

Selecting YOUR Dachshund Puppy

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Whether you are buying a puppy or breeding your own, you will naturally be trying to choose the best. After all this time, you might expect selecting puppies from a Dachshund litter to be easy for me. Well, it isn't. But although I do not pretend to have a "magic formula" for identifying potential champions, along the way one gets a few ideas.

We prefer to choose our puppies at eight to ten weeks. Before this, no idea of gait can be established. Some breeders prefer to run them on until six, eight or even twelve months, but if you adhere to a few ground rules, you can select the puppy you want as a future champion much earlier than this.

At birth, some obvious faults (kinky tails, enormous patches of white, etc) can be noticed immediately, and these are certain discards. With white on the chest, do not discard a promising puppy with a patch of white. This actually does become less. But if the whelp looks to be wearing a complete white shirt – well, that's different!

Eye colour is hard to spot in very small puppies, but at the age of eight weeks, it is possible to differentiate between light eyes and darker ones. A pale, luminous grey eye nearly always means a light eye as an adult. This is one fault that I myself dislike and I have never kept a light-eyed dog or bitch. Of course, one has to expect different pigmentation in chocolates and dapples. The shape of the eye can also be assessed very early. The actual shape of the eye does not change. Beware of the round eye – easily picked out when the puppy is very young.

Heads? Well, heads alter. Look for a Dachshund puppy with good depth through of muzzle. The head will, of course, lengthen as the puppy grows, but do beware of a "snipey" muzzle – this is quite often the one that novices select. It looks, to be sure, more like a Dachshund at eight weeks, but usually ends up without enough strength in muzzle and jaw. And yes, quite often, they are the "prettiest" puppy in your litter – just another trap for young players!

Neck and shoulder can be assessed at eight weeks. If unsure, stand over the puppies when they are feeding. You can get a good look as they thrust their necks forward to feed. At the same time, one can assess body length. Remember, you are endeavouring to choose a puppy which, as an adult, will have the correct

proportions of a good Dachshund.

Length of neck is important. A dog which is maybe a bit too heavy in keel and body can still be balanced if he has the correct neck and shoulders to carry it. The body of the puppy will still be immature, so do not choose the one which is heaviest in keep (another novice choice!) This usually matures into a Dachshund which is too low altogether and may have the wrong topline as an adult. The shape of the keel, we have found, is more important, as depth comes with maturity.

Tail set-on can be seen at eight to ten weeks. A too-high set on tail is an ugly fault, quite often overlooked to an extent where it can creep into all your breeding stock. Another fault, and a very nasty one, is a too broad skull. By this I mean too much width between the ears. This is another fault that will be there forever.

When you stand the puppy you have chose, do not worry too much about a certain looseness of shoulder or elbow – these nearly always tighten. Of course do avoid like the plague any puppy which is grotesquely loose. In short, you are looking for a heavy boned, lengthy puppy, dark in eye, perhaps a trifle loose in front. This just might be your future champion!

With Miniatures, any appearance of "toyishness" is to be avoided. Go for the well boned look again. It is quite possible to predict the future size of Miniatures. Avoid the Minnie who only goes undersize (I nearly said weight!) just because it is lightly boned. If the bigger one is the best, so be it! Again, do make sure that it is really a Miniature. Anything which can be mistaken as a Standard in size should be discarded as a show prospect.

Long-haired Dachshund puppies are harder to pick, because of coat. Do not pick out the one with the heaviest coat. It should be silky-straight, not curly. The one essential I would look for in a Long-haired Dachshund would be a good neck, as some Long-haired Dachshunds, good in other respects, fail in this, and the Dachshund can look a bit "lumpy" no matter how good it is. Again, this is a quality which can be picked out with a puppy below three months of age.

With a Wire-haired Dachshund, the same remarks apply, except for coat. A puppy with what appears to be "good coat" in the next can be perceived as being a "bad coat" at three months. No amount of clever trimming can convert a "bad coat" into a good one, but often a coat which is too uneven or "woolly" can be greatly improved.

To the novice who reads this, the very best advice I could give is to make the acquaintance of someone in your breed, hopefully who has very much the same bloodlines, and who can give you on-the-spot advice. It's time well spent to get expert opinions. Dachshunds are a difficult breed to select – and remember, even experts can get it wrong sometimes. Good luck



NZ Ch Nevacrest Sea Nymph
Only Standard Wire Dachshund to win Best in Show in Australia
Owned by Robin Hill and Mrs B Clentworth



Eng/NZ Ch Silvae Defender (imp UK)
shown with owner Mavis Lightfoot and judge Ernie Schache



Ch Dachswan Phantom (imp UK)
imported by Frank d'Harty and then owned by Mathews and Mackinoly



Drofneq Dagobert
Runner Up in Show
Garden Island 1979



Peter and Ruth Simon's
Ch Consort of Stutton (imp UK)



Dr Ian Hamilton's
Ch Dubrovnik Cork Tip



from

IS THERE A DACHSHUND IN THE HOUSE?

Sheridan Pausey's excellent reference book for both newcomers and established breeders and exhibitors, especially for its fantastic collection of photos.

It is unfortunately now out of print, so if you can beg or borrow a copy, do so!