

## Opening Space

**Dogs in Review readers sound off about one of the magazine's features.**

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Can we discuss breeders again? My question about who really is a good breeder in last issue's Opening Space has generated a lot of comments; obviously this is a question that dog fanciers feel strongly about. If we're not breeders right now, most of us either bred dogs in the past, will be breeders in the future or at least work with a breeder to get the dogs we have, so it makes sense that everybody has an opinion. We here at Dogs in Review are interested in this question also because we so often need to turn to the breeders to get the real scoop about many different questions, and to do that we want to know who the best breeders are.

For the record, here's what I think you should have achieved to be a really good breeder. You may not agree, but here goes:

1. You should have been around for some time, preferably many years. For a new breeder to produce a few amazing litters is impressive, but it's only when you've proved over a long period of time that this wasn't a fluke that you deserve to be called a real breeder.
2. You should have bred a high percentage of dogs which have achieved success in more than one area: not just in all-breed competition but at specialties as well; not just at conformation events but also in whatever "working" venues are open for your breed. (And if there are none, there's always obedience, temperament testing and therapy dog titles to be earned. As they say, a well-balanced dog has titles at both ends!).
3. Your dogs should be appreciated by your peers to such an extent that other breeders incorporate them into their breeding programs. The judges may be wrong your fellow breeders as a group seldom are.
4. You should regularly test all breeding stock for any inheritable diseases known to exist in your breed.
5. You should actually focus more on temperament than on conformation not just say you do!
6. You should deal ethically and honestly with your peers and the pet people, providing accurate information about both sold puppies and stud dogs. You are responsible for every puppy you sell and you make complete breeding records available for any dog you stand at stud.
7. Finally, you must provide a decent lifestyle for your dogs. I don't care how much they win, if your dogs spend most of their time in crates or unattended in a kennel, you are not a good breeder in my book.