

Showing a Purebred Dog

Having a knowledgeable breeder evaluate your dog is the first step.

By Allan Reznik

Q. I think I might want to show my purebred dog. How would I get started?

A. Dog shows were originally designed as a venue to evaluate breeding stock. Each breed has a standard, which serves as a blueprint, describing the perfect specimen from head to toe. Since the perfect dog has never been produced, breeders attempt to mate two dogs that complement each other physically. They hope to produce a litter of puppies that is an improvement over the quality of their parents.

Ideally, the breeder from whom you purchased your dog lives close enough that she can evaluate your dog in person. She can objectively assess his pros and cons. If this is not possible, contact the regional breed club in your area. Then make an appointment with a knowledgeable breeder to evaluate your dog. Offer to pay something for this evaluation. The breeder probably won't accept but it's a classy gesture.

If the breeder feels your dog has show potential, attend a few dog shows without your dog. You can familiarize yourself with the protocol and environment. Next, sign up for some handling classes so that you and your dog can develop a rapport. You will also learn the nuances of showing a dog. Some breeds require hours and hours of meticulous grooming – Poodles, Bichons, and the wire-coated terriers that require hand-stripping. If your breed falls into this category, you may decide to hire a professional handler to show your dog. Then you can root for him from the sidelines. Good luck!