New Year, New Dog

The winter might not seem a great time to add a canine companion to the family, but it’s actually an excellent time for the new pup!

Pups seem to housebreak easier in the cold months, and there are more non-daylight hours when you are in the house, so there couldn’t be a better time for you and your new gun dog to become a team. When the snow leaves and the grasses and cover grow, your pup will be able to negotiate the cover by the time October comes around, and you will have a pup that is 10-12 months of age.

When you decide to get a puppy, pick the breeder first. It is easy to pick your puppy out of a litter of 8 week-old pups, but before you go and look at the litter, make sure you’ve done your homework. The safest way to acquire a prospect that should turn out to be a proficient gun dog is to buy a pup only from someone who has hunting dogs that hunt. I have talked to many breeders who raise Brittanys, Labradors, German Shorthair Pointers, and English Setters who themselves have never held a shotgun, never mind hunted with these dogs.

Then consider the health of the puppy:

1. Have both parents been certified by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals? This helps ensure that the dogs do not have hip displaysia, a disease more prevalent in the larger breeds such as retrievers and large setters.

2. Have the eyes been checked for cataracts and certified against eye deformities? This is important in Labradors.

3. Have the pups been examined by a licensed veterinarian and been given their first series of shots and wormed against parasites?

In closing, I would ask for a written health guarantee against any of the things mentioned above. If the breeder is serious in his breeding practices, he or she will want you to be happy with a healthy animal.

John
at Kirby Mountain Sporting Dogs