

Quail Canyon Labs

Consider Before Ownership

The Labrador Retriever

As a breed the Labrador needs no introduction. Probably one of the most famous, popular and widespread breeds in the world, they have been a familiar sight for decades by the sides of heads of state, on advertising and in the ring of honor at Crufts. They were developed in Britain as an all round gundog. As such they still retain the webbed feet and waterproof double coat of their forebears and their greatest joy in life is to go for a swim or to dash off and retrieve something for you. They are valued for superb temperaments and willingness to please which make them as good a family pet as a working companion.

Things to Consider Before Ownership

Is a Labrador The Right Choice Of Dog For Me? A purebred dog as versatile and talented as the Labrador Retriever attracts many admirers. Whether you are looking for a puppy for a family pet or house companion, a show dog, a field dog, or a competition dog, there are many serious factors you should think about. Do you think you have enough time to devote to your new Labrador? Even a pet Labrador will require considerable time to train. Of course, a field dog or obedience/agility dog will require hours of daily attention and special training. The Labrador is a demanding dog who will want to share his whole life with you, consider your choice carefully.

You can expect a Labrador to live on average between 10 and 12 years though it is very possible that they can go until they are 15. Do you know where you will be in a decade? You have to plan for a Labrador to be part of that picture. It is important to win the lifelong battle against the flab - they are a greedy breed. They are a breed that need a lot of exercise - as a gundog they need the stamina to go all day and keep to their master's side, always ready to dash off and retrieve. If you are not committed to the welfare and the whole existence of this energetic, purposeful animal, if in the simplest, most basic example, you are not willing to walk your dog daily, despite the weather, do not choose a Labrador as a companion. Ideally, long walks to keep them happy and busy are the best but failing that, some games such as retrieving or finding which occupy their mind and stop them from getting bored are good. A swim, especially in the summer is always appreciated but if it is the sea do remember to rinse them off afterwards so that the salt does not build up in their coat and cause skin problems. Labradors love cars and generally make very good car companions. They are not a breed which is prone to carsickness and enjoy the stimulation that being in the car brings.

Acquiring A Puppy

The safest way for you to obtain a puppy is to find a reputable breeder. This is also the case even if you are not looking for a show specimen or a top contender in field work. The novice breeders and pet owners who advertise at attractive prices in the local newspapers are probably kind enough towards their dogs, but perhaps they do not have the expertise or facilities to successfully raise these dogs. An insufficient diet can cause indigestion, weak bones, rickets, poor teeth and other problems.

The color of the Lab you choose is strictly a matter of personal choice. While no importance is placed on color in the breed, only the three colors - yellow, black and chocolate - are recognized as true Labradors.

There should be two important documents your breeder should give to you, and these are the pup's vaccination record and AKC registration papers. It is best that you know the breeder's intentions on which type of registration they will obtain for your puppy. There are limited registrations which means that the dog is registered but no litters produced by that dog are eligible for registration. Each registration certificate for such dog shall carry notice of the

limitation, and the limitation shall continue, regardless of any change of ownership, unless and until the owner(s) of the litter at birth shall apply to AKC for removal of the limitation. Limited Registration is determined by the litter owner(s). The litter owner(s) check the Limited box on the AKC Dog Registration Application.

When you finally acquire your new puppy, he or she should be examined by your vet as soon as you buy him or her. Your vet will be able to tell you all about any possible physical defects as well as continue your puppy on a vaccination program. Your home should also have been prepared for your new puppy's arrival. Anything potentially dangerous should be moved out of reach.

Diet

Labradors are greedy dogs on the whole and it is more difficult to stop them from eating than not eating. It is important to give them a balanced diet with plenty of calcium until they have finished growing, which can be until they are two years in the case of a big male. It is recommended that you buy a good quality dog food, and you will find that most dog food brands do a feed to suit your dog from birth to old age. Beware, some cheaper foods in the supermarkets can cause digestive upsets. Labradors are prone to worms and the runs because of their greedy nature. Make sure you follow a regular worming pattern with them and watch carefully for any signs of infestation. Fleas will also give them worms, so de-flea regularly. It can also be helpful to give them live yoghurt if they have a stomach upset or the runs. If you want to feed them soft or canned food, you will also have to give a good mixer or puppy biscuit for their teeth.

Exercise

Remember, do not force your puppy to do too much exercise on the lead until they are six months old, as this will damage their growing bones. Just lead training in short bursts and exercise on grass will suffice.