

ARE YOU SURE YOU ARE SUITABLE FOR A GOLDEN RETRIEVER??

Frequently asked questions about purchasing a Golden Retriever

"Buyer Beware"

You may be interested in a Golden Retriever for a variety of reasons:

- A family pet.
- A hunting dog.
- An obedience competitor.
- A show dog.
- A combination of all the above.

Whatever your objective, YOU, as the dog owner, will be responsible for the care and training that will enable your Golden to fulfill it's potential.

If you want just a watchdog, you should **NOT** get a Golden Retriever. Although its size and initial barking might deter an intruder, the typical Golden is adaptable, friendly to everyone, gentle (although physically active), and committed to carrying things around in its mouth including the intruders flashlight!!

If you are a fastidious housekeeper (or are married to one), you should **NOT** get a Golden. Most Golden Retrievers shed their coat throughout the year, and quite profusely in the spring, in spite of diligent daily brushing. Also most Golden Retrievers love to get wet. If there is water on your property your Golden will be wet, and possibly muddy, a frustrating amount of the time.

If you want a one man dog, prefer cats to dogs, or not home much, you should **NOT** get a Golden Retriever. Golden Retrievers are very people orientated, and aren't happy as kennel dogs.

Most people prefer to get a young puppy and raise it themselves. This can be very rewarding, but also time consuming and sometimes frustrating. Other people prefer a dog that is out of its puppyhood and has already been 'civilised'. Here we will discuss the pros and cons of both, and how to select a Golden Retriever of any age.

Our hope is that we will help you understand the Golden Retriever, and decide if this is the breed for you.

WHAT IS A GOLDEN RETRIEVER ?

The Golden Retriever was developed in Scotland and England in the late 19th Century for the purpose of retrieving wild fowl on land or water. It's physical characteristics and its willing, adaptable, trainable nature may also have fitted it for usefulness in many other endeavours.

The Golden Retriever is a 'natural' dog needing no surgical alterations to ears or tails, and no exotic grooming, to keep it looking characteristic of the breed (as opposed to some terriers, poodles, etc.). The Golden has a normal canine structure without distortions of leg, jaw or tail, and is characteristically a healthy, sturdy, adaptable animal. Basic grooming for a Golden should take no more than 20 to 30 minutes a week.

The mature male Golden is ideally from 22 to 24 inches at the shoulder, and weighs 70 to 80 lbs (32 to 37 kgs). Bitches, 20 to 22 inches, and 60 to 70 lbs (27 to 32 kgs). The build is sturdy and muscular, but neither massive like a Newfoundland, nor refined like a setter. The head is broad, with well proportioned,

well set on ears, and a kindly expression. The coat, which is one of the most characteristic features of the breed, is a 'double coat' with a thick, weather proof top coat, and a dense, soft undercoat. There are featherings of longer hair on the backs of the legs, on the front of the neck and chest, and on the tail. The adult coat may range in colour from a cream to a dark gold, and the darker Golden can have a lighter feathering. A predominate colour of either white or setter red, or white markings on the head, feet or chest, are not desirable in the show ring, but have no effect on the dogs usefulness for work or companionship. The physical characteristics of the Golden Retriever are more fully described under the section "Breed Standard"

CHOOSING A GOLDEN RETRIEVER

What are you looking for in a Golden Retriever?

- A beautiful animal
- A good family pet
- A good hunting dog
- A good Obedience worker

There are Golden Retrievers that fit each description, and some that fit all of the descriptions. THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER CLUB INC. has members whose interest in the breed has led them to develop the potential of the Golden in each of these areas.

Golden Retrievers also work as 'Pets as Therapy', appear in many commercials and advertisements, and are one of the preferred breeds of veterinarians.

There is no question that the Golden is a versatile and remarkable breed.

Before you even start looking at litters of puppies, take time to learn about the breed. Attend dog shows, obedience trials or field trials. The Golden Retriever Club of NSW Inc. meets on the first Tuesday of each month, Feb-Nov, at the Bill Spilstead Canine Complex, Luddenham Road, Erskine Park, starting at 8pm). Talk and question Golden owners. They are proud of their dogs and breed and are happy to share their enthusiasm.

Look around. It's much easier to find the 'puppy farm' or 'back yard' breeder, that knows and cares little about the welfare of the breed, than it is to find a reputable breeder. Have patience and never buy on impulse. We have all heard "can I have that little doggy in the window", but all puppies are cute and NEVER buy on impulse. The Golden Retriever Club of NSW Inc., and other interstate breed club members can supply you with a list of conscientious breeders in your area who will help you in your search, even though they might not have anything for sale themselves.

Read and re-read the sections on this site about hereditary problems. You want a sound, healthy representative of the breed.

Careful selection now will save heartache and money later. Poor quality puppies are produced by people who breed their pets just to have litter, or by profit seekers who give little thought to quality, looks or temperament in the puppies they produce. Many of these indiscriminately bred puppies have health problems, poor temperaments, and or breed disqualifications. Remember, you are choosing a companion for the next 10 to 15 years.

PRICE

A poorly bred 6 week old puppy selling at what appears a 'bargain price' is NO BARGAIN! The chances are that the parents were not tested for hereditary defects, that the puppies had little, if any, veterinary care, and that they were not given the proper socialisation and TLC that is needed to raise a healthy litter of Golden Retriever puppies.

Don't forget to ask about (and sight) the necessary Hip, Elbow, Eye and Heart certificates of EACH of the

parents and ensure that they have been issued by qualified Specialists in their respective fields. Do not accept any excuses for their absences. Dedicated breeders ensure their breeding stock have the required clearances.

SEX

Temperamentally, there is very little difference between the sexes in Golden Retrievers. Neither sex is harder to house train, and both are equally intelligent and affectionate. Both are excellent with children, and both make excellent companions. Problems of aggressiveness which males of other breeds may exhibit, rarely occurs in the Golden.

Sex related behaviour such as mounting and marking may be exhibited by some male Golden Retrievers, particularly if other males are present, or if the male has been used at stud. Neutering a male before one (1) year of age will not only help to alleviate these problems, but will eliminate the risk of testicular cancer, and lower the risk of prostate cancer. Since there is no responsible reason not to spay a bitch unless she was bought specifically for showing or breeding, the oestrus cycle in the female need not be a consideration.

CHOOSING A REPUTABLE BREEDER

Choosing a reputable breeder is very important. Since it would be almost impossible for you to know what the puppy you are buying will grow up to be physically and emotionally, you must rely on your faith in the person from whom you are purchasing your puppy. There are three (3) options open to you in choosing this person.

1. Pet Shop or Dealer

The worst possible choice. The puppies are poorly bred and raised. They are thought of as merchandise to be sold for a high profit. The high profit results because little has been put into the breeding or the care of the puppies. Many are sickly. Pet shops rely heavily on impulse buying, which is not the way to choose an addition to the family.

2. Backyard Breeder

Also a poor choice. This is the person who owns a pet Golden and thinks it would be 'fun' to have puppies, that it would be a great experience for the children, or that the bitch should be bred once before she is spayed. Even worse, perhaps it's being done just to make money. Usually this breeder knows little about the 'breed standard' or history of the breed, and still less about care. The casual breeder does not have annual eye examinations done by an ophthalmologist, and does not send hip x-rays to be scored. The backyard breeder is not aware of breed problems, and doesn't care. This person's only goal is to produce puppies, and when the 'fun' is over, sells them quickly.

3. Serious Hobby Breeder

The **very best choice**. The serious and dedicated hobby breeder regards his/her dogs as even more than a hobby, although the true fancier does not expect to make a profit. When someone is involved in dogs for the enjoyment of each individual animal, for participating in any of the many aspects of 'dog sports', and for the challenge of producing the finest animals possible, the result is superior. These breeders acknowledge responsibility for each and every puppy produced, and stand behind every dog they have bred.

Unequivocally, your choice should be from the ranks of the serious hobby breeder. It is an interesting fact that poor quality puppies from pet shops and backyard breeders are often sold for the same price, and sometimes even more, than those purchased from the serious hobby breeder.

HOW DOES ONE RECOGNISE THE SERIOUS HOBBY BREEDER ?

Presented below is a list of requirements the breeder should meet before you consider purchasing a puppy. Don't be afraid to confront the breeder with these requirements. It is your right, and you can rest assured that the dedicated breeder will respond positively and with pride.

The breeder should:

- Belong to a Golden Retriever Club located in their State or Territory. The reason for this requirement is that this sort of participation indicates depth of involvement in the breed. This breeder is exposed to other points of view, learns more about the breed and modern breeding practices, and is kept up to date on Australian National Canine Council Rules and Regulations. If the breeder does not belong to a breed club, contact the Club to make sure that their membership has not been cancelled for misconduct etc.
- Be involved in showing his/her dogs in the breed ring, the obedience ring, retrieving trials or in a combination of all three. The reason for this requirement is that it means that the breeder is not breeding in a vacuum. The breeder who does not participate has no idea how good his/her dogs really are, and is deprived of the opportunity to share information and ideas with others. Showing provides the competition which encourages breeders to produce better dogs. The breeder who competes wants to prove how good his/her dogs are and is putting his/her breeding program on the line. This breeder is not relying on just a pedigree to indicate quality.

Even if you do not want a competition animal, you deserve a pet that was the end result of a carefully planned litter, a puppy which received the same care as a potential champion. The breeder who competes in organised activities is known by others, and has a reputation to uphold. This breeder will be as careful and honest in selling your pet puppy as in selling show stock.

- Ask you what kind of dogs you have had in the past, and what happened to them; whether or not you have fenced yard; if the dog will be allowed to be a member of the family. Sincere breeders will be a bit hesitant to sell you a puppy until they know more about you, and what you are looking for in a dog, and what 'life style' you have in mind for your dog. Having the best interest of the puppy at heart, to say nothing of yours and theirs. Reputable breeders will take great pains to place puppies properly the first time round. A returned puppy is a traumatic experience for all concerned, so the breeder who is always willing to accept a puppy back will try to make certain that a Golden Retriever is the breed for you.
- Be able to give you references; names of people who have purchased puppies in the past, names of other breeders, name of the veterinarian who provides care for the breeders dogs.
- Be able to show you proof that both the sire and dam of the litter have had their eyes examined by an ophthalmologist within the last twelve (12) months, have had their hips and elbows x-rayed and scored and more recently, holds a clear heart certificate issued by a veterinary cardiologist.. The breeder should also be willing to answer your questions about any other possible hereditary problems.
- Be able to show you a clean environment, healthy, well socialised puppies, and a dam with a good temperament.

- ***You should avoid:***

shy, whimpering, fearful puppies.

puppies with dull coats, crusty or running eyes, signs of diarrhoea, rashes or sores on their abdomen.

signs of neglect, such as lack of water, pans of uneaten food, and dirty conditions.

a breeder who will sell a puppy under eight (8) weeks of age, as early separation from the dam and litter mates can be very detrimental both psychologically and physically.

a breeder who lets you handle a very young puppy, as there is a real risk of transmitting disease before they are vaccinated.

- Provide you with a record of the dates and types of vaccinations and worming done, feeding instructions, a copy of a three (3) to five (5) generation pedigree, and registration papers if you intend to show or trial your puppy. Explain how to register the puppy in your name.
- Give you written instructions on feeding, training and care. Both pedigrees and registration papers are provided by reputable breeders at NO extra charge for show and trial dogs. This should not be confused with withholding papers until the dog has been spayed or neutered, which is how puppies not purchased for showing/breeding are sold by many reputable breeders. This is done to help stop the backyard breeders.
- Give you a period of time in which to allow you to have the puppy examined by a veterinarian to determine its state of health, so that both of you are assured as to the condition of the puppy at the time of sale. If a problem should arise, it can then be quickly resolved.
- Make it clear that his/her responsibility continues long after you have taken your puppy home and in fact as long as the dog is alive. Many dedicated breeders will ask that the dog be returned them, or placed with new owners who meet their approval if for any reason you are unable to keep the dog. They'll cheerfully be available for advice whenever needed, and can ease your way over many rough spots.

If your breeder meets all these requirements, you are in good hands. If you find yourself with a negative response to any of these requirements, think twice and discuss the situation with someone else. **DO NOT** be impulsive and **DO** ask questions.

PICKING A PUPPY

Once you have found a breeder that you trust, its time to think about a puppy again. Take your time. You might have to wait weeks, or even months, for the 'right' litter to be whelped, and it can be well worth the wait. If you are fortunate, and more than one good litter is available at the same time in your area, you can compare puppies, pedigrees and parents. You may be asked to put a deposit of \$ 50. 00 or more on the puppy of your choice if the puppies are not yet eight (8) weeks old. Good litters seldom go begging, and it is not uncommon for a choice litter to be completely spoken for by the time the puppies are eight (8) weeks of age, and ready to go to their new homes.

Be sure that the breeder knows if you want the puppy for a particular purpose other than just a companion (such as a show prospect, obedience dog or hunting dog), and have the breeder help with the selection of the puppy. Very few litters have more than a few real 'show prospects' in them, but a 'pet quality' puppy from a well bred litter has all the potential of growing up to be a sturdy, healthy Golden of proper size and temperament.

Almost all Golden puppies are appealing, but you need to look for more than 'cuteness'. They should be sturdy in build, with straight legs. They should feel firm and muscular, and be squirmy and active at first when picked up, but willing to relax and accept being held and cuddled for a short time. Coats should be clean and thick, eyes, nose and ears free of discharge or irritation, and the puppies should not be pot bellied. Gums should be pink, not pale. Dark pigment around the eyes, with black nose and foot pads is preferred, although this might not be important to you in a dog that is to be a companion only. White markings are not correct in a show or breeding animal, but again this dog does not affect the puppies usefulness otherwise.

Golden puppies are born much lighter than their adult colour, even a very pale coloured puppy will

probably become a good gold shade if the ears show the proper gold puppy.

If the breeder offer you several puppies to choose from, take each of the puppies you are considering away from the rest of it's litter mates, and observe it's reactions to the environment and to you. Puppies at seven (7) to eight (8) weeks of age should be willing to explore their environments, and although perhaps a little bit cautious at first, they should investigate new objects and be fairly self assured. Speak to the puppy and see if it will follow you as you move away. Roll a ball or other toy to see if it has the instinct to watch, chase, carry and possibly even return to you with the ball. Some puppies are slower to develop the retrieving instinct than others, but you should not consider a puppy which does not show some interest in or awareness of a moving object. See if the puppy exhibits the type of personality you would want to live with.

Perhaps the bold, brash puppy that never stops getting into things would be too much for you, and the more easy going fellow who's agreeable and a bit more receptive to your guidance would be a better choice.

CONSIDERING THE OLDER DOG

If you aren't prepared to go through the trials and training of a baby puppy, an older puppy, or even a mature dog, can be a good alternative, especially in households in which the family pet may have to spend much of the day unsupervised. Golden Retrievers are very adaptable, and a Golden of any age with a good temperament can become a member of the family in a very short time.

There are many reasons that older dogs are available. Breeders often hold puppies until it is old enough to determine it's show or breeding potential, a brood bitch that has been bred once or twice is retired or circumstances change and the breeder is helping someone place a much loved pet they have had to part with. The reasons are myriad, but whatever they may be, the older dog is available. He is house broken, knows many commands, and has formed many behaviour patterns. If the dog has been loved and well taken care of, he will continue to give love and devotion to his new owners because a properly raised Golden loves and needs people. Never be hesitant to take a good natured older dog into your home. Although it may be confused at first and cause a few problems, patience, consistency and reassurance are the key words. The dog's self confidence will return, and it will adapt readily to your routine.

Try to find out all that you can about the older dog that you are considering, so that you can determine if his temperament is compatible with yours. Learn as much as possible about his habits, daily routine, likes and dislikes, diet and past history. It is important that all family members meet the dog before its adoption, and agree that this is the dog they want.

It is best to acquire the dog when the household member with primary responsibility for the dog's care and training will be at home full time for the first few days. Time must be taken to make clear that the dog knows where it is to sleep, relieve itself, where and when it will eat, and what it can and cannot do in the house. In short, it has to learn the routine it will be following and what is expected of it.

Give the dog a month or so to settle in to its new environment, and gain confidence in its new owners before beginning formal obedience training. Even if the dog has had some obedience training, attending class is an excellent way to brush up on its training and help you understand its responses and personality more completely. You'll enjoy working together.

If you rescue a mistreated or abandoned Golden Retriever through a Golden Retriever Club rescue service or a Humane Society, and give it your affection, it will reward you with eternal love and gratitude. These dogs may well be of unknown background, and bring you a few more problems than those with a more favourable history, but the rewards can be great.

HEREDITARY PROBLEMS

The vast majority of dogs of all breeds (as well as mixed breeds) can live, long healthy lives if given proper care and routine veterinary attention. Nevertheless, any dog can fall victim to a wide range of

acquired problems, just as humans can. They range from acne and viral diseases to allergies and cancer, and so on. In addition, each pure breed of dog has its own particular hereditary problems, some minor, some impairing, and some possibly fatal.

The Golden Retriever is no exception and unfortunately, the problems multiply with indiscriminate breeding. Failure to screen for hereditary problems before breeding often results in the 'doubling up' of unfavourable genes, and the results are distressing for the buyer and dog alike. The following, while not all inclusive, are some of the more common hereditary problems that may be encountered in Golden Retrievers.

HIP DYSPLASIA

The term hip dysplasia means poor development of the formation of the hip joint, and describes a developmental disease in young dogs of many breeds. Unsound hip joints are a common problem in the larger breeds, and hip dysplasia can be a serious problem in any dog.

Hip dysplasia is an inherited defect with a polygenic (many genes) mode of inheritance. The degree of heritability is moderate in nature, meaning that the formation of the hip joints can also be modified by environmental factors such as poor nutrition, excessively rapid growth, and certain traumas during the growth period of the skeleton. As with any quantitative trait, hip joint conformation can range from good to bad, with all shades in between.

Signs of hip dysplasia cannot be detected in the newborn puppy, but usually appear in the rapid growth period between four (4) and nine (9) months of age. Signs of the disease can vary widely from slight irregularities of gait, to crippling lameness.

Improvement or even apparent disappearance of lameness can occur as the dog matures, as a result of the joint stabilising, inflammation subsiding, and muscular strengthening. However, the dysplastic dog will usually develop arthritis in later life.

The only accurate means of determining the condition of the hip joint is by proper x-ray examination. Sedation will be needed to restrain the dog so that a diagnostic film can be made, as positioning is of great importance. Signs of hip dysplasia found on x-ray include shallow sockets, irregular shape of the femoral heads, looseness of the joint, and degenerative joint disease or osteoarthritis.

Hip dysplasia can sometimes be diagnosed by x-ray between six (6) and twelve (12) months of age, but this is not entirely reliable, and dogs intended for breeding should be x-rayed when fully mature in order to select for sound hips. Twelve (12) months of age is considered to be minimum age for accurate x-ray determination of desirable conformation.

X-rays should be scored by the A.V.A. or Australian Canine Scoring Schemes.

The dysplastic dog should not be used for breeding, but may well lead a long, happy, useful life. During the acute phase, of the disease, your veterinarian may suggest rest and supportive care. Moderate and regular exercise, control of weight, and perhaps anti-inflammatory drugs are helpful in the older dog. Many Golden Retrievers with hip dysplasia will show no outward signs at all, until perhaps seven (7) or eight (8) years of age when muscle tone decreases and arthritis and wear and tear on the joint becomes more noticeable.

Golden Retrievers and other breeds of retrievers often seem to have high pain thresholds, and do not show signs of pain when other breeds might be very uncomfortable. An x-ray does not always show how your dog feels, as many dysplastic Golden Retrievers are completely unaware that they have a problem.

EYE DISEASE

Hereditary cataracts are a common hereditary eye problem in the Golden Retriever breed. 'Cataract' by definition is any opacity within the lens of the eye. At least one type of hereditary cataract appears at an early age in affected Golden Retrievers, and while these may or may not interfere with the dog's vision, some do

progress into severe or total loss of sight. There are also non hereditary cataracts which sometimes occur, and examination by a veterinary ophthalmologist is necessary to determine if the cataract is or is not of concern from a genetic standpoint. If there is any question, the dog is certainly not to be recommended for breeding.

A few families of Golden Retrievers carry genes for progressive retinal atrophy (PRA) which is progressive deterioration of the light receptive area (retina) of the eye, and may result in complete blindness at a fairly young age. There are also other eye defects, such as retinal dysplasia, that prevent consideration of a dog as a breeding animal.

Eyelid and eyelash problems also may occur in the breed, some with an hereditary basis, others are sometimes due to other factors. Entropion and ectropion are the turning in or turning out of the eyelids. Distichiasis involves eyelashes rubbing on, and irritating, the eye. Surgery may be needed to correct these problems, and while it is a fairly simple procedure, such dogs should not be bred with.

Nuclear sclerosis, the 'bluish haze' of the eye seen in older dogs, is a normal part of the age related change in the lens of the eye and is not a problem. Examination of breeding stock should be done annually, until at least eight (8) years of age and preferably longer, as hereditary eye problems can develop at varying ages. The examination should be made by a veterinary ophthalmologist, who has the special equipment and training needed to properly examine the dog's eyes.

OTHER ORTHOPAEDIC PROBLEMS

There are a number of orthopaedic problems besides hip dysplasia which also may occur in the growing dog. Among these are panosteitis, osteochondritis dissecans, luxated patella, and other problems. It is suspected that there may well be some hereditary disposition to such conditions, so even though surgery may be able to correct some of these problems, there is some question whether dogs affected with any of these conditions should be considered for breeding.

EPILEPSY

Seizure disorders may arise from a variety of environmental factors including viral infections, other diseases, and trauma. In some cases there is no ascertainable cause other than perhaps some inherent factor resulting in a low threshold to the stimuli setting off the seizures. One or perhaps two isolated seizures do not necessarily constitute a problem, but dogs subject to recurring seizures should not be bred. Often the veterinarian can recommend medication which will control the seizures, although medication is not always effective, and many dog owners are not always willing to try and live with this problem.

SUBVALVULAR AORTIC STENOSIS

Subvalvular Aortic Stenosis (SAS) is a congenital heart problem that can occur sporadically in any breed. SAS is a defect in the heart valve that will ultimately be fatal to the affected dog. No outward abnormalities are evident in a dog affected with SAS. Through auscultation with an extremely sensitive stethoscope and using ultrasound, a veterinarian specializing in cardiology can evaluate heart function in dogs of any age.

Murmurs that may indicate SAS can be detected in puppies as young as 7 or 8 weeks of age. If a murmur is heard, the affected puppy should be re-checked in a few weeks to determine if the murmur is innocent or indicates SAS. Puppies will outgrow innocent murmurs, but a murmur indicating SAS will remain as the dog matures, and these dogs should be tested more thoroughly.

Responsible breeders test both sire and dam for SAS before breeding. All cardiac evaluation for SAS should be done by an ACVIM Board Certified Cardiologist or an individual with special training in clinical cardiology. Your veterinarian can recommend a cardiac specialist.

BREEDING YOUR GOLDEN RETRIEVER

Breeding is not for beginners. It is hard to do well as it is easy to do. UNTIL you can satisfy the requirements that the serious hobby breeder should meet, as presented in the section of this booklet entitled 'Choosing a Reputable Breeder', you will be doing the breed an injustice if you have a litter of puppies.

Consider Your Motives. If you think that:

Having Puppies Would Be Fun

It is also very time consuming and demanding. By four (4) weeks of age a Golden litter of eight is active, dirty, noisy and potentially destructive. Illness or death of the dam or puppies can be expensive, emotional and no fun at all.

It Would Be Educational For The Children

So would a litter of mice. Bitches do not whelp at your convenience, and the children are often in school, or in bed at the time of delivery. Care of the pregnant bitch, and properly raising and socialising puppies is work for a responsible adult.

It Would Help Us Get Back Our Investment

You may find that the rate of return is very low. Stud fee, veterinary fees, advertising, and the daily care and feeding of a litter is very expensive. You may be able to sell three (3) or four (4) puppies out of a litter of ten(10). Even experienced breeders sometimes have difficulty selling puppies.

It Would Help Fulfil The Dogs Needs

You are anthropomorphising. While the instinct for procreation is strong, the dog has no conscious knowledge of what it is missing, no regrets and no guilt feelings. Spaying or neutering will remove the instinct and the problems often associated with it, such as wandering and marking. Pregnancy not only contributes nothing to a bitch's health, but sometimes causes problems. A spayed bitch cannot be accidentally bred, and will not be subject to the uterine infections in older, intact females.

It Will Improve The Bitches Temperament If She Is Bred

You are wrong. No animal whose temperament needs improving should be bred in the first place, since temperament is most often the result of hereditary factors. And while raising a litter will not only not make an improvement in the dam's temperament, it will also probably result in a litter of unsatisfactory puppies who will be imprinted by their unstable dam. There is also the possibility that the bitch will be an unsatisfactory mother, necessitating much more work on your part.

Consider Your Resources

Raising a litter is a demanding project. Do you:

Have The Facilities For Whelping And Raising A Litter Properly?

You need a warm, quiet, secure area, easily cleaned, to properly confine and care for a litter of eight (8) fast growing puppies while they are with their mother, and a similar larger area for use after weaning.

Have The Time To Devote To This Project?

Time to take or send a bitch for breeding, sit up for hours during whelping, and hand raise the litter if the bitch is unable to. Time to buy and prepare food, feed and clean up four (4) to five (5) times daily. Time to go to the veterinarian for check ups, inoculations, or with a sick dam or puppy. Time to individually

socialise each puppy daily. Time to answer phone calls, talk with prospective buyers, and answer the same questions over and over again. Time for all the paper work required, including typing accurate pedigrees, health records, care instructions, records of sale, and so on.

Have The Money To Put Into The Project?

Can you afford to pay the stud fee, inoculations and veterinary care for the bitch and puppies, as well as other expenses. What if the bitch has problems necessitating a caesarean section? What if the puppies die? What if the bitch dies, or cannot raise the puppies? Can you afford to feed and provide veterinary care for 2 or 3 four (4) month old puppies that didn't sell? Can you afford to refund the purchase price on a puppy that proves to be unsound or unsuitable?

Consider Your Dogs Quality

Is your dog truly an outstanding representative of the breed? 'Pretty, friendly and smart' is not nearly enough.

1. Temperament

Your dog must be absolutely sound and stable, with a personality and disposition appropriate for the breed. Shyness, aggressiveness, gunshyness, lack of retriever ability or trainability, and hyperactivity are all reasons not to breed, regardless of other qualities.

2. Breed Type And Quality

Your dog must be structurally and functionally sound, with conformation characteristics appropriate for the breed. An experienced, knowledgeable exhibitor/breeder can assist in the evaluation of your dogs adherence to the breed standard.

3. Soundness

Your dog should be tested free of certain genetic defects, as should the proposed mate. Knowledge of the status of parents, grandparents, siblings, etc., with regard to genetic testing is also desirable. Hips should be properly x-rayed and submitted for scoring. Eyes should be examined annually and be free of hereditary cataracts, central progressive retinal atrophy, and any eye anomaly.

4. Pedigree

A four (4) or five (5) generation pedigree on the proposed litter should be read and interpreted by a person with extensive knowledge of the breed, and of the dogs involved. Titles alone are no guarantee of genetic value.

5. Health

A breeding animal must be fully mature, in the prime of health, and in lean muscular condition. All inoculations should be up to date, and the animal should be free of both internal and external parasites. Acquired problems such as a narrow birth canal from previous injury, transmissible venereal tumour, anaemia, any disease or infection of the reproductive organs, concurrent diseases of other organ systems, or any contagious diseases are all reasons not to be bred.

Thank you for taking the time to read this article

The above information was extracted from that supplied by

The Golden Retriever Club of NSW Inc.

