

## Dispelling Chow Chow Myths

**A prospective Chow owner has some concerns after hearing things about the breed.**

*By Allan Reznik*

Q. I am interested in buying a Chow Chow, but have been warned that they are stubborn and not easily trained. Also, I am told they are prone to hip dysplasia. Would one of these dogs be a good choice for me? My husband and I are retirees (no kids, no grandkids, just cats) and I have owned dogs all my life. I took my last dog to training classes for five years and have a pretty good idea of how to train a new dog. I enjoyed walking my last dog but have been told that Chows will not walk on a leash for any distance. Any insights you can provide will be greatly appreciated.

A. I'm curious what prompted you to consider a Chow? You seem to have been hearing a lot of opinions about the breed, and I suspect many of these comments have not come from Chow owners or breeders.

It's coincidental that you mentioned having cats because I would describe Chows as quite cat-like in their independence, cleanliness, and aloofness.

Yes, they are stubborn, a trait they share with all the Oriental breeds, from the smallest Pekingese to the biggest, burliest Tibetan Mastiff. Some of us love that quality in a dog while other owners need a dog that lives to please them and is more demonstrative in its affection. If you need a dog to fetch your slippers and the morning newspaper, forget the Chow.

A Chow would consider being asked to perform parlor tricks "demeaning." Yet the breed is intensely loyal to "its" chosen people.

They are a clean breed so puppies are quickly housetrained. Also their rough, stand-off coats are relatively easy to groom.

I recommend going to a dog show, meeting Chow breeders and approaching them after they're done in the ring to ask about the breed and make an appointment to visit their dogs at home. If there isn't a dog show in your area, visit the Chow Chow Club's website, where you'll find lots of information on the breed and locate a club and breeders in your part of the country.

Chow puppies are adorable teddy bears, but this is absolutely not a breed to buy from a pet shop or a casual, inexperienced breeder. Early socialization is a must, and a good breeder will be your mentor and friend for the life of your dog. Take the time to find a great one.