

Obama Dog Contenders Face Off

Learn more about the dog breeds being considered by the Obama family.

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President-elect Barack Obama and his family have narrowed down their choice to two dogs, a "Labradoodle" (Labrador Retriever-Poodle mix) and a Portuguese Water Dog. Find out about the breed history and temperament of the candidates in the running for first dog.

Labrador Retriever

This dog has a retrieving jones. Lead a Lab to a body of water and he will retrieve all day – balls, sticks, and even children who might happen to go for a swim. Descended from dogs found in Newfoundland by explorers, fishermen, and settlers, the Labrador Retriever evolved by natural selection. An excellent retriever of fish and game, these dogs have been known by several names, among them the Black Water Dog, the Lesser Newfoundland, and the St. John's Dog.

In the early 1800s the breed was introduced to Britain, where it was eventually crossed with other sporting breeds. The final product was the strong, sturdy Labrador Retriever, which has now become America's most popular dog, thanks to its outgoing, eager to please temperament.

The Labrador is easy to train and excels as a field dog and in obedience trials. Labs enjoy outdoor exercise and are especially fond of swimming. This medium-sized, high-energy dog is best suited to a suburban or country home with a yard and a family that can provide it with the activity it loves.

[Click here to read the entire Labrador Retriever breed profile.](#)

Poodle

Beneath the Poodle's air of distinction and dignity, beneath that lovely "poodly" coat, beats the heart of a plain old simple wonderful dog whose good-natured versatility makes him at home in any arena, from the show ring to the field to his favorite spot, the home. The oldest of the three Poodle varieties, the Standard is the original from which the Miniature and Toy were developed. The breed is a member of the family of water dogs and is closely related to the Portuguese Water Dog and the Irish Water Spaniel.

Widely known throughout Europe as a retriever of waterfowl, it is possible that either Germany or Russia was the Poodle's country of origin, although France seems to be the country most responsible for popularizing the breed both as a family pet and sporting dog. In that country the breed is known as the caniche, a name derived from the French word for "duck".

With its well-mannered demeanor, clean habits, non-shedding coat and desire to please, the Poodle makes a superior house pet for town or country. The Standard needs plenty of outdoor exercise and is better suited to a house than a high-rise. It's an excellent watchdog and loves playing with children.

[Click here to read the entire Poodle breed profile.](#)

Portuguese Water Dog

The Portuguese Water Dog, known as Cao D'Augo in its homeland, is a strong swimmer and diver, and is said to be able to shimmy up a rope in traditional seaman fashion. The breed was most numerous in Iberian peninsula seaports, where the dogs worked as members of the fishing boat's crew retrieving fish and fishing gear, as guards, and sometimes as rescue dogs. They were also used to carry messages from boat to boat and boat to shore; the dogs are reported to have performed this courier service for the Spanish during the Battle of Trafalgar.

The breed was brought to the United States in the late-1960s, and in 1972 a club was founded to promote its interests. Efforts have been so successful that more Portuguese Water Dogs exist in the U.S. than in Portugal.

The breed is good with children and is an ideal choice for the water-sports enthusiast who can give it daily exercise and a home with a yard.

[Click here to read the entire Portuguese Water Dog breed profile.](#)



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