

"Responsible Breeding"

by: Gloria Knapp (As published in the Pinscher Patter, June 1997)

The April '97 AKC Gazette reported that the Min Pin finished 18th in AKC's 1996 registration statistics. They were one of the breeds that stood out because of their double digit swing. Total 1996 figures were 20,355. There are very few people that I run into anymore that ask our favorite question, "Are they bred from the Doberman?" Instead, it is constant calls wanting a Black and Tan female and a Black and Tan male for breeding. I have been in the breed for a long time and have watched a lot of changes take place, both good and bad. It is very sad to hear of the increasing amount of Min Pins that are being seen in pet shops, advertised in papers for \$150 sell, trade "OBO" (or best offer) and found in animal shelters. I have someone in my neighborhood that found a Min Pin cross in a parking lot. He was a light red with four white feet and white on his chest, kind of a common looking plain head, but he had those wonderful Min Pin eyes. Along with popularity, the breed suffers. It brings out the market breeder (for money only) and they add our breed to the stock found at the puppy mills.

Unfortunately, not all market breeders are the large kennels that we think of as puppy mills. They can be the nice couple down the street that happens to have a Min Pin and decides to breed her or him without giving any more thought to the outcome than just having a cute litter of puppies. Usually, it's because Aunt Mary wants a puppy, or because Junior wants to see puppies born, or some similar reason. In Phoenix we have one person that does rescue work for Min Pins. Since 1991, she has rescued 85 Min Pins. Most of these came from private homes. In 1996 alone there were 21 rescued. This is appalling!

90% of these dogs were males that were still intact. With only one person doing the rescue work, this has to be only a fraction of unwanted Min Pins in this area. Most of these dogs were saved from death but not all. Is this what you want to happen to your dog's puppy? Or her puppy? This is not a breed to be sold to just anyone. Min Pins are very intelligent and energetic and not the dog for everyone. People should be screened carefully before being allowed to purchase a puppy. I implore each and everyone of you out there to think before you breed. Please become a responsible breeder! Breeding is both an art and a science. The ethical breeder lives for his dogs, not off his dogs. Most breeders that show their dogs have spent years studying pedigrees and individual dogs. They don't breed animals that can't finish their championship or at least only breed quality animals that don't have disqualifying faults and conform to the Standard, and still there are pets in the litters. You can usually buy a pet from a breeder for less than you would pay in a pet shop and a responsible breeder will stand by his dogs. Any pet quality animal that leaves your home should be sold on a spay or neuter contract and their AKC papers checked for limited registration. If all of us did this, we would not be having these problems. Make out a sales contract and have the new owners sign and date it. An example of the spay/ neuter part could be something like this, "Buyer agrees to having the pet neutered or spayed between the ages of ___ to ___ months. Since the dog is being

purchased as a companion dog only, AKC papers will be withheld until written proof from the Veterinarian is received by seller. Failure to have the dog altered within the agreed time period voids contract and allows (the seller) to reclaim the dog." I have been told that this will hold up in court. A lot of people really don't understand why they need to alter a dog that they don't intend to breed. If an animal is altered before the age of one year, health problems are reduced drastically. Females are prone to pyometritis and uterine and mammary cancers. The males really are in for it too. They can get testicular cancer, prostate cancer, perianal hernias and perianal masses. Altering tends to elongate the dog's life and improves the quality of life for both dog and their owners. Without that hormone supply, the need to mark EVERYTHING is gone!!

How does one become a Responsible Breeder? First become a responsible owner. Become familiar with the breed. Join a Min Pin Club. Go to shows. Buy books. Get the Min Pin tape put out by AKC. Go to the library and read, read, read about the breed and breeding. Do some research on genetic problems and how to eliminate them. This is a good place to remind breeders to be honest with other breeders. Dealing with accountability does not mean blaming. All of us can have unknown disease recessive surface. It is not dealing with it in a positive and aggressive manner that can be wrong.

Responsibility is what we want, not blame. Before breeding, make sure your animal is of breeding quality and that you know the standard and are breeding to the standard. Breeding Min Pins is an incredible responsibility. Breed only the best, healthiest, soundest in conformation and temperament according to the standard. "KNOW THE STANDARD." Don't overestimate your ability. Find a mentor and look, listen and learn. Keep only the very best prospects. There are people out there that just love the breed and don't want to show, (good show homes may be few and far between) so don't pass up opportunities to place dogs in a loving home. Get involved with rescue in your area Call your local Animal Shelter and get on the list for rescuing Min Pins. Contact the national rescue coordinator. At the very least, donate to the rescue fund.

I have met many breeders over the years of all ranges of ethics. A responsible breeder will do everything within their power to ensure healthy, genetically sound puppies, go to happy, safe homes. If each one of us can educate and convince one person to become a responsible breeder/owner and spay and neuter their pets, then we have started on the road to recovery before it's too late.