

So.....you want to pick your puppy.....

There is an excitement when you are getting a puppy that is hard to explain. You want to meet the litter, snuggle them and then pick your favourite. In the short time you are with the litter you are only getting a snap shot of temperament, attitude, and drive. It is not a complete picture, and that sassy little puppy you like may very well be a heathen in 4 weeks time, a puppy that will require far more work that you are equipped to handle. Conversely, that cute snuggly little puppy that you sat with for 20 minutes may never have the drive you are looking for in an obedience dog... Picking a puppy is an art. A good breeder is your best friend and ally in this.

I have been very lucky with both my Dalmatians I have gotten from Bonnie. My first Dal I had a choice between 2 pups. I picked the sleepy quite snuggly little boy. And he is a wonderful companion. He tries his heart out for me and always gives it 100%. We have successfully gotten our Canadian Championship in Conformation, our Pre Companion Dog in Obedience and almost a dozen titles in NADAC agility.

However, the more I got into performance and conformation showing the more I found his soft nature holding us back. Do not get me wrong, I adore Bryn and would not trade him for the world, but his soft temperament is one of our biggest challenges in training and competition. I must be very careful in how I train so that he does not get discouraged and shut down.

I discussed these challenges with Bonnie at length. Bryn is my heart dog, I would not trade him for anything, but I did want to be more competitive in the ring. I will say it has made me a better more patient handler working with Bryn. He has forced me to learn a lot more than a "ring ready" puppy would have. But we were not competitive with the other Dals in the conformation ring.

Bonnie had a litter of puppies about a year after I got Bryn and I got this wonderful email at 5 weeks. It read something like this:"Emily, I have your puppy here. She is a beautiful little Liver girl with personality to spare. She is pick bitch and she belongs with you"

I am paraphrasing as I am certain the email was much longer. I thought about it, for a day or so (Bonnie claims it was less haha). I had Bryn who was 1, did I want to add another Dalmatian so close in age?

It came down to Bonnie's and my conversations. I trusted her judgement and went and got Fynlee a couple weeks later. She has been a great match. She is challenging and sassy. She has the drive I wanted and needed to be competitive in the ring. Bonnie knows my training style and personality and picked a puppy that is so well matched. She is tough, and hardy, tries her heart out but still has a mind of her own. She handles correction well, which makes her a joy to work with. I am still careful in how I train, but I worry less about her shutting down. She is almost 2 and we have yet to have her shut down, even on day 4 of 30+ degree heat at the dog show she still goes out and tries her very hardest. She loves everyone and everything. Fynlee is brave and outgoing (a lot of this is socialization I did when she was very young, but her Alpha personality does play a role). There are times when she drives me crazy, but it is those things that make her a good match for me and my goal. We finished our Championship before a year and completed her Grand Championship 4 months later with limited showing. I am excited to take her into the obedience ring, and debute her in agility.

The biggest mistake that many puppy buyers make is they chose the puppy they like the spots of best, or the one that snuggled the most. This is not a good basis for a show or performance dog. If you are looking for a show Dalmatian, or an agility partner, or a performance dog- talk to your breeder. Bonnie knows these puppies. She spends every day with them. She can tell you which ones will be sassy and spunky and which ones will be quiet and reserved. She will be able to help match a puppy to your needs. Do you work a lot and just want a relaxed pet? Or do want a dog that will run 10km with you every morning and still have gas to go to obedience classes 3 times a week? Or run in a full Agility trial weekend?

It is not something that anyone wants to hear- everyone wants to pick their own dog. But the risk is picking a dog that is not well matched to your life and goals. I know you filled out the application... It is incredibly thorough. It is important to be honest on this, Bonnie is basing her pup's future on your questionnaire. And you want a dog you can love forever, one that will match your lifestyle and competition goals.

Picking a puppy is an art, the best Breeders will have one or two pups for you to chose from, ones that she feel are best matched to you and your lifestyle. Trust Bonnie. She has spent many years breeding Dalmatians and the last 8 weeks she has cared for these puppies and watched them grow and interact. She is your best resource in making sure you get the perfect Dalmatian.

Because they all snuggle well on the ride home

Sincerely,

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