QUESTIONS TO ASK A BREEDER WHEN BUYING A PUPPY

Compiled by Chaleureux French Bulldogs

chaleureuxfrenchbulldogs.com

Buying a puppy is a fifteen year decision. These are the questions worth asking any breeder before you commit, and what each answer actually tells you. Ask them of us and ask them of everyone else you talk to.

QUESTION TO ASK	WHAT YOU ARE DETERMINING BY ASKING
Are you a registered breeder?	Being a registered breeder does not automatically mean good breeding practices, though more often than not it does. Registered breeders agree to follow their association's code of conduct and standards. They will have a prefix (kennel name) and a member number that can be checked with the association, so you can make sure they are not scammers. Most Australian States also require a breeder registration number on every advertisement by law, and these can be looked up on public registers.
Do you hold a council breeding permit, and can I see where the puppy is being raised?	Breeding permits are a local council matter and the rules vary a great deal from one area to the next. Some councils require a permit and others do not, so a breeder without one is not necessarily doing anything wrong. Where a permit does apply, it generally means the premises have been inspected against a standard. What matters more is transparency about where the puppy is being raised. Not every breeder allows visitors to their home, and there are sound reasons for that, including biosecurity around a young litter. You should still be able to see the environment somehow, whether in person, on a live video call, or through photos and video taken where the puppies live. A breeder who will not show you that at all, or who avoids your questions, is the one worth thinking twice about.
How long have you been breeding this breed?	Bulldog breeders need to be experienced or to have close mentorship, because the breed requires knowledge and careful planning to produce healthy puppies.
Have both parents been health tested? If so, what tests have been done and are the results available to be seen?	**DNA testing is the basic requirement**, to ensure that two dogs being bred together have not had their puppies inheriting a condition that is known for that breed. It is the floor, and every responsible breeder does it. **Health testing is a separate thing.** Health focused breeders perform assessments on the dog itself, such as radiographs (trachea ratio, hips, spine), Respiratory Functional Grading, and pre breeding health screens done by a veterinarian. Ask which of these have been done, and ask to see the reports.
Have either parent of the puppy had any surgeries, allergies or behavioural problems? Are both parents able to be viewed?	Bulldogs are susceptible to several health issues. Determining whether either parent has had problems relating to spine, hip, patella, tail pocket, allergies, or partial or complete Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome surgery, is especially important to know, because these issues come with a considerable degree of heritability. View the parents, the mother should be with the pups. Sometimes the stud will not be owned by the breeder, so videos or photos should be available. Look at every angle of both parents and consider whether the features are extreme, as this is associated with breathing and skeletal problems. Many buyers now choose puppies with leaner bodies, longer necks, wider nares and longer backs, because less extreme features are far less likely to develop breathing issues.
Is the puppy fully weaned and what is the puppy being fed?	This is very important, whether raw, cooked or commercially prepared. The puppy should be getting a quality diet and being fed at least three to four times a day.

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Has the puppy or any of its littermates been ill or required veterinary attention?	If the puppy or its littermates have been ill or required veterinary attention, it is important to know what the problem was, whether it has been fully resolved, and if necessary to discuss the problem with the treating vet to determine whether it is likely to be recurring.
How many litters do you have each year?	Bulldogs are a very time intensive breed to raise and require round the clock care, especially in the first weeks. If a breeder has multiple litters, ask whether they are able to provide the necessary care for each puppy. Breeding females almost always have caesareans, and the limit for those is almost always three litters.
Are the puppies socialised?	Proactive socialisation of a puppy starts with the breeder. The critical socialisation period for puppies is between approximately three and seventeen weeks of age. A puppy's experiences during this period of learning and development can influence and shape their temperament. Providing plenty of opportunities for socialisation and exposure to different environments during this time helps to ensure your puppy grows into a well adjusted adult that relates well to other dogs, other animals and people.
Can you provide me with a couple of references from previous puppy owners?	Talking with previous puppy buyers is a very good way to find out about the experience other people have had with the breeder you are considering buying a puppy from.

CHECKLIST OF WHAT YOU SHOULD RECEIVE

- Pedigree papers
- Breeder permits, memberships and registrations current
- Breeder registration or supply number, shown on the advertisement as required by law in most States
- Breeder contract and health guarantee, including what is covered over and above Australian Consumer Law protection
- Worming, when it was done, what product was used, and which worms are covered
- Vaccinations, when, what product was used, and the vet certificate
- Microchipped, and the change of owner forms completed
- Health check, when it was done, what was checked, and the vet certificate
- Diet, what the puppy is fed, how often and how much
- Housing, crating, bedding, toilet training and socialisation

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