

Acquiring your Labrador Retriever Puppy

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Since 1991 the Labrador retriever has topped the AKC “charts” for number of new registrations. Sixteen years in the number one spot is pretty impressive and shows the “staying” power. In a free market economy when demand is strong supply will follow. This is the essence of capitalism. However, applying the capitalistic ideology to breeding dogs is a recipe for disaster. Certainly people who breed and nurture pure bred pups are entitled to earn money for their time and efforts. However, far too many breeders of Labrador Retrievers have profit rather than a love of the breed as their modus operandi.

Those who breed Labrador Retrievers solely because they can make money from it damage the reputation of this wonderful breed. They do this by producing inferior quality dogs that do not manifest the outstanding qualities of the true Labrador Retriever. Consequently, it is the family who acquires a pup from such breeders that suffer either financially or emotionally when the even tempered, highly intelligent breed of dog they thought they had acquired turns out to be a far cry from what they bargained for.

Just what do I mean by inferior quality pups? Well, let’s start by looking at what a Labrador Retriever is and what is isn’t. A Labrador Retriever is a dog that possesses a very specific set of physical and mental attributes. Taken collectively these attributes are known as a breed standard. The breed standard represents perfection. It is also a culmination of qualities that allow the dog to perform the specific task for which it was originally bred. Conscientious breeders use the breed standard as the “standard of success”.

The Labrador Retriever’s original function was to retrieve in the icy cold waters of Canada. Later it became more of a gentlemen hunter’s dog. Such work required a dog that like being with and working in close proximity to its human partner and possessed discriminating intelligence. The need to swim especially in cold waters and to traverse marshy lands necessitated physical traits such as a strong second thigh and low set hocks for good rear propulsion, an otter tail, dense coat, well angled shoulders and a muscular chest for swimming as well as picking up birds. The Labrador Retriever standard put into representative of the breed. The Labrador Retriever standard can be found on the American Kennel Club’s website at www.akc.org.

Unfortunately, many members of the dog loving public have come to believe that a Labrador Retriever is any offspring resulting from the mating of an AKC registered Labrador Retriever dam to an AKC register Labrador Retriever sire. Since the AKC is the world’s largest breed registry the aforementioned definition is technically true but definitely inadequate.