

Herding Dogs as Pets

Fanciers explore whether herding dogs make good matches for pet owners.

Karen Steinrock

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The secret to working with pet people is patience and understanding. It is important to stay in touch with owners for the life of their puppy. The puppy owner needs an explanation as to why, if for some reason they no longer can keep this puppy (at any age), the breeder is always willing to take the puppy back.

Peggi L. Weymouth Briard Club of America Briard referral averages seven inquiries per month. Something I must always explain is that socialization of the puppy is of utmost important in determining the type of disposition a Briard will have as an adult dog. The owners should take the pup with them as often as possible, encouraging people to pet him and acclimating him to strange people and the world around him. A puppy kindergarten class followed by a beginning obedience class are two of the best ways to accomplish this.

The best Briard homes have both time and love to provide their dog. Bravery, loyalty and intelligence form the basic character of this breed. These and other remarkable qualities of the Briard character can be developed only if the owner is willing to devote time to early training. Though Briards have the physical requirements for outdoor life, he is at heart a housedog. As a sheepdog, the Briard had to make decisions and, at times, can be quite stubborn.

I am not a breeder, but I am a pet person. I know from experience that there are many wonderful things to do with a "pet" Briard, such as carting, obedience, tracking, agility, therapy work, etc., to keep your Briard happy and healthy. Keeping an open line of communication between breeder and puppy owner helps assure the puppy will have every opportunity to grow into a happy, confident, mannerly dog. Michael Rohe Puli Club of America We receive about five to seven inquiries weekly. The unique appearance of the cords in the coat is what usually attracts pet people to this breed. Pet owners commonly use call names like Marley, Ziggy, or Whoopie... you get the idea. Twenty years ago the breed was commonly brushed and pet owners were more likely attracted to the intelligence and work ethic of the Puli. Old-timers and those immigrants from Hungary are more interested in the latter, I suspect.

Pet people need to know that the gorgeous show coat seen on top exhibits doesn't just happen naturally. It must be maintained. In Hungary it is said that the Puli is not a dog, and everyone who owns one eventually comes to realize what this means. The extremely intelligent breed is a sensitive companion, intensely devoted and faithful. Most important for the Puli is the relationship with his owner. This is not a part-time pet. Left to his own devices, the Puli will get into a fair amount of mischief. The breed requires stimulating activity.

The secret to working with pet people? Honestly apprising the inquirer that a Puli is not for everyone.