

## **Breeders or Puppy Mills?**

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The Internet lets me receive information from other enthusiasts all over the world. Sooner or later, most things come my way - the good, the bad and the ugly.

I recently came across the bad and the ugly, a Web site offering AKC registered puppies for sale that is full of lies. The operators say they're opposed to the sale of dogs by pet shops and claim to not keep dogs in stock, yet they offer a wide choice of breeds and availability. They also claim to be very knowledgeable.

But the site is run by puppy brokers who buy from backyard breeders and puppy mills that breed only for profit. If you buy from them, you will not have a caring breeder to follow up on your puppy's progress and development.

And what reputable breeder would let one of their dogs be used as a raffle prize or be sold at auction? Many owners have been asked to donate a puppy for a raffle, and some Web sites hold auctions to dispose of their excess stock.

Another site claims to be a clearinghouse for purebred breeders, and says there are not many purebred breeders in certain areas of the country. Since the operator is located in the Midwest, which has the "largest concentration of purebred breeders" in the country, they can help you find the "puppy of your dreams." The truth is, these people live in puppy mill country, and there are reputable breeders of all breeds all over the country.

If you want a puppy of any breed, check the AKC GAZETTE Breeders'/ Buyers' Aid section, or call the AKC Breeder Referral Service (900-407 PUPS) to be put in touch with the parent club's breeder referral contact, who can refer you to a reputable member who can work with you to find a suitable puppy.

When you buy from a serious show person, you should get a puppy from someone who breeds quality dogs recognized by judges all over the country. Be sure you're dealing with someone who is a "serious winner." Ask to see the puppy's parents' championship certificates. A box full of blue first-place ribbons alone doesn't prove quality.

A puppy can get a blue ribbon by being the only entry in its age class. I know of one owner whose dogs never get points and aren't considered serious contenders, yet by having the only entry in the age class, she gets first place and a win shot. I laughed until I realized how she could use the photos to dupe unsuspecting" puppy buyers. Her impressive stack of photos implies that she has good dogs. Potential buyers should realize that winning is less important than the quality of the competition, and they should get references on any breeder they're considering doing business with.

For accurate information on our breed, look at the Miniature Pinscher Club of America Web site. For Breeder information, look at the AKC GAZETTE, use our Web site or call the AKC . Speak to dedicated, reputable people who are interested in the future of every puppy they sell. Don't be a victim of a slick Web site and the lies of a puppy broker.

The "good" of the Internet is to get an e-mail from someone looking for a puppy and refer them to a local breeder to make a successful placement and give a new owner a solid education.