

So why a Purebred dog??

So as not to open a can of worms, the topic of getting a purebred dog versus adopting a mixed breed is one that I struggle with even as an owner, trainer and breeder of purebred dogs. My wife and I have had and will continue to have both. We have raised and trained a number of purebred dogs to American Kennel Club Championships and obedience titles. At the same time, we have adopted a shelter dog (mix breed) and put an American Kennel Club obedience title on him and he was also a therapy dog. In many respects dogs are dogs and with some love, stable living conditions and training all breeds including mixes can be great members of a family. Oops, sorry, I forgot to mention food. I find that the very best way to have man's best friend become man's best friend is with food.

Yet having had many many dogs in my life, I have come to the conclusion that if asked what I feel is the best way to go, I would have to say purebred dogs. Why? In one major word: predictability. Predictability on how the dog will look and behavioral characteristics, not to mention predictability on health issues. Most are highly unlikely not to exist if your dog came from a reputable breeder. Reputable breeders give health guarantees with their dogs in writing. Why and how? The parents of your pup are health tested to be free of issues associated with that breed. For example, my breed Staffordshire Bull Terriers are genetically predisposed to juvenile cataracts. None of mine have had juvenile cataracts. Why? I have had the parents tested before I bred them. Therefore, I can say with certainty that none of the pups produced by these parents will ever have juvenile cataracts. I put this in writing in my contract with puppy buyers with a refund guarantee. Now while talking about health issues let me take this opportunity to dispel a myth. There is an old saying that mixed breed dogs are healthier than purebreds. Sorry, what you end up with is a dog that can carry predisposed genetic issues from both breeds. So you greatly increase your probability of health issues. Worse yet, the issues are unknown. This is in particular an issue with "Designer" dogs. Note, I said dogs not breeds. Cockapoos, Maltipoos, Labradoodles, Puggles and Goldendoodles for example are ALL mixed breeds. They are no different than what is produced from the neighbor down the street whose lab gets lose and has a romantic interlude with a Great Dane down the

street. Speaking of health issues, let's look at one of the more common "Designer" dogs, the Goldendoodle. Petplace, a major internet source for information on dogs, lists over 40 diseases and genetic issues that Goldendoodles are subject to. Many are caused by genetics. Want an eye opener on bad breeding? Just google the average cost of a luxated patella which is a very common genetic predisposed health issue.

Predictability is not the case with mixed breeds. When one ops for a mixed breed or pays for a mixed breed such as a "Designer dog" (I am not referring to adopting a shelter or rescue dogs) it is "what you see is what you get". At best, you are taking an educated guess at what the pups will look like and act like as adults. It's is a gamble. Now you can get purebreds from a shelter. However, ask yourself what reputable breeder would ever allow one of their pups to end up in a shelter? In fact, I have never personally known a reputable breeder who did not have in their contract that if for any reason the buyer could not keep or care for the dog that it came back to the breeder. So, most purebreds that are in shelters come from less than reputable breeders or buyers ultimately disobeyed the contract and dumped the dog in a shelter.

So how does one know a reputable breeder from a back yard breeder, pet shop or puppy mill?

1. They have health testing done on the parents of the pups prior to breeding.
2. Raises the pups in their home and makes sure they are properly cared for and socialized.
3. Potential buyers are very carefully screened. In other words the home pups go to is the number one priority of the breeder.
4. A contract with the buyer is made stipulating the puppy is correct for the purpose it was purchased for. A vet recorded is provided showing what shots the puppy has had as well as a pedigree, future shots to be given, worming dates and what food is recommended for you puppy. A health guarantee for genetic problems is provided stating that the breeder will take the pup back if things don't work out including cost refund should the pup have genetically linked health issues.
5. The breeder will always be available for questions or assistance as needed.

6. A purebred dog from a reputable breeder will look like, have a temperament like, and be able to do what that breed's stated purpose is with proper training.

Breeding a good dog is not a money making venture. There are a lot of expenses that are incurred in doing it the right way. There are health clearances, stud fees, veterinarian visits, medical care and occasional emergencies. All this before one pup is even born. Additionally, there are the rising cost of dog show venues and field trials to prove your breeding stock, coupled with transportation fees and lodging to get all this accomplished. Anytime you have parents of a puppy that are AKC Champions, Obedience or Field Trial Titled the owner has put countless time and money into getting that dog to that point.

This is not what you will find with a pet store puppy, puppy mill or back yard breeder that just throws a male and female dog together and produces a litter.

But what about a shelter dog?

Before you judge me as someone who hates mixed breeds, that is not the case. My wife and I have fostered, transported, done home visits for and assisted in the adoptions of the toughest shelter dogs there are, mixed breed pit bulls. The purpose of this article is to assist current and future dog owners with some knowledge as it relates to purebred's verses mixed breeds. In fact, it is hoped that this article helps in the reduction of dogs entering shelters. The National Animal Interest Alliance did an extensive study of dog shelter admissions from shelters throughout the country. What they found was both interesting and telling. It is commonly reported that 25% of all shelter dogs are purebred. However, at the same time this percentage has been felt to be high by shelter professionals. The conclusion of the study by NAIA indicated that in fact the 25% number is far from their findings which supported that only 5.04% of all dogs in shelters were found to be purebred. Clearly the results of this study show and support that most shelter dogs are NOT pure bred dogs.

As the heading of this article stated, what about shelter dogs? There are some very, very justified reasons for adopting a dog from a shelter and I commend and support anyone who does so. Let's take a look at a few of them.

1. You are saving a life. Shelter dogs don't ask to be there. They are there for any number of reasons. Some good some not so good, but the bottom line is that if you adopt a dog from a shelter you are saving a life.

2. Cost. This is a mixed bag. On one hand a shelter dog adoption is relatively inexpensive compared to the cost of a purebred dog? However, the medical costs associated with mixed breeds can often far outweigh the cost of a purebred dog from a reputable breeder.

3. You are off to a good medical start with the dog. Any reputable adoption program or shelter will not adopt out a dog which is not up to date with shots and is spayed or neutered. In addition if the dog comes into the shelter with some K-9 disease such as heart worm or parvo, shelters in many cases are quick to provide health care to these dogs.

4. There are advantages to adopting an adult dog from a shelter. Usually they are house trained and you can see what the dog's temperament and looks are. Best of all, they usually are through that "puppy" stage. The youthful energy of biting and clawing have been outgrown.

5. At a shelter you usually have, tragically, a number of dogs to pick from. Take a few that you are interested in for a walk, introduce the dog to your family members, and if you already have a dog or a cat, be sure to do a "meet and greet" to make sure all the animals are compatible. It has been my experience that often the dog picks you as much as you pick the dog.

Lastly, like a box of mixed chocolates, you don't know what you may be biting into. One of the wonderful things about adopting a shelter dog is that although you may have a guess at what breed they may represent, they are in the end a surprise package and that can be a lot of fun.

In the end, whether purebred or mutt, the reasons for getting a dog are many. They make us laugh, keep us healthy, give us a sense of purpose, make us happy, and most of all they are wonderful friends that ask for little but give so much.

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