



It's A Breeder's Choice

What do you mean I don't get to pick my own puppy? Trust me, I understand. I remember the first time I read this on another breeder's website and thought to myself, how would they know what's best for me? This was of course before I was a breeder myself.

Being a breeder means that months before you know that your bitch is going to come into heat, that you are looking ahead to who might be her perfect mate. You put the time and research and back and forth communication with the owner of the stud into how to match up what he looks like and what his temperament is and how it compliments your bitch and her attributes. You take careful consideration into looking at what your bitch has produced in a puppy in the past and think, "What could be better with this next litter?" You weigh your options and finally decide on the stud that you feel would best produce those certain qualities that you are searching for in a puppy to make an even more impressive dog for the show ring.

Then the time comes and your bitch has been bred. You wait and wait until alas the day has arrived where you get to take her to the vet and see if all of your hard work up until that day has paid off. Is she pregnant? Did the breeding stick? It's a success! And we couldn't be more thrilled! Only a few more weeks until we get to find out how many pups she's carrying.

And so after all of the preparation and anticipation of welcoming these new precious puppies into the world you realize; the hard work has only just begun.

It's every 2-3 hours you're up, feeding the puppies with the momma. Making sure each pup has a teat to suckle and that the mother isn't accidentally crushing one of her babies. Ensuring that the puppies are fed and warm enough and that their box isn't too soiled in between feedings and checking on the momma to make sure she is eating and doing well herself.

Two and three weeks of age roll around and the puppies are opening their eyes and learning to walk on all four legs. Their sense of sight and hearing has come in and the puppies are

learning quickly how to fight for a feeding spot with their mother. Momma has her hands full now as her little ones are all over her. They are growing up quick and you are starting to notice each individual puppy's personality develop. "Oh he's a bit feisty and likes to be first in line to feed." "Aw, she is so sweet and is always looking for a litter mate to snuggle." "Uh oh, that one is definitely a trouble maker, always picking on her brothers and sisters." It's the countless hours that as a breeder you put into caring for and stressing over the health and development of the litter. Taking note that one pup is falling behind and needs extra time alone with its mother. Or seeing that this pup just isn't acting right and needs closer supervision. Being a breeder is knowing from about four weeks on which pups stand out as potential prospects for being apart of your kennel and which pups are cute but won't make the cut.

Four, five, and six weeks arrives sooner than you anticipate and you have made it out of the woods with the fragility of the pups' health. By no means are we safe to stop worrying about the litter, but by this point we have avoided many major health crises that could have taken place. Now the fun begins. The pups are full blown developed into their personalities. They fight, and bite with their sharp, piranha-like teeth, they bark and growl, and run around like Tazmanian devils. They have learned how to drive their mother crazy during feeding and they know just how to look at you as to persuade you into picking them up out of their box for a few extra kisses and cuddles before it's time for them to settle down and go to sleep.

By this point, you know every single pup of the litter. You have observed and taken note of the little quirks of each puppy's personality that make it unique and special. You see how they stand out from the others of the litter. How they interact and play, how well they eat, and their sleeping tendencies. You know which one is the lazy one of the bunch and which one has all the energy in the world. You know which ones are more obedient and which ones have that little rebellious attitude in them. It's clear to see as you have spent all of your days with them for over two-months. And then the time comes when you have set aside the few elite pups of the litter that catch your eye and spark hope inside of you that this may be the one that makes it big in the show ring!

The phone calls and emails roll in and much interest is generated about the litter. Susan from Detroit wants a chocolate boy and Dan from Tallahassee wants a black boy. So you take into

consideration what is available from your litter after you have picked your prospects as the breeder. You talk to Dan and Susan and you find out more about what they are looking for in a dog.

Susan had a chocolate boy lab for fifteen years. His name was Wolf and he was the best dog she could have ever imagined. He was her best friend and closest companion. He loved swimming in the lake by their house and going for walks every single day. He especially loved snow in the winter and always being close by to Susan. He died at an old age and now Susan wants another special pup to replace what she had with Wolf. You learn that Susan lives on a good bit of land and that her pup will be getting lots of exercise. She wants a dog with a bit of spunk and energy, certainly not the lazy one of the litter. "No problem Ms. Susan, we know just the pup for you!"

Dan on the other hand, has never had an English Labrador before but has parents who have. He adores the calm and lovable temperament of the breed and just knows that it would be the right fit for his eight-year-old daughter. He is looking for a male dog who will be protective of his little girl. He wants a pup who is not eager to run off on a big adventure, but one who will stay right by their side and be content with whatever environment he's in. His little girl has Autism and he knows that a high-energy pup might be too much for his daughter. "Sir, I think I have just what you're looking for."

You see, the breeder doesn't just know the litter from the very day it was born up until the day it leaves, but the breeder gets to know the client and what he/she is looking for. A true breeder has a lasting relationship with the families who are entrusted with a pup from one of their litters. A breeder stays in touch with their clients and knows how the pup is doing at three months old and nine months old and two years old. We love to see pictures of our pups growing up and want to know when there is a problem or concern. A breeder cares about how the pup settles in to its' new home and how the family is doing as well.

A breeder knows a litter inside and out and a relationship with a potential client goes much deeper than a name and number. Each client who is chosen as a recipient of a Tried & True Labrador pup becomes family. We as the breeder, take on the responsibility of getting to know you, your family, your home environment, your interests and preferences, and then work with you to give you just what you're looking for. It's a relationship that goes beyond the day you pick up your pup!

With all of that being said, we unapologetically choose our pups for our Tried & True families and we hope that after reading more about our process that you understand and appreciate how we are here for you!

God Bless,
Tried & True Labradors