

Beagle



One of the most popular of the hounds, bred down from the larger Foxhound to hunt with men on foot, preferably after the hare. He is still used in packs, very often organised by institutions, including colleges and schools, but it is as a first-class family pet that he really makes his mark. A bustling, eager little dog, full of enthusiasm and vigour, ever ready for any activity which involves him.

Sturdy, bold and active, he is the very essence of quality, and is blessed with an equable and merry temperament. His head is powerful but his expression benign and there is usually a most definite difference between the dogs and bitches.

Everything about the breed gives the impression of athleticism and there is no better sight than a Beagle pack in full pursuit, their heads down to the scent, their sterns up in rigid order as they concentrate on the chase. This instinct is mimicked in his everyday behaviour in the park; the man with the lead in his hand and no dog in sight owns a Beagle.

An easy dog to keep, he can get as muddy as he likes but cleans up with a sponge and water, and dries off his short dense coat in a trice.

During the reigns of King Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I there were wirehaired Beagles, some of which were small enough to be carried in the pocket of a hunting jacket. Size has increased over the years but smaller versions of the breed, called 'pocket Beagles', are sometimes born.

What about Health Issues?

You may be aware that some breeds of dog (and crossbreeds too) can be susceptible to inherited disease. Of course you want to be sure that the puppy you choose is as healthy as possible, and you would like to know that it has not inherited any undesirable disease-causing genes from its parents. There is some help in that DNA tests for diseases in purebred dogs are available for some conditions in some breeds, but there are not very many such tests just yet! There are also, however, a number of clinical veterinary screening schemes that dog breeders can use to increase the probability of producing healthy puppies.

Details of the various screening schemes, both veterinary and DNA, that are available to breeders in the UK can be found on the Kennel Club's website at:

www.thekennelclub.org.uk/doghealth

Puppy buyers should be aware that, at present, the application of various health screening results to breeding programmes is not always straightforward, and breeders may make choices for various reasons. A responsible breeder though, will always be willing to discuss relevant health issues with you. Breed clubs are often useful sources of breed-specific information.

And what health screening is relevant for the Beagle?

There are not currently any veterinary screening schemes or DNA tests for disease relevant to this breed under the Accredited Breeder Scheme, however you should still ask breeders and refer to breed clubs about health issues in the breed.