

Oh, to be a puppy BUYER!

Australian Terrier Breed Column
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Sometimes in life it is insightful to be on the other side of the coin to increase your depth of understanding of a particular event or situation. This year I have the opportunity to increase and evolve my pack by the purchase of one puppy and the anticipation of purchasing a second one. Talk about a new understanding and appreciation of the anticipation/anxiety/questions that puppy buyers go through!

I have had Australian Terriers for almost 15 years and have bred 6 litters. Of those puppies, I have three that reside with me, and one is a 2nd generation bred-by! I also co-own six others. Those puppies visit me on a regular basis, along with others that were sold as pets, to be shown or just groomed, stay while their owner's are on vacation or "just because". Admittedly this is a small number of puppies compared with much bigger breeders, but it has given me the opportunity to watch traits, characteristics, and personalities develop over time. For early litters, I had to rely heavily on the evaluations of my Australian Terrier breeder mentors, and experienced breeders of other breeds, to choose which puppy should be kept and "grown out" to be shown and possibly bred in the future. While, with each litter I have improved my observation and evaluation skills, I feel lucky to have ultimately matched the perfect puppy with each puppy buyer. (Only two puppies ever have come back to me -- one because the husband was highly allergic, and the second because the husband bought a golden retriever puppy at the same time, and house training of both puppies together didn't go very well. Both of these returned puppies went to much better homes in the long run!)

For each litter I have taken hundreds of photos, along with dozens of videos, over the first 12+ weeks of the puppies' lives to share with prospective buyers. Several long emails, phone conversations, and in-home visits were conducted with each buyer to discuss their wants and needs, and my expectations for the future of their puppy. Sometimes these conversations included pictures and stories of Aussies and/or other dogs that exist or have existed in their lives and how this new one will fill a void or enrich their lives. But they always include excitement when meeting the puppies for the first time, be it in person or via photos and video. Then come the questions about personalities and how they will develop. This is usually followed with a desire to see each stage of the puppy's development (via pictures or visits)... when they open their eyes, when they first start moving around, start making noise, playing, eating, etc. Then the anxiety that the puppy I pick will be the "best" one for them. Normally these are followed by more excitement, anticipation, anxiety and/or questions on the day they pick up their puppy to go home.

Now I am the one waiting with bated breath for the pictures and info, wondering if the puppy chosen will be the right one for me. Luckily, I have had the opportunity

to have observed both of the breeders' dogs over the years, so I know the pedigrees/personalities of the puppies parents, and I explicitly trust their ability to choose the best puppy for me. Of course, this doesn't make the waiting and anticipation any easier! The first puppy is perfect! I'm still going through the puppy buyer anxieties for the second, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

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