This is also true for many other breeds. So while they have now added a new color to their dog’s genes, they’ve also added in an unknown number of possible health conditions and are no longer breeding a true purebred dog, it is now a mutt. Find out what the normal colors are for your breed of choice and stick to the breed standard colors.
Many of the other “fun” colors you will come across are dilute versions of the proper colors that accidentally happened. Backyard breeders will continue to use that dog in their program because they want to create “unusual” dogs they can sell for more money to people who don’t know any better. Yet once again, there are health conditions that can come along with these colors that you should be aware of. These dilute colors often come with an underlying skin condition that results in the hairs of the coat being so weak they fall out of the follicle causing irreversible baldness. While you may not see any signs of it when they come home, it can start appearing in puppies as young as 6 months, and unfortunately it has no cure.
Health testing is the most important thing you should be getting from your breeder when considering purchasing a puppy. Like I mentioned before, breeders pour their heart and soul into every puppy they create. They are striving to create the best possible version of their dogs to carry on their lines. These breeders should be able to tell you about the parent's hips, elbows, eyes, ears, any genetic markers they carry or don't carry, cardiac function and more! They should know what your puppy's great great grandparent died from and when. Why they chose this particular breeding and what they hope to accomplish. Great breeders can talk about their dogs for hours and will if you let them. I recommend letting them. You will learn so much about the particular dogs you are interested in.
This doesn't mean that you are getting a guarantee that nothing will go wrong health wise with your puppy. What it does mean is that you have a support team if something does go sideways. Great breeders will always be invested in their puppies until the day they die. They want to know when things are not going well, when the puppy is sick or something has come up. It gives them more information on the breeding they did, things that one of the parents might be carrying and what to look out for in future breedings from those parents.

Social Media makes it so easy to stay in contact with your puppy's breeder and reach out to them if something great or something not so great happens. They can also be a great source of advice, living with the mother of your pup, they have raised and cared for a dog who is probably very much like your own. Often some of your puppy traits are also a parent trait and you can commensurate with their love of the trash or uncanny ability to try to unalive themselves.

When looking into getting a puppy, ensure that your breeder has gotten all the possible health testing done and are willing to provide them. If they haven't done the testing or are unwilling to show you the results, it is one of the biggest indicators for a backyard breeder.
So your breeder came up to you and suggested that you keep a certain puppy but they want to be able to breed them when they get to breeding age. That doesn't sound too bad, right? Some breeders will sell their puppies, sometimes for a lower price, to a “guardian home” so they can still use the puppy for their breeding program. This sounds like you have a really special puppy but let's unpack the ultimate reason for this placement.

Ask why the breeder did not keep this puppy if they wanted to use it in their program. Yes, I understand breeders cannot keep all the puppies they produce. However, they should be keeping the best of the litter, or the one who will continue on their breeding program, and finding good homes for the rest of the litter. Oftentimes backyard breeders will place puppies in guardian homes so they can outsource the costs of raising the puppy, as it is the full responsibility of the guardian to cover the costs of food, toys, and veterinary care, while still reaping the benefits from the sale of all the puppies produced.
If the breeder is placing a dog with you as a guardian home, ask what requirements they expect of you to raise the puppy. Many times you are constantly at the breeder’s beck and call and must do everything they ask of you, and you will have very little to no say in the decisions. Remember, you are a guardian, not the owner until your contract ends. Your breeder will expect you to completely take care of that puppy in all aspects unless they want a say in something, and if you don't comply they will take that puppy back. Before agreeing to any type of guardian program ensure you know everything expected out of you.

Some breeders will expect their guardians to show the puppy in conformation or compete in performance sports to see if the puppy matures into a nice dog who should be bred. Is this something you are willing to do? Training and showing is expensive and time consuming. If they just want you to keep the dog on your couch and send it back for 2 to 3 months to be bred and whelp puppies, then maybe they are just trying to get around commercial breeding requirements. The USDA requires licensing of facilities that have more than 4 breeding females on the premises. If all their breeding females are in other homes, this allows commercial facilities to get around this requirement and that is shady.

There are some benefits to guardian homes, but most often they are used by backyard breeders and puppy mills. Many times the only goal of breeders who use guardian homes is to further increase how much money they have in their own pocket with little to no care for you or the puppy you are taking home, which is the exact opposite of everything a reputable breeder should be.
Everyone has seen the HSUS or ASPCA commercials with the dogs in terrible hoarding conditions. That is where your pet store puppy comes from. Hands down, I don’t care what the 17 year old working the register tells you, every single one of their puppies comes from a puppy mill. Also known as a commercial breeding facility. They are commercially producing puppies to make money. The pet store can afford to exist in the mall because of the enormous price mark up on each puppy. The puppies have no health testing, barely basic vaccine history, and leave behind a mom in a dark cage with no human contact.

This is also true for the Amish and mennonite breeding facilities. They view the dogs as livestock and sell them as such. They might have a nicer set up than the puppy mills who sell directly to the pet stores, but the puppy’s parents are still not getting the genetic testing they should be getting, and the puppies are not getting the socialization and exposure they need before coming home with you. They are really cute puppies, and that is how these stores exist in the first place. The puppy sells itself, even when they are outrageously overpriced, and it’s a great setup if you are only trying to make money. That split second decision will cause you a decade of heartbreak. That one purchase keeps the petstore open a little while longer which keeps the puppy mill in business a while longer as well. You will be left with a puppy who has a list of health and behavioral challenges a mile long.
When it comes to reputable breeders compared to backyard breeders there are some very noticeable differences to keep an eye out for. While going through the process of trying to find a puppy, make sure you keep an eye out for these major red flags. If you are ever unsure, don't hesitate to ask more questions. If your potential breeder is annoyed by this then you will now know how huge of a red flag that is. While nobody is perfect, we want you to ensure you keep an eye out for these red flags during the searching process for a high quality breeder. Finding a good breeder may take a while, but it is worth the wait!
Finding the Perfect Puppy

We all love dogs and never want to see them in unhealthy conditions. Unfortunately, the only way to keep these babies out of the living conditions that are shown on the ASPCA commercials or in the local shelter system, and especially out of the hands of people who treat them as puppy producers and a quick cash grab is to develop thick skin. The people who feel they are “rescuing” their puppy from a pet store or unfavorable conditions are the ones who are perpetuating the problem. If puppy mills and pet stores are not making any money off the puppies they produce then they will stop producing puppies.

If you happen upon a situation that you do not think is safe or sanitary for the puppy then don’t be afraid to call the local authorities. They can dispatch animal control who can help to educate the owners and if they need to, help the puppies on the premises by taking them and working to find them good homes. They can also keep an eye on the owners to make sure they are not rapaciously selling puppies to less knowledgeable folks for quick money. The more we can educate people about finding a breeder who truly has the best interest of the puppies in mind, the fewer dogs there will be in the shelter system. Ultimately, this education will help every dog of every age in the world, live better lives with the people who love them. If you are looking for a puppy from a breeder, make sure you do all your research to ensure that you are picking a good and reputable breeder.
Finding your new best friend can be a daunting and overwhelming task. Be patient, and never hesitate to ask for help. Your local trainers would be thrilled to help you through this process. We work with different breeds everyday and are familiar with the traits that they typically possess. Trainers can also help you figure out which puppy would be the best fit for your lifestyle and help you have productive conversations with the breeders you are working with. Many trainers also know of and already work with good breeders so they may be able to help point you in the right direction for the breed you are looking for.

Once you decide on a breed for your family, it is always a great idea to check out breed rescues and shelters during your search. Breed Rescues are the ones who are contacted when shelters find unsavory breeding facilities. Those breed rescues will vet the dogs, learn more about their personalities, and work hard to find them appropriate homes. Just like contacting a breeder, these organizations are run by volunteers and foster homes so be patient when you contact them. Shelters and rescues are a great way to find a companion of any age to fit your lifestyle. You can and will still find puppies in rescues, and if you are interested in looking for a good rescue, keep an eye out for our e-book on finding a rescue.
Finding the Perfect Puppy

We understand that some people have a particular set of traits in mind for their new puppy. Finding a breed with those specific traits is important for setting everyone up for a successful experience. There are people who have no idea what they want in a puppy and they might choose to rescue a mixed breed puppy from the shelter. That is also a great way to find a new best friend. We fully support adoption from our local shelters since they are currently in a crisis trying to find so many dogs their forever homes.

There is currently a major divide between breeders and the “adopt don’t shop” movement that I think needs to be addressed here. Responsible breeders do not allow their puppies to ever end up in the shelter system. They understand that they are responsible for that dog for its entire life and if something happens to its forever home, that puppy or dog will go straight back to the breeder’s home. Puppy mills and backyard breeders are the people producing the dogs who end up filling the shelter system to the absolute brim. I will always be an advocate for adopting your companion from a shelter, but there are many times a breeder might be a better option, so please “adopt or shop responsibly” for your next companion. We hope this has helped educate some of you on how to find your next pup while not contributing to the pet overpopulation issues every city in the country is currently facing.