

## 1. Phase I: Determining the Best Breed for Family and Lifestyle

- 1.1. Researching Breeds and Traits—Understanding Form and Function and Matching Same to Lifestyle and Logistics
- 1.2. Using Breed Selector Tools
- 1.3. Review Breed Specific Questionnaires
- 1.4. Research the History of the Breed
- 1.5. Field Research—See the Dogs in Person

### 1.1 Researching Breeds and Traits—Understanding Form and Function and Matching Same to Lifestyle and Logistics



Many people ignore this step and in my opinion it is the most critical. Prospective owners need to assess their lifestyle and family interaction. Do you want a breed that will play with the kids (fetch a ball, stick, or Frisbee)? Do you want a breed that requires little exercise or grooming? Do you want a big dog, a medium-sized dog, or a little dog? Is anyone in the house allergic to dog dander—do you need a breed that does not shed much? How about temperament—do you want a breed that will grow up to be a good watchdog or do you want a breed that could care less about barking at strangers or barking at all? Do you want a breed that shows aptitude for training? All of these factors and more need to be determined when you are looking at prospective breeds. Each breed comes with certain generalized characteristics—the reason the breed was developed in the first place.

It is necessary for you to research prospective breed traits so you can narrow down your selection. You can do this by researching breeds in books or on the Internet. I list a few Internet sites to get you started:

Purebred Dog Breeds: <http://www.dogbiz.com/group-index.htm>

Dog Owner's Guide to Breed Profiles including mixed breeds: <http://www.canismajor.com/dog/tprofile.html>

Your Purebred Puppy: <http://www.yourpurebredpuppy.com/>

Finding a dog or puppy the right way: <http://members.aol.com/debradownsth/>

AKC recognized breeds: <http://www.akc.org/breeds/>

UKC recognized breeds: <http://ukcdogs.com/RegBreedGroups.htm>

The only problem with the sites listed above is you usually will not find information about rare breeds.

Use the following sites to find information about Rare Breeds:

ARBA: <http://www.arba.org/>

Rarities: <http://www.raritiesinc.ca/>

Dog Owners Guide: Rare Breeds: <http://www.canismajor.com/dog/raredogs.html>

Canadian Show Dogs: Rare Breeds: <http://www.angelfire.com/bc2/CKCShowDogs/group9R.html>

**1.2 Using Breed Selector Tools:** In addition, there are sites that can help you determine the best breed for your family using what is called a Breed Selection tool. Based on questions about your lifestyle and requirements, the Breed Selector tool helps you better define your wants, needs, and requirements for a dog. I list a few below:

K9 Country: <http://www.k9country.com/>

Dog Breed Info Center: <http://members.aol.com/debradownsth/>

Animal Planet's Dog Breed Selector: <http://animal.discovery.com/guides/dogs/selector/selector1.jsp>

Select Smart: <http://www.selectsmart.com/DOG/>

About Dogs: [http://www.about-dogs.com/dog\\_breed\\_selector.htm](http://www.about-dogs.com/dog_breed_selector.htm)

Purina Dog Breed Selector: <http://sy.adiho.com/ASA/Controller?sysid=4&appid=9901>



Again the problem with most of the Breed Selector tools is that they do not take rare breeds into consideration. However, they can help you determine the type of dog that best fits your family and lifestyle. Then you can always check out the rare breeds sites to see what other breeds fall into the group that you might want to investigate. They will not help you narrow down a mixed breed combination either, but if you know what went into the mix, they can help you learn about the temperament and traits you could be dealing with.

**1.3 Review Breed Specific Questionnaires:** Several breeds offer questionnaires specifically designed to educate you about the detailed needs of a particular breed. If you are on the ShilohZone and interested in Shilohs,

you can check out “So, You Think You Want to Own A Shiloh?” It can be found here:

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ShilohZone/files/PUPPY\\_RESEARCH/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ShilohZone/files/PUPPY_RESEARCH/) (you must be a member of the ShilohZone for this link to work).

**1.4 Review the History of the Breed:** I think it is important to learn all you can about the foundations of any breed you are seriously considering bringing into your family. If it is a mixed breed, you will need to study the various breeds involved in the mix so you have an idea of the different temperaments and traits you could be dealing with. For people interested in Shilohs, the only breed history we have is the Origins article written by the breed founder:

<http://www.shilohshepherds.info/origins.htm> (or link to it from the Zone Links page).

The foundation stock of Shilohs is the German Shepherd Dog (GSD). Some lines called the MAW lines are said to have a Malamute cross in them. Some lines have outcrosses, most of these are German Shepherds either White GSD, German import GSD, or American bred GSD. It behooves anyone interested in Shilohs to research German Shepherds. Shiloh temperaments run the gamut from soft to hard, with and without working traits, and are larger than typical German Shepherds. In addition, Shilohs are said to be bred to have less drives than typical German Shepherds. So depending upon what you want in a dog, research the lines—that is a good indicator of temperament. If you are looking at an outcross puppy, often defined as the first three generations of a Shiloh bred to an outcross, researching the GSD breed can be especially important depending on the type of puppy you are looking for.



**1.5 Field Research—See the Dogs in Person:** There is nothing better than “field” research. Find people who own the type of dog you are interested in and ask them questions—many, many questions. See if you can arrange to meet with them and interact with their dogs. Check with local pet food suppliers or training clubs to find out about AKC or UKC shows in your area or check out AKC or UKC web sites for event calendars. If you are on the Zone and interested in Shilohs, post a message indicating what city you live in and hopefully a Zoner in your area will respond. Dog shows are a great opportunity for “field” research. For Shilohs or other rare breeds, check out the ARBA, IABAC, Rarities, and RBCSWO web pages for their show

calendars. Once you have narrowed down the breed, you are ready to move to Phase II.