

How to Find a Quality Vizsla & Reputable Breeder

You've read articles and books. You've done your research and decided the Vizsla is the breed for you. Now it's time to find a puppy and Vizslas are not that easy to find! Many people turn to a pet store or the want ads. These are NOT the first place to look! Buying a puppy from a reputable breeder is the best way to obtain a puppy you will be happy with for life. Breed rescue is also a good option if you are looking for an adult dog.

Most pet stores deal in large numbers of breeds and obtain their puppies from puppy mills.

Puppy mills have one purpose: to make money. They breed for quantity, not quality.

They rarely, if ever, health check their animals. Puppies from these places are generally not properly socialized (very important for Vizslas), vaccinated, or wormed. They pay no attention to the conformation breed standard nor to temperament. The adult dogs are kept in filthy conditions. Puppy mill puppies' adult looks and temperaments are unpredictable.

The same is true of the "backyard breeder" whose ad you see in the newspaper. Many of these people are simply careless or misguided. They want a litter so their children can experience it or they want a puppy from their bitch or the litter was accidental. Don't overrule the profit motive for some. Many times these people have no idea what goes into producing a litter of healthy, sound puppies. They have no intention of standing behind that puppy any more than the pet store beyond the 48-hour health guarantee.

You may pay less for the puppy to begin with, but you'll pay much more in vet bills and emotional bills than you would from a reputable breeder.

How do I find a Reputable breeder?

Start by contacting local Vizsla Clubs to see if they have a Breeder Referral program or Breeder List. Another source is looking through dog magazines: Dog World, Dog Fancy, Dogs USA, Gun Dog. The first three magazines list upcoming shows throughout the country. Attend a show and purchase a show catalog. Talk to exhibitors after they are done showing (many exhibitors are tense before they go into the ring, so ask to talk to them when they are finished exhibiting). Most exhibitors are willing and eager to talk about their breed.

Search the internet. The Ingle & Mead web site is a good source of information. Also, there are Vizsla Email Lists on YahooGroups and SmartGroups that you can join. Our CWVC web site contains helpful resources: "Reputable Breeder Resources" on "The Vizsla" web page, and many categorized, helpful links on "Other Stuff".

How do I know a good breeder from bad?

Someone who shows their dogs, has clean kennels and belongs to the right clubs is not necessarily a good breeder. A pedigree filled with champion ancestors and field titles does not insure your getting a good puppy. You need to ask the right questions and know what to watch for.

Don't be afraid to ask to come over for a visit prior to the breeding to spend time with the Vizslas. It is VERY important that when you are told Vizslas are active dogs, you know what that means. More than one Vizsla has been returned because their owners did not know they were "that active". Good breeders would rather have you decide the breed is too active for you BEFORE you purchase a puppy and are willing to spend time for you to find that out.

What are the conditions of the facilities used for the litter? Is it clean? Where is it located? If the puppy area is located away from the main living quarters, ask if the puppies are allowed in the house and what has been done to socialize them. Puppies should be handled from the time they are born. They need to be exposed to different sights and sounds from birth. They need to be exposed to different types of people. If the facilities are dirty and the puppies cower in a corner, look elsewhere. If the breeder says they are never in the house and little socialization has been done, leave without a puppy.

Ask to see the parents. With Vizslas, it is not uncommon for the sire to live elsewhere, but the dam should be clean, friendly, and outgoing. If the litter is very young and mom is with them, you may see some protectiveness via growling or barking. This is acceptable behavior.

Time for the Interview

Expect to be interviewed at length by the breeder. A concerned breeder wants to make sure that the puppies are going to homes where they will live a long and happy life. They want to know that you are willing and able to take care of health and emotional needs of the Vizsla. Some common questions breeders ask are:

- Are you aware of problems in this breed?
- Are you aware of temperament traits of the Vizsla?
- Do you know the size and characteristics of an adult Vizsla?
- Do you have a fenced-in yard?
- How will you exercise your dog and who will do it? How often?
- Will you keep the dog in the house?
- Do you have children?
- Does everyone in your family want this dog?

Expect to be educated if you do not know answers to all these questions. If you have children, a reputable breeder will want to meet them. Someone who cannot handle their own children will not be able to handle a Vizsla. If not everyone wants the dog, chances are good that the dog will end up in rescue. Everyone must be in agreement before buying a Vizsla or any breed of dog.

What Questions Should YOU Ask?

Learn about the health problems of a breed BEFORE you go to a breeder, then ask the question: "What are the health problems in this breed?" If you've done your research, this is a good way to know if a breeder is being honest with you.

- Have both parents been checked for these problems?
- Can I have copies of the certificates and reports?

- What health problems have you in particular encountered over the years?
- What guarantees do you give and under what circumstances?
- What traits did you consider when planning this litter (temperament, hunting ability, conformation)?
- Will the breeder give references?
- What are the drawbacks or negatives of this breed?

NOTE: If the breeder does not have negatives to go with the positives, or worse yet, says there are not any negatives, run the other way!

Breeder Contracts

Most reputable breeders use a contract as a way of setting down agreements and guarantees of the sale. This protects both the breeder and the buyer. Contracts usually cover health guarantees, responsibilities of the breeder and buyer, and most will state that the breeder will take the dog back if it isn't satisfactory for whatever reason. Many breeders have spay/neuter clauses or limited registrations for pet quality (as opposed to show quality) puppies. Requiring the puppy be spayed or neutered is a way of controlling many accidental or misguided breedings and pet over population. Please don't be put off when a breeder insists on a contract - it is for your protection.

Picking Out the Puppy

If you have done your research and found the Vizsla litter that is right for you, the chances of getting a puppy you will be happy with increases immensely. Don't be in a hurry to get a Vizsla puppy. Wait for the litter that seems to fit your needs.

It is not unusual for a breeder to NOT allow a buyer to pick their own puppy. A family with children will be happier with a more docile puppy than the dominant "HERE I AM!" puppy from a litter. A breeder may pick the puppy for you, or give you a choice of only two or three from the litter. The breeder is concerned about making a match for the life of the puppy. Rely on their knowledge of the breed and their observations of the litter to pick the pup that is best for you. Chances are you will not be disappointed.

If you are allowed to pick from the litter, avoid any puppy who seems ill. Actually, if there is a puppy in a litter that seems ill, you may want to avoid that litter entirely. Puppies should be active, happy, and outgoing, with no sign of fear. Approaching you with caution is acceptable as long as the puppy then relaxes and plays. Pups that cringe in the corner could develop into fear biters. On the other hand, the pup that rushes to you happily, shoving all littermates aside in order to be the first to you, the one who bites at your hands and jumps at your chin will be a handful, needing strong discipline and an experienced owner. If you are not an experienced owner, you will probably want to choose a puppy that falls somewhere inbetween these two extremes.

*Vizslas are a wonderful breed
but they are not for everyone.*

*Take the time to research thoroughly
before buying a puppy.*

*Take the time to find a responsible
concerned breeder.*

You will find it is time well spent.

Vizsla puppies, as well as any other breed, are a commitment for the life of the dog. If you spend the time up front finding the right breeder and litter, you can look forward to many happy years with your new family member.