



So you want a Golden Retriever Puppy?

We understand! We love Golden Retrievers. And we would like to help you make an informed decision as you consider your options for bringing a new dog into your life. If you love dogs, it is important to be a conscious consumer. This involves doing your research on the pet industry to ensure you are not supporting a person or company who does not have the dog's well-being in mind. GRRR has created this guide to help make that easier for you.

Did You Know...

- Most shelter and rescue dogs make wonderful pets and do not have anything wrong with them. Dogs are most often relinquished to animal shelters because of “people” reasons, such as cost, lack of time, allergies, or lifestyle changes (new baby, divorce, moving, or marriage), and not because of something wrong with the dog. Sometimes a lack of obedience training results in a dog being relinquished, but this is often easy to address by enrolling the dog in a basic obedience class. Many shelters/rescues will have already started this work for you!
- You can get purebred dogs at shelters or through breed-specific rescues.
- Breed is not a guarantee of temperament or personality. Every dog is an individual. The best way to determine if a dog will be the right fit for your home is to meet them and observe their personality, rather than relying on breed stereotypes.
- Puppies are a lot of work! Consider an adult dog, which may better fit your lifestyle and can require significantly less work than a puppy. Plus, since their personality is more formed, you will know exactly what you are getting.
- There is no such thing as a “deal” when it comes to buying a dog. “Bargain” puppies are often poorly bred and may suffer from serious health problems requiring expensive veterinary care. For example, Rosie, who was a “\$875 bargain” but had to be relinquished to GRRR because the owners couldn't afford a \$6,000 surgery due to poor breeding.



Adopt Don't Shop!

Here are some great resources for finding your new best friend while helping to solve the pet over-population problem:

- Find local shelters and rescues at: theshelterpetproject.org/shelters
- Petfinder.com
- Adoptapet.com
- Your local Humane Society
- Rescue Groups including the following Colorado-based Retriever Rescues:
 - Golden Retriever Rescue of the Rockies - www.goldenrescue.com
 - Golden Retriever Freedom Rescue - www.goldenretrieverfreedom.com
 - Retriever Rescue of Colorado - <http://retrieverrescueofcolorado.com/>

Only Purchase a Puppy from a Reputable Breeder

We encourage you to adopt, but if you have your heart set on a Golden Retriever puppy and are unable to find one at a rescue or shelter, it is essential that you purchase a puppy only through a reputable breeder.

- Many dogs available at pet stores or online through both private websites and classified sites such as Craigslist originate from puppy mills.
- Puppy mills are large commercial operations that put profit above the well-being of the dog. You can think of them as the equivalent of “factory farms” for dogs. They are often filthy, overcrowded, and are cruel or negligent in their treatment of dogs. Lack of adequate access to food, water, socialization, and veterinary care is typical. There are estimated to be 10,000 of these “commercial breeders” in the US alone.

- While they are technically government-regulated, the standards are minimal and do not require humane treatment.
- Puppy mill dogs are known to have health issues, so the money saved on the lower purchase price (versus buying from a reputable breeder) will end up going towards medical expenses that could cost significantly more in the long run.
- Socialization issues are common as puppies are often taken away from their mothers too early and they often have little to no human interaction.
- To learn more about puppy mills, visit humanesociety.org/puppymills, aspc.org/animal-cruelty/puppy-mills, or bestfriends.org/resources/puppy-mills
- In order to ensure you are not supporting puppy mills, it is essential to **never** buy a dog from the following places:
 - The Internet – an in person visit to meet the puppy and parents is a must!
 - Classified ads and Craigslist - make it easy for irresponsible breeders to mask poor conditions and sell dogs to well-intentioned consumers who have no idea what's going on behind the scenes.
 - Websites can easily be made to look sleek and professional, making it impossible to identify puppy mills or irresponsible breeders online.
 - Pet stores - these puppies most likely originated from puppy mills.
 - Backyard breeders - are often irresponsible and sell poorly bred dogs (as opposed to reputable professional breeders).
- Do your research and visit the breeder in person (this applies to rescues and shelters too).
 - Come prepared with a written list of questions so you do not forget anything important.
 - Ask open ended questions as opposed to yes/no questions. This will ensure you get much more useful information in the response. Good questions to ask include: How do you socialize the dogs? What health testing has been done on the parents? What requirements must someone meet to buy one of your puppies?

How to Identify a Reputable Breeder

Reputable breeders will:

- Allow you to visit, to meet both the puppies and the breeding dogs, and to see where they are kept. These facilities should be clean, spacious, and well-maintained. The dogs should be lively, clean, friendly, and healthy. They should not shy away from you.
- Only sell puppies to people they have met in person. They will not sell dogs online or to pet stores.
- Honestly explain the potential genetic and developmental problems common to the breed. They will be willing to share proof of health screenings such as OFA and CERF certificates.
- Not always have puppies available, but will keep a wait list of interested people for future litters.
- Not allow the puppy to go home until 8 weeks old at a minimum.
- Provide guidance for the care and training of your puppy and be available even after you have taken the puppy home.
- Often be actively involved with recognized breed clubs, such as the Golden Retriever Club of America.
- Have a good relationship with a local veterinarian and be able to show you records of the puppy's vet visits.
- Breed only one or a few types of dogs, about which they will demonstrate specific knowledge.
- Have only a few litters per year.
- Provide references of other people who have purchased one of their dogs.
- Provide you with a written contract.
- Require you to:
 - Explain why you want a dog and to show that you are going to provide a good home to the dog.
 - Sign a contract stating that you will spay or neuter (unless the breeder plans to breed your dog). And you will return the dog to the breeder should you be unable to keep it for any reason.



More Information on Finding a Responsible Breeder:

- pupquest.org
- grca.org/find-a-golden/where-to-find-a-golden/grca-puppy-referral/
- humanesociety.org/issues/puppy_mills/tips/finding_responsible_dog_breeder.html

Sources:

- 1: Kavin, Kim. The Dog Merchants. Pegasus Books, May 2016
- 2: www.humanesociety.org/issues/puppy_mills/tips/finding_responsible_dog_breeder.html
- 3: www.aspc.org/animal-cruelty/puppy-mills

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