



How Can I Find a Good Breeder?

Golden Retriever Club of America (GRCA)

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QUESTION THE BREEDER

The Golden Retriever Club of America (GRCA) would like to assist you in learning what to ask breeders before you buy a puppy. To that end, we have compiled this list of questions to ask as you make contact with Golden Retriever breeders. The more items or “yes” answers you check off, the higher the probability you are working with an ethical, conscientious Golden Retriever breeder.

You can learn the reasons for asking these questions by going to http://www.grca.org/allabout/a_find.html or by ordering the “Acquiring a Golden Retriever” booklet from the GRCA on-line store at <http://www.grcasales.org/acquiring-a-golden-retriever.html>.

If you would like to correspond with local or regional puppy referral volunteers, go to <http://www.grca.org/allabout/puppyreferrals.html>.

You also might want to consider adopting a mature dog from a Golden Retriever Rescue group near you. You can find a list of local rescue groups at <http://grca-nrc.org/>.

Please take time to read and learn about the Golden Retriever breed, so that your puppy purchase is an informed one!

Some questions to get you started

Before visiting in person, ask the following questions to open a dialogue with the breeder to determine if they are attempting to produce puppies of good quality. Then go meet them and their Golden Retrievers.

GOLDEN RETRIEVER CLUB OF AMERICA (GRCA)

- Are the parents of these puppies two years old?
- Do the parents have their final health clearances?
- Can you provide a copy of a 3-to-5 generation pedigree?
- Are your puppies sold with a written contract?
- What is your policy about refunds and/or replacements if something goes wrong?
- Are you willing to take the puppy back for any reason?
- What would you do if I could no longer care for this dog?
- Do you have copies of current health clearances from a board-certified ophthalmologist and cardiologist (www.acvim.org) for:

SIRE / DAM

____ hips ____ hips

____ heart ____ heart

____ elbows ____ elbows

____ eyes* ____ eyes*

**Generally, eye clearances should be dated within the past 18 months.*

Standard practice is to test breeding stock yearly, though this may not be possible when frozen semen from a deceased Golden Retriever is utilized.

Ask the breeder for full AKC-registered names or registration numbers of the sire and dam and verify the clearances yourself or ask to see copies of the reports. Some clearances can be found at www.offa.org.

Both OFA and PennHip hip clearances are acceptable.

The depth of multiple generation clearances of sire and dam do not guarantee a Golden Retriever will be without health issues, but it may reduce the risk of them.

- Do you provide references and telephone numbers to puppy buyers of other owners who have purchased puppies from you? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you sell your puppies on AKC limited registrations, if they will not be shown in conformation events? Yes ___ No ___ Is this in your written contract? Yes ___ No ___
- Note: Dogs with limited registrations are eligible to show in obedience, agility, field and other performance events
- Would you describe how you raise your puppies in the house and around other people?

- How many litters have you bred? _____
- How many years have you been a breeder? _____
- Why did you choose to breed this particular pair of dogs? _____
- Please describe the health, temperament and longevity of the sire and dam's pedigree for three generations.

- _____
- How much do you charge for your puppies \$ _____

Health Issues

Serious, conscientious breeders are aware of the health issues in their lines. They thoroughly research pedigrees, genetic forms of inheritance and the prospective breeding pair in an attempt to create well-structured, healthy animals.

Breeders who answer that there are no health issues in their lines may be new to the breed, unaware of ancestors' health issues, not have tested their breeding stock, not kept track of their litters health clearances or may not be entirely honest with you.

You may want to ask about the following health issues within three generations, noting the severity, number affected and age at onset.

Do any relatives within three generations have any of the following conditions, and to what degree?

- Cancer
- Temperament issues
- Skin disorders, including allergies
- Epilepsy
- Hypothyroidism
- Orthopedic disorders

CO-OWNERSHIPS

Co-ownership of your puppy should mutually benefit both parties. It's prudent to enter this relationship with a contract that details where the dog lives and for how long, who pays veterinary costs and health screening tests, who pays event fees, who makes breeding decisions, who does the whelping and puppy raising and when the co-ownership ends. An arrangement where the buyer pays all the expenses and the co-owner makes all decisions is an example of a one-sided relationship and is one to avoid.

BONUS POINTS

- Are you a member of the Golden Retriever Club of America? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you adhere to the GRCA Code of Ethics? Yes ___ No ___
- Are you an active member of your local dog club? Yes ___ No ___
- Do you show your dogs at AKC, GRCA or other organized competitions? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, which areas?

- Breed/Conformation
- Tracking
- Hunting Tests
- Agility
- Field Trials
- Working Certificate
- Obedience Trials
- Other

All puppies are cute. But don't buy heartache!

TURN ABOUT IS FAIR PLAY: EXPECT THE BREEDER TO QUESTION YOU

It's a good sign if you are carefully screened by a breeder regarding how you intend to care for the puppy. A breeder who really cares about their puppies will probably question your plans for exercise, housing, a fenced yard, training and how the puppy will be incorporated into your daily life.

A conscientious breeder is committed to placing the puppy he or she brought to life in a permanent home. The breeder will want to ask you many questions to be sure the puppy is a good match for you and your family.

Remember that conscientious breeders will be available to you for questions about your Golden Retriever for its entire lifetime.

Do your homework ahead of time so that you and your new puppy will have a lifetime of joy and pleasure!

QUESTIONS A CONSCIENTIOUS BREEDER MIGHT ASK YOU

- ___ Will someone be home with the puppy the majority of the time?
- ___ How many hours a day would the dog be alone?
- ___ Who will be the primary caregiver for the puppy?
- ___ Have you owned a dog before? What breed? For how long? How many pets do you have?
- ___ Why are you interested in a Golden Retriever?
- ___ What are your activities outside of work? Please describe what you expect to do with your dog.
- ___ What activity, energy level do you want in a Golden Retriever—high, medium or low?
- ___ Have you read any books on raising puppies?
- ___ Are you purchasing the dog for companionship, obedience, field work, agility, showing, breeding or other?
- ___ My puppies are sold on spay/neuter contracts. Do you have an objection to spaying/neutering?
- ___ Where will your dog sleep at night?
- ___ How many children do you have? What are their ages?
- ___ What other pets or livestock do you have?
- ___ Is your yard fenced? If so, how high?
- ___ Have you done your homework with regard to the costs associated with caring for a dog?
- ___ Have you ever taken canine obedience courses? Do you plan to take them with this dog?
- ___ Do you prefer a male or female? Why?
- ___ What would be a typical day for your family?
- ___ How do you plan to give your Golden adequate daily exercise?
- ___ Have you ever had to get rid of a dog or turn one over to the animal shelter?

Compiled and Reviewed by the following GRCA committees:

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For more information, please contact the **Golden Retriever Club of America** <http://www.grca.org>