

- **Before buying a Vizsla, consult our Buyer's Guide below.**
- **Looking for a breeder in Canada?**

## **GUIDELINES FOR BUYING A VIZSLA**

*Vizsla Canada does not rate, recommend or endorse breeders, their kennels, or their breeding stock. It does, however, encourage breeders to test all breeding stock against known genetic diseases, in particular, hip dysplasia and to adopt good breeding management principles.*

***It is up to the buyer to research the breed and breeders as fully as possible. The following guidelines are intended to assist in your choice of a Vizsla breeder.***

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### **EVALUATING AND CHOOSING A VIZSLA BREEDER**

#### ***Questions to ask the breeder BEFORE you buy a puppy:***

- The first question to ask is: Why does the breeder breed? They should reply that they breed because they want to improve the health/temperament or enhance specific physical traits of the breed. They should consider the improvement of the breed foremost.

Other important questions to ask are:

- Is the breeder a member of the Canadian Kennel Club, or another country's registered body for purebred dogs? All responsible breeders should be members of a purebred dog registry (that their breeding stock is registered as purebred).
- Are the puppies registered? For example, in Canada, the law states that any dog represented as a purebred must be registered with the Canadian Kennel Club.

Beware- if a breeder offers you a pup at one price, but quotes another price (higher) "*if you want papers*"; then you are clearly not dealing with a responsible or registered breeder.

- At what age does the breeder let a puppy go to a home and why? Puppies have definite needs that are met at different stages. Have they thought it through or are they just sending the pups home as soon as they can? Do they understand the developmental stages of pups?
- Does the breeder offer a health guarantee? Any responsible breeder will ask you to sign a contract that spells out the arrangements. A contract should protect the buyer as well as the seller, and always puts the puppy first and foremost. The breeder should be willing to offer a written health guarantee. Health guarantees can vary with regards to time frames/age.
- Does the breeder do any health testing for OFA Hips/Elbows/Heart, CERF

testing for eye problems? OFA refers to the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals that is a registry for Orthopedic and Cardiac diseases in dogs. Hip x-rays are evaluated and given a rating by the OFA. This cannot be evaluated by a regular vet.

CERF testing is done only by a certified Veterinary Ophthalmologist.

- Will the breeder be willing to help you, if you have problems with the puppy? The answer to this should be a resounding **'YES!'** with some implication that they'll be quite upset if you don't! The breeder should also be willing to help if the dog needs a new home, should something happen to you. Many breeders will insist that you return the dog to them, at any age.
- Ask for references. The breeder may also ask YOU for references.

### ***Good or reputable Vizsla breeders will:***

- Be aware of and knowledgeable about the Vizsla's faults and possible health problems. Every breed has some. Avoid the Vizsla breeder/seller who says there are none; or doesn't know what they are.
- Test and ensure that their Vizsla breeding stock is cleared of hip dysplasia; and should be able to provide proof of testing for both the dam (mother) and the sire (father) from the one of the various testing organizations (American Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA), International Canine Genetics (PennHIP) in the USA, a Veterinary College in Canada, or the British or European equivalent). If the breeder also has copies of test results for the puppy's grandparents and great-grandparents, so much the better.
- Ensure that their breeding stock is tested and cleared for other genetic diseases known to affect the Vizsla breed (e.g. eye diseases: Canine Eye Registration Foundation (CERF) certification; sebaceous adenitis) (thyroid, congenital heart disease).
- Know very well the pedigrees of their own dogs; and be willing to provide these.
- Encourage you to meet the dam and the sire (if he is on the premises) and provide copies of their registration certificates.
- Be willing to show you where the puppies are whelped and raised. This should be a clean, heated, indoor facility.
- Register the litter with the CKC, AKC, or another country's registering body for purebred dogs
- Put your purchase agreement/contract in writing. You should enter into a contract with the breeder that guarantees the dog is a purebred Vizsla, and eligible for individual registration. That the dog is from sound, healthy stock and, if given proper affection, care and nutrition, should develop into a sound representation of the breed.
- (may also) ask you to sign a Non-Breeding Contract as part of the dog's registration. If you are buying a pup with breeding rights, you should expect the breeder to ask you a lot more questions about your future plans for this dog, and the breed.
- Outline in writing what s/he is prepared to do if you encounter problems or have to give up the dog. Most breeders give you 48 to 72 hours to have your own veterinarian check your puppy and, if necessary, return or exchange the dog. Note that some breeders will offer to take a dog back, for the lifetime of the dog.
- Tattoo or microchip your Vizsla as a registered, purebred dog. This is

also helpful for identification if your dog is lost or stolen - it can be traced back to the breeder.

- Know the breed standard and have a copy available. Purebred dog registries, in most countries, have official descriptions of the Vizsla's appearance, temperament, movement, etc.
- Interview you ! They should ask questions about your lifestyle and interests. They should want to know why you want a Vizsla; and try as much as possible to ensure a good match between you and the breed, and you and the individual puppy.

### ***Good or reputable Vizsla breeders will also:***

- Provide you with written instructions on the care and feeding of your new Vizsla puppy; and ideally will send your puppy home with a small supply of food.
- Achieve titles on their own dogs in conformation, field, obedience, tracking, or other performance events. While a Championship-titled dog doesn't necessarily mean it's worthy of breeding, Vizsla breeders who are active with their dogs in one or more areas indicates a measure of desire to maintain or improve the breed's conformation, temperament and versatility.
- Be members of Vizsla Clubs or associations in their own country or beyond. This indicates their willingness to keep up-to-date on the breeds.
- Happily provide references from other puppy buyers, other dog owners, or breed club members. Talking to the breeder's previous buyers will tell you a lot about the individual with whom you'll be dealing with, if you purchase his/her dog.
- Provide follow-up support and assistance after you bring your dog home and will encourage you to call or write if you have questions or problems.
- Will want to hear from you !! From the puppy's first few days of adjustment in its new home, to stories and pictures, achievements, etc. for the life of the dog.

### **AVOID VIZSLA BREEDERS:**

- Whose major income is derived from the sale of puppies.
- Who do not register their dogs, or litters, with a registered purebred dog registry. At that point, they are not considered to be purebred.
- Who *routinely* practice in-breeding: i.e., mating sister to brother, mother to son, father to daughter.
- Who breed females younger than 18 months and older than 10 years.
- Who breed the same bitch year after year.
- Whose dogs appear nervous, fearful, aggressive, or in poor health.
- Who keep dogs chained outside or locked up in outdoor kennels all the time or in poor housing conditions. Vizslas need a lot of attention and love from humans; they don't get it in these sorts of situations.
- Who don't appear interested in you or what happens to the puppy after it

leaves the breeder. They should be interested in your plans for this dog !

## **UNDERSTANDING YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A DOG OWNER**

Buying a dog is a lifetime commitment and a major responsibility in time, energy and sometimes money. Vizslas often live until the age of 12 to 14 years. Before buying a Vizsla, or any dog, please consider:

- Domesticated dogs cannot fend for themselves. Who will feed, walk, groom and pick up after your dog; when it's a puppy and when it grows older?
- Can your home and lifestyle accommodate a dog? If you work long hours, travel a lot or have a very active social life and are out much of the time, then don't buy a dog; certainly not a Vizsla. Dogs are social creatures and need human attention, affection and quality time with family members.
- Have you considered the energy requirements of a Vizsla and its effect on your personal lifestyle? While they require a bit less than some of the other sporting breeds, adult Vizslas still need a minimum of 45 to 60 minutes of vigorous daily exercise. Puppies will require 2 hours of play and exercise a day. Since dogs generally don't run around a yard on their own, YOU will need to walk, run, hike or play each day with your Vizsla. If you're not an active person, then you should consider a dog with much lower energy and exercise requirements (or a cat !).
- Vizslas do have a protective instinct, but should not be aggressive. If you are looking for a guard dog, the Vizsla is not for you.
- Obedience training/lessons are essential for all dogs. Will you take the time to socialize and train your new Vizsla? And the younger the better, for socializing and a well-behaved dog.
- Have you budgeted for the cost of good quality, nutritious food, veterinary fees, and obedience lessons?
- Have you found a veterinarian and discussed your new dog's medical care requirements?

**Vizsla Canada** is a non-profit, national breed organization formed in late 1992 and incorporated on March 12, 1999 to promote and protect the purebred Vizsla and to educate the public in the joys and responsibilities of owning these breeds of dog. Vizsla owners are encouraged to become members of Vizsla Canada.