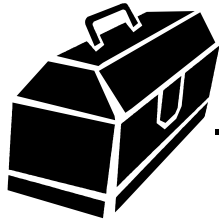


THE ROTTWEILER



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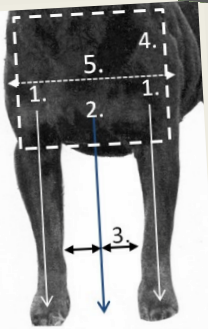
"a student of the breed needs the right tools"

Guidelines For - Stud Dog - Brood Bitch - Puppy Selection

July 2015

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Dog Brood Bitch
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Selection



"Hello Steve, it's Mike." "Hi Mike, what's up?" "I just bought a Rottweiler pup and would like you to see it and give me your opinion." "OK Mike, come over at 1." "Thanks Steve." Mike was prompt and arrived at 1 PM. He took the pup from the back seat of his car and paraded it on my front lawn. "Steve, this is Bruno." "How old is he Mike?" "He's 10 weeks". I inspected the pup's bite, checked for both testicles and had Mike gait the pup in a large circle. "Well Steve, what do you think?" "What do you think Mike?" He was puzzled by my redirected question and paused. Mike wanted my approval, but I suspected he called because of his apprehension concerning traits the pup possessed. Mike thought for a moment, then listed his concerns: "His gums are pink, but the breeder said not to worry, the gums will get darker. I also think his head is a small but the breeder said his head will come in once he's two years old. I'm not sure what the breeder said was true. I'm worried."

"I agree his gums are pink and his head is small. However, I don't believe these traits will improve with age. It's best to see dark gums and correct head type upfront. Hoping is not reassuring."

Similar to Mike's situation, a first time breeder called me to inspect and grade a litter of 8 puppies sired by a frequently used stud dog. She was not knew to Rottweilers, but it was her first attempt at breeding and was perplexed by the result. After I inspected the puppies, Helen asked, "What do you think Steve?" I answered her with my usual question, "What do you think of the puppies?" "They all look different!" In the litter there were lanky, compact, long in body traits and coats varied from soft to coarse. The pups were an amalgam of unrelated parts from the pedigree. "I agree Helen, there's no uniformity." "Is there supposed to be uniformity?" "Yes! Ideally, they should all be uniformly good. Helen, did you do any research on the stud dog and your bitch's background? Helen sheepishly replied, "No."

Mike and Helen's dilemma is not unique. It's all too familiar. Statements such as: "Oh, don't worry, the gums will get darker," "His head will get bigger", "Her eyes will get darker", "The bite will correct", "None of the pups look like the sire or dam!", are not encouraging to an owner nor are they an effective predictor of future outcomes. They are rationales – excuses - for faults, problems and poor planning.

Making a successful selection for a Stud Dog, Brood Bitch or Puppy is subject, in part, to chance and frailties of the flesh. However, logic dictates that having guidelines for their selection is a useful tool and can greatly diminish uncertainty.

Stud Dog

1. Five Stud Dog Types.

A. The Great Stud Dog. He is rare. His breed type is irrefutable. The great stud dog reproduces his excellent and desirable traits with mechanical consistency. No matter what bitch he

couples with, we can observe his traits i.e. excellent head and compact body type or superior working temperament etc. in his offspring. He is **prepotent** and stamps his mark on progeny. Some examples of great Rottweiler stud dogs are: Ives Eulenspiegel - probably the most prepotent dog of all time - Dingo vom Schwaiger Wappen, Jeneck's Wotan, Eiko vom Schwaiger Wappen, Vico v.d. Flugschiese.

B. The Variable Stud Dog. His mark is inconsistent. With compatible bitches, his offspring are, compact, have good head type and possess his excellent angulations. In these successful litters, he sires many good quality puppies and leaves his mark. With incompatible bitches, the pups are a hodgepodge of parts from the pedigree and there is maybe only one pup that resembles him.

C. The Mediocre Stud Dog. He occasionally leaves his mark. He has admirable traits and sires many litters but most of his offspring do not resemble him. Once in a while however, a surprise occurs and a pup emerges that has his positive aspects.

D. The Skip-A-Generation Stud Dog. He leaves not his, but his sire's stamp. Sometimes, we encounter a stud dog that has no outstanding breed type or admirable traits. His breed type is pedestrian. However, his sire's was not. Each time he is coupled, he throws not himself, but his sire's outstanding breed type i.e. powerful masculine head type, good bone substance, correct angulations and movement. His purpose is his production record, not for showing.

E. The Poor Stud Dog. He never leaves his mark. He is used because he can.

Prerequisites For Stud Dog Selection

- 1. No disqualifying faults according to the standard.**
- A stud dog, at minimum should be V rated. It is an objective opinion affirming that he is excellent in type, conformation and locomotion. (*Note: The Skip-A-Generation Stud Dog. His production record supersedes his need for a V rating. He appears unworthy, but produces far better than himself.*) He should be compact, possess good to superior head type, dark almond shape eyes and dark gum pigmentation, dry tight skin, good bone substance, good markings, good front and rear angulations and his locomotion should be reasonably unhindered and harmonious. (*Also refer to the Feb. 2014 issue of the Rottweiler Working for the meaning of and value of a V rating.*) In essence, **use the most correct dog possible.**
- Prefer using stud dogs that have ZTP and working titles - or their equivalent. This assures at least, reasonable working temperament.
- A stud dog must be healthy. He must have hip and elbow ratings within acceptable standards. If possible, he should also have heart and eye certifications. Demand the official documentation.
- A current - at least 30 days prior to breeding - brucellosis test. It should be provided by the stud dog owner on demand.
- He can couple naturally.
- At least one week has passed since his last mating.
- The stud dog owner provides a written contract with: terms of payment, how many puppies constitutes a litter, will a repeat breeding occur if there is no pregnancy etc.
- He has viable healthy ejaculate. Essentially, he can sire a litter.
- Depth in his pedigree. His pedigree has quality dogs in the background.

Caveat

- Currently, many stud dogs cannot couple naturally. Most likely, their fight/sex drive is low. Therefore, they go through the motions but there is no completion. Instead, their semen must be extracted manually to be used with the receptive bitch. Unless there is a valid reason for artificial insemination - great distance, the stud dog is no longer living, special circumstances etc. - dogs that cannot couple naturally will pass this inability and low drives to their male offspring and perhaps their sired females too? Prefer a natural coupling.
- Some stud dogs are given steroids to artificially enhance their physical appearance. They are "pumped-up" to look great at shows. However, their special appearance is at the expense of their internal organs, reduction of drive and sperm count. When it is time to perform, they often have great difficulty or cannot. Beware muscularly exaggerated dogs.

- Some stud dog owners are prone to hyperbole. They often boast that “Every male their stud dog sires is a carbon copy of them, every litter is huge and every pup is outstanding.” Before using a specific stud dog, inspect, view and ask questions about his offspring with the owners of the puppies he sires. There is no better metric than the clear quality of his offspring. In the long view however, a complete assessment of a stud dog’s mark on the breed is not revealed until years after his death.
- When considering the purchase of an adult stud dog, thoroughly inspect all of his aspects – traits, pedigree, production record - and question why he is being sold.

Brood Bitch

1. Three Brood Bitch Types

A. The Great Brood Bitch. Her breed type is irrefutable. She too, leaves her mark no matter what stud dog is used. Because her production record is a finite number of breedings, she is more unique than the great stud dog. Her influence on the litter is commanding. With each brood, her desirable traits.i.e. superior construction, breed type and powerful locomotion are evident in her puppies. Most likely, her dam was a great brood bitch or she was sired by a great stud dog. Few breeders will sell a bitch of this high caliber since she is so highly prized.

B. The Variable Brood Bitch. Similar to the variable stud dog, her success is also predicated upon a compatible partner. With compatible dogs, she produces her good traits i.e. powerful head type, excellent front and rear angulation, working temperament. With incompatible dogs, the litter is average and perhaps one pup has quality.

C. The Poor Brood Bitch. Because of her mediocre breed type and random pedigree, she leaves no distinguishing mark. Therefore, her puppies - no matter what stud dog is used - are a mixed assortment of traits. Her strong point is that she can conceive, carry and successfully raise the litter. This type of brood bitch is most common.

Prerequisites For Brood Bitch Selection

1. **No disqualifying faults according to the standard.**
2. She should possess the following: excellence in breed type, temperament, construction and locomotion, a V rating from a conformation judge. In breed type, she should have a powerful muzzle - wide at the base - good pronunciation of the zygomatic arch, good width of top-skull, good bone substance, dark eyes and gum pigmentation. She should not be frail, weak in head type and bone substance. Powerful bitches produce powerful offspring.
3. Prefer bitches with working titles. They pass working temperament to their offspring.
4. She must be healthy with a hip and elbow rating within acceptable standards, a normal thyroid and a negative brucellosis test. If possible, she should have heart and eye certifications.
5. She can couple naturally.
6. Depth in her pedigree. Her bloodline has quality dogs in its background.
7. She is coupled only once per year.

Caveat

- In the early 70’s until the late 90’s, Rottweiler bitches easily conceived and had multiple huge litters. Often, they had 12 and sometimes an astounding 16-18 puppies! Surely, fertility was factor in the Rottweiler’s amazing rise in popularity back then. Today, these large litters are no longer common with an average size of 6-8 pups as the norm.
- Caesarian section is another frequent problem. Once a rarity in the Rottweiler, it is now commonplace. When a bitch requires a “C section”, she will likely need it for succeeding litters. Many unwelcome difficulties accompany this procedure.
- Infertility too, has increased among bitches. Because of the higher incidences of hyper/hypo-thyroid, other hormonal imbalances and uterine anomalies, bitches are not conceiving or have complications with their pregnancy.

- With the preceding problems, some bitches may experience an unusual three and four cycles per year or a very short time between intervals. A normal interval is 6 months. This anomaly can prevent conception or if they conceive, often lose the pups from an unstable uterine environment. Bitches with these obstacles should not be coupled. Their female pups inherit the anomaly and perpetuate it.
- A virgin brood bitch's producing ability should be first tested with a proven stud dog. When coupling an unproven stud dog to an unproven brood bitch and she does not conceive, no one can be sure, which was at fault.
- When considering the purchase of an adult brood bitch, thoroughly inspect all of her aspects – traits, pedigree, production record etc. - and question why she is being sold.

Puppy

Puppy selection for many is difficult. Deciding which one is the pick, best suited for my needs, best moving, strongest temperament etc., can be unclear. Added to the mix is the influence of emotion, impulse and cost. Even the experienced breeder will sometimes be confronted with tough decisions. A selection based on objectivity increases the success of a decision and greatly reduce mistakes.

1. First decide the puppy's purpose. Will it be for **show, breeding, working, protection, or a family companion**. It is a critical decision and narrows the focus.

2. No selection should be made prior to 8 weeks. At 8 weeks, a puppy's incisors are present, it has been vaccinated - at least once - for distemper and parvo. Its temperament, eye color, gum pigmentation, markings and conformation are discernable and a strong indicator of its adult conformation. The best age for making a puppy selection is not 8 weeks, but 6 months. Then, all of the aforementioned traits are either well established, or not. However, few breeders will hold a pup that long.

3. **The family companion.** The two primary concerns for a family companion are:

A. Temperament. Its temperament must be outgoing, sociable, friendly, steady and calm. It should easily demonstrate these traits and eagerly come – with tail wagging - when called. Any pup that exhibits shyness, nervousness, fear or sits in a secluded area should be avoided.

B. Health. Its eyes and nose must be free of discharge. Its coat must be shiny, black, tan to mahogany markings - robust with no presence of demodex, diarrhea, limping, malformations and no rear dew claws.

Breed type is also a consideration. It should be reasonable. A breeder will not sell a high caliber show specimen as a family companion, but if it looks like a Doberman, Whippet or Black and Tan Coon Hound beware!

4. **The show pup.**

A. No disqualifying faults according to the standard.

B. The show pup must be **special**, far above average - read "*Definition of a Show Dog*" by Steve Wolfson available on request snwolfson@optonline.net - It should possess superior breed type with the following prerequisites: head type that has excellent skull to muzzle ratio, good width of top-skull and muzzle at the base, scissors bite, good ear set, good bone substance, compact body type, good front and rear angulation, good pronunciation of the sternum, front and rear legs that do not turn out, good croup angulation, tight well knuckled cat-like feet, black, tight-fitting coat with mahogany markings and able to gait in a harmonious unrestricted stride. It also requires #3A, and B.

5. **The pup for future breeding.**

It requires #3A and B #4A and B

6. **The pup for working.**

A. No disqualifying faults according to the standard.

B. Its temperament demands #3A and B with high drives and an ability to confidently deal with stress. A puppy working ability temperament test is advised. Regarding breed type, it should be able to attain at a minimum, a G-SG rating in conformation.

7. The pup for protection.

Its temperament demands strong nerves, courage and an uncompromising ability to deal with stress. #3B is another requirement. A puppy working ability temperament test is advised. Good conformation is a positive but not required.

Caveat

- Puppies change from one week to the next. What is observable at four weeks may not be at six. If possible, delaying a decision until the very latest is best.
- Always temperament test a puppy.
- A puppy with blue eyes will have a future eye color of 3A or higher. Pink gums do not get darker. Light markings do not get richer or darker in color. Sooty markings do not become clearer. Long in body rarely becomes short. Poor angulation does not improve. Nervousness, shyness and lack of confidence in temperament remain. Overbite rarely corrects. Under-bite never corrects. A missing deciduous tooth is a precursor for a missing adult tooth. Splay feet on a puppy is an inherited trait and remains.
- The price of a puppy should be reasonable, not exorbitant. Price is not a stamp of quality. Much can go wrong as it matures.
- All puppies are "show prospects." Because the breeder says it is a show dog does not make it so. Much can change or go wrong.
- When a breeder makes a claim, ask for the documentation.
- Beware the breeder that pressures the sale.
- Beware the breeder that says, "Don't worry, as it matures, the gums will get darker", "The light markings will get darker", "The head will get bigger", "The bite will correct."

Summary

As in life, for stud dogs, brood bitches and puppies, nothing is certain. Success is influenced in part, by luck. No great stud dog is without fault or can erase the problems of a bitch. No great brood bitch will always produce superior puppies. No great puppy is without imperfection. One should apply reasonable compromise in these matters.



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