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How to Choose A Stud Dog

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The secret of breeding success is simply to breed a really good female, the product of close line-breeding, whose sire was a proven producer, to a line-bred stud dog of the same family who has proven in several litters that his get are above the average in quality, with some really great ones among them. This is a simple and effective method and the one used by all the great breeders of the past, in cattle, horses, sheep, swine and dogs. Great care must be taken not to breed two together with the same obvious fault, of course.

It is, therefore, obvious that you have already selected the family of the prospective sire when you chose the female, since you tilt the scales in your favour when sire and dam belong to the same family. The odds are always weighted heavily against the breeder, since Nature is always pulling against him toward the mean common average. By line or family breeding one reduces the possible combination of genes passed on to their puppies and when the majority of these are desirable the puppies should resemble the family type with the chance that one or more might be an improvement over either or both parents. This is why sire and dam must both be of the best possible quality from the best possible family.

One gets out of a breeding, only what sire and dam put into the puppies and this is determined by the specific genotype of both parents. Phenotype is the term applied to the physical characteristics of a dog - the visual appearance of the whole and its component parts. Genotype however, is the term applied to the hidden characteristics inherited by the animal from all his forebears - his genetic equipment. Often phenotype and genotype are quite different and this is why a beautiful animal may never produce a puppy half as beautiful as he is himself and also why an average dog, as far as appearance goes, may produce puppies better than himself and quite different in many ways, structurally. It is because the genotype is what determines the sire's ability, and because he inherits this from all his forebears, that the general excellence of the family is so important.

There is but one way to determine the genotype of a dog (or female) and this is to test mate him. Breeding a dog to an equally good very closely related female will reveal his powers to pass on characteristics good and bad. If one can find a sire who passes on mainly the good characteristics of his family or himself, does not pass on any or many of his less desirable physical traits and occasionally produces an excellent puppy, then one has uncovered a top sire.

The same process of Test Mating must be used to uncover the genotype of the female. There is no other way to determine what she will produce. We must know the genotype of both parents in order to be able to predict even fairly closely what their puppies will be like. Even then, there are so many genes to match up with each other, some dominate, some recessive, that no two puppies will be exactly alike, nor will any two puppies produce alike in their turn.

The matter of choosing a sire becomes more complicated when one examines a given dog's production record. Some dogs seem to produce better females than dogs and



vice versa. Some males seem to contribute nothing of themselves but the sperm and all the puppies resemble the dam's family only. Finally, some sires stamp their own physical type on a large share of their progeny, because, as stated above, the majority of their genes are pure and dominant for the most desirable traits.

When such a dominant sire appears in a breed, he will usually improve the breed immeasurably and a large share of succeeding generations will be his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. He will produce good puppies from good and fair females, even occasionally from poor ones.

Many such sires are known to the old timers in each breed and to the "pedigree hounds." In wire-haired Fox Terriers, Talavera Simon and Gallant Fox were so dominant in desirable genes that virtually every show dog today is a descendant of either or both. Similarly in Doberman Pinschers, all the good modern show dogs are descended from Sieger Lux v. Blankenburg, his half-brother Troll v. Blankenburg or their close relative Helios v. Siegestor.

Such dominant sires are almost invariably line-bred, ie. - very closely bred with very little outside blood. As a corollary, only the best of their progeny have produced well. However, even the best carry some undesirable genes and the Wire-haired Fox Terrier has been cursed with the squirrel tail of Gallant Fox, almost the only bad physical characteristic he and his get passed on to their progeny.

The intelligent breeder endeavours to learn all he can about the prospective sire - not only what he produces but the physical and family characteristics of the females who were mated to him; also what his family - his sire and dam produced. This takes time, research and careful study. As one highly successful breeder said recently, she often sits up far into the night, studying pedigrees and production records of different available sires, planning a single future mating. A very prominent canine organization recently spent several thousand dollars to have a professional poll-taking firm ascertain the average length of time a dog fancier remained in the game. It turned out to be THREE YEARS. Apparently, there aren't many who are interested enough to take the time to intelligently plan the matings of their dogs and since, as stated above, nature is always trying to pull the breed downwards toward its original cruder form, their efforts have left them so discouraged they leave the dog game to try something else. Fortunately, a few always become so interested that they are willing to stay with it until they become master breeders. Go to many dog shows over the years, and you will see many of the same faces at every show and their dogs will still be winning.

In every breed there comes a time when there just aren't any dominant sires. All that can be done during such periods is to maintain as many good average dogs as possible. Such a period has been the case for the last few years in my chosen breed, and the owners of good females, good producing females, are at a total loss at the moment, not knowing what sire to breed to. Inevitably, a dominant sire will appear, of the proper bloodlines, since history invariably repeats itself.

Maybe I am not being very helpful. I feel that many breeders do not have any idea, really, of what they are trying to produce. Attending dog shows may only further confuse them. When a dog goes through to Best of Breed and on to Best in Show one day and places third two days later in its breed to a dog of very different type, his confusion may



be compounded. There is an answer, and time will come to the aid of the sincere breeder. There is a yard stick - the Breed Standard. Recently, as guest speaker at a Specialty club, I asked all those who had read the Standard of their breed within the past six months to put up their hands. Not a single hand went up. How in the name of Heaven can one criticize judges or breed intelligently if one doesn't know what he is trying to breed? If the Standard says the ideal dog should be square that is what you want. If it says the relation of height to length should be 8 ½ to 10 - that is what you want. And the closer your dogs come to the Standard, the more often they will win.

So choosing a stud boils down to a relatively simple formula. Choose a female of the best quality available, with no serious faults and breed her to the best dog available of a closely related strain, a dog who has proven that he is a producer of the occasional top dog, but also the producer of pups of a good general average quality. Obviously, you will pick the sire of dogs you admire, since he will have taken at least until then to prove his ability. There will be lots of other "breeders" who have done the essential spade work for you.