

Thinking of an Airedale Terrier

This leaflet has been produced by The South of England Airedale Terrier Club to help anyone considering an Airedale Terrier as a companion dog. Owning a dog one should realise will be a long term commitment and there can be problems which hopefully you will be able to identify in advance to avoid an expensive and upsetting mistake for the puppy as well as yourself.

Most prospective owners will opt for a puppy but the Club does run an Airedales in Distress Rescue Scheme where it may be possible to obtain an adult dog who through no fault of its own finds itself homeless.

Management

Feeding

Feeding an adult Airedale Terrier is not expensive, obviously quantity depends on the individual dog, some require more than others depending on lifestyle etc. Obviously a puppy requires a good diet and your breeder will advise you and give you a diet sheet before you collect your puppy so you can be prepared. Good quality food is essential to promote health and growth as an Airedale Terrier grows rapidly in the first year. Therefore the first year will be expensive if you intend to rear your puppy well; this is another consideration before you make your final decision.

Training

This is one of the most important aspects of owning any dog especially when it is a large breed. Even though the Airedale Terrier has a good temperament, it can be stubborn, and training will take time, patience and kindness. Find a good training club (ask other local dog owners or your Veterinary Surgeon to recommend one) which will help to socialise your dog and give you support as a new owner. Again each dog is different and some will be easier than others but do bear in mind that in today's 'anti dog society' people must be vigilant in their training. Also remember that you need to 'pick up' after your dog as most local authorities impose a hefty fine on those caught not doing so.

Exercise

All dogs need exercise for their mental wellbeing as well as physical. An Airedale Terrier will accept as much or as little exercise as you are prepared to give, but it must be remembered that they are a large intelligent breed and will need at least one good walk a day and some time to play. Puppies should not be suddenly taken out on a five mile hike but should be gradually built up to taking as far as you are prepared to walk! The puppy will not be ready to partake in any long walks until it has completed most of its growth, short socialisation walks will be sufficient. If you are in any doubt contact your breeder.

Grooming

The Airedale Terrier is known as a trimmed breed therefore will need some time spent on the grooming of its coat. A puppy will need to learn to stand on a table for when it is trimmed. So if possible do your daily grooming on a table a few minutes a day so that it gets used to it. The trimming will need to be done two or three times a year depending on the individual coat, some need more some need less. At approximately six months the puppy will need its first trim, if possible return to the breeder for this and if you wish to learn they will be able to give you advice. You will need help as it does take time to learn, attending shows can help as you will find most people willing to help, and the club does have a trimming chart available to help you should you decide to do it yourself. If you go to

a professional groomer it is important to stress the fact that you require your dog to be hand stripped and NOT clipped.

Questions

Can you afford a puppy?

The cost of a well bred / reared puppy will be considerable. The initial price however is just the start as inoculations, veterinary fees and feeding are on going costs .If holidays are planned then arrangements will be needed for the dog, in which case the cost of kennelling should also be taken into consideration.

Have you got enough space?

An Airedale Terrier does not need an excessive amount of space in which to live, but it would NOT be advisable to take one into a home which is overcrowded already. Any dog will need a space with a bed to call its own. A well fenced garden is a must; if you need to fence it's always a good idea to ensure the fencing goes below ground level as some Airedale Terriers will dig. Ideally someone will be at home during the day as a lonely bored puppy (any breed) can be very destructive. Is your car big enough to take a dog?

Have you the Patience

As already stated a puppy can be very destructive and time consuming. House training Airedale Terriers is not usually difficult if the puppy is put in the garden after being fed and when it wakes up, newspaper should be left on the floor by the door in case you are not around.

Training can be exhausting at times the main thing to remember is to keep your temper (count to 10!) as the puppy will be not responsive if it thinks you are cross with it.

Questions to ask the breeder

Considerations

- 1) Dog or Bitch
- 2) What sort of temperament can you expect
- 3) Has the breeder encountered any hereditary problems
- 4) Does the breeder have stock x-rayed for Hip Dysplasia
- 5) Show dog or pet
- 6) What is the cost of a puppy
- 7) Will there be any endorsements on the puppy's registration. If yes – what and why.
- 8) At what age can you collect the puppy (8 weeks is normal). It is not a good idea to decide to take a puppy on your first visit. You should go home and discuss, and make sure it is what you really want. A responsible breeder will understand and appreciate you caution.
- 9) What help and support can you expect once the puppy is purchased.

Do be prepared to wait; it is always worth waiting for a healthy puppy from a reputable breeder. Make sure you feel confident about the breeder you are buying from they should be knowledgeable and just as importantly approachable as they will be your back up should any problems arise.

Facts about the Airedale Terrier

The Airedale Terrier is a medium / large breed of dog, black and tan in colour, although grizzle on the saddle of the adult dog is acceptable and with a hard wiry top coat and a soft undercoat, The Kennel Club standard states 23 -24 inches at the shoulder for a male, 22-23 inches for a female. Any gross deviation from these sizes is a major fault.

The Airedale Terrier should not be shy, nor should he be aggressive to other dogs. He loves children and being part of the family. He has a good sense of humour and a lot of energy and is very intelligent. However he can be quite independent minded, even stubborn at times and dominant if allowed to be. He should be given basic training as soon as possible and taken to puppy socialisation and training classes as soon as his inoculations are complete. The Airedale Terrier responds best if the training is made fun and the praise for doing well is lavish and loving.

The best breeder to buy from is one who is involved in showing as this encourages breeders to produce sounder and better looking dogs. All the litter will be socialised and reared as potential winners not just as something from which to make a few extra pounds. These breeders should also be able to supply proof that they have submitted their stock to the K.C. / BVA Hip scheme for testing and that they abide by the Kennel Clubs voluntary code of ethics as adopted by the National Airedale Terrier Association. A copy of the K.C.'s code of ethics should be available for perusal by prospective owners; failing this the K.C. will post a copy to anyone who requests it. The code as it applies to the Airedale Terrier states in paragraph 1 "Members will submit breeding stock to the K.C. / BVA hip scheme for testing and will make available copies of the relevant certificates to the purchasers of their stock" amongst other pertinent points. The Airedale Terrier Breed Council endorses the adoption of the code of ethics.

Responsible breeders should be prepared to take back or re-home dogs they have sold, not to pass the responsibility to rescue societies. As stated the Airedale Terrier is a broken coated breed (this means that he has a harsh top coat and a soft undercoat). He doesn't moult but needs regular brushing and combing – the technique should be demonstrated by the breeder to the new owner – or a little shedding will occur especially when he is in need of a trim. The old top coat should be stripped off approximately every two or three times a year, with particular attention being paid to keeping the leg hair tidy, the hair between the pads cleaned out and the nails kept short.

Airedale Terrier puppies must not be over exercised, allowed up and down stairs or become overweight as this puts too much strain on their young fast growing bones.

Adult dogs need about twenty minutes brisk walking twice a day to keep them fit, but they do love to free run in the woods and fields if given the chance. They do hunt however so need to be trained to recall.