

Why buy a pedigree purebred dog?

A Pedigree Pure Bred Dog has parentage that is known AND:

- Both parents are of the same breed.
- The breed is recognised by the Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC) or one of its Affiliates.
- The dog's breeders are registered to breed puppies.
- The parents of any puppies are registered with the ANKC or one of its affiliates to be bred from and it has a pedigree showing at least 3 generations of parentage.

A Designer Dog is many things including:

- A puppy resulting from the deliberate mating of two unrelated breed types.
- A puppy resulting from an accidental mating of two different breed types (note these dogs used to be called mongrels or cross breeds).
- A puppy resulting from the mating of two cross bred (or designer bred) dogs.
- A puppy resulting from the mating of one pedigree or pure bred parent and one cross bred or designer bred dog.
- A designer dog has not been bred by a registered breeder.
- A designer dog is not pure bred or pedigree.

Pedigree Pure Bred VS Designer Dog

The Cost Factor

Many people believe that pedigree dogs will be out of their price range. You may be pleasantly surprised. Some pedigree breeds cost more than designer or cross bred dogs, some cost considerably less. The amount of money and work that goes into properly raising a litter of puppies does not vary. Most of the expenses that pedigree owners face, breeders of designer breeds don't. These include:

- Stud Fees
- Importing new blood lines (spending \$8,000 - \$10,000 to import a dog from the UK would be an average, some dogs cost a lot more).

- Importing frozen semen (average cost of \$5,000 from USA).
- Raising promising stock for showing and future breeding (note: some of these dogs will not measure up and will be placed into homes, it has cost time and money to get to that decision).
- Air freight to access stud dogs. To send a 13kg dog interstate and back can cost approx \$400 each way.
- Vet checks and assessments for inheritable diseases such as hip dysplasia, eye disorders, blood disease, heart defects etc. These tests are sometimes performed on parents before breeding or on the puppies.

Hybrid Vigour

A lot of the hype with Designer dogs is due to the mistaken belief that they are healthier than the pedigree pure bred dog due to so-called 'Hybrid Vigour'.

Hybrid vigour can only occur when both parents are clear from genetic problems. Their breed does not matter. It is the genetic make up of the parents that counts! The only way to be sure is to ask the breeder if they have tested for known problems.

It is easy for you to research these problems on the internet these days, not all information is accurate with some one-off cases often being attributed to an entire breed but it gives you a guide.

When looking at Designer Dogs (cross breeds), you need to consider two breeds, not one. First look at the problems that are common to those two breeds. For example, does hip dysplasia show up for both breeds? If it does, then that lovely designer breed could be a real problem. Check if the parents were tested and ask what the results were. Second, look at the unique problems for each breed and then do more research. Some genetic problems only need one parent to have the disorder, just the same as in humans. Once again ask if any testing has been done.

Today Tonight (an Australian television current affairs show) ran a story in 2003 regarding the misconception that the public has about the health of designer dogs. After the story aired, the station was inundated with other owners of designer dogs who also advised of similar health problems with their dogs so they ran a follow-up story the next night.

As a dog is a living creature, there is no guarantee, with either a pure bred or a designer dog, that the dog will be disease free for its entire life. Buying a pedigree pure bred dog from a registered breeder who tests for hereditary diseases, is however your best chance of getting a healthy dog. Breeders of designer dogs will generally just take 2 dogs and breed them without any thought of testing first.

The Known VS the Unknown

The pedigree dog is infinitely more predictable as to size, characteristics, temperament and coat than its crossbred relatives.

The designer dog (or crossbred dog) is a gamble as to how it will turn out. As many of the designer dogs are first crosses, no-one can really say what its coat will be like, how big it will grow etc. Just ask many professional groomers of the coat problems with designer dogs.

Breeders of Designer Dogs may tell you by crossing 'x' and 'y' breed that they are taking the best from both breeds. They however have no control over which attributes from the parents will be used. The puppy could quite possibly get the worst attributes of both parents.

Wally Conron (the man who first bred the Labradoodle for the Royal Guide Dogs Association in Victoria, Australia) once said

"I have opened a Pandora's Box. I'd be the first to come out and admit that. It's a pity, really...we had gone to great lengths to ensure the poodles we used did not have any problems," notes Conron, who feels the same cannot be said of many of today's breeders.

"I think it is a recipe for disaster because they are breeding with dogs that have hereditary problems".

"Another concern is that people are being misled into believing that labradoodles as well as other poodle crosses all have allergy friendly coats and do not shed. This is not the case and their coats and saliva have to be specially tested," Conron says. "At the Royal Guide Dogs, for instance, we had one litter where there were ten puppies and out of those only two were non allergenic."

Final word

Adding a dog to the family is a big step (a 10 to 15 year commitment) and the final choice of a pedigree dog or a designer dog is up to you.

Most people undertake a lot of research into the type of dog they want with consideration being given to looks, size, coat, temperament, health, longevity etc. The safest way of getting what you want or need is to consider a Pedigree Pure Bred dog. There is over 180 pedigree breeds recognized by the Australian National Kennel Association so there is one to suit everybody's situation.

If you still want a cross breed after reading this (and we have no problem with that), then please do the right thing and visit your nearest dog shelter and help save one of the thousands of homeless dogs that are put down each year. They will give you the same amount of love and enjoyment and cost a fraction of the money that you would pay for a designer dog from a pet shop. Buying from a pet shop could also inadvertently support puppy farms and possible serious neglect of dogs.

With thanks to Dogzonline.com.au who provided the content for the above article.