

A GUIDE TO CHOOSING A PUPPY AND BREEDER

Korthals Griffon UK

a. *Are you sure you want a Korthals Griffon?*

So you have decided to purchase a 'proper' hunting dog! You are about to dedicate a substantial amount of time, money and patience to lovingly nurturing, training and exercising this dog in a formal manner to achieve the best you can? You have 'seen' the breed in-action, hunting, at field trials and 'up-close'. Talked to owners, talked to handlers and are now ready to obtain an example?

b. *Finding a Breeder* *¹ (and therefore a puppy)

This is your 'first step' in finding a Korthals Griffon puppy. Do this by contacting recognised field/hunting clubs and associations, breed clubs and the Kennel Club, NOT by first looking on 'Gumtree', Craig's List, in the free ad's, local papers or the plethora of 'find a puppy' web sites on the inter-web! Do your research, look for references on pedigrees AND breeders for the Korthals Griffon breed. Remember; you'll be paying the same from a 'poor' breeder and pedigree or a 'conscientious' breeder with nurtured pedigrees.

c. *Pedigree (Purebred <Americanism>)*

"Pedigree" means bred from two virtually identical parents of the same breed who have in turn been bred the same way ~ That meet or better the National and International 'breed standard'. All Pedigree dogs born in the UK are eligible for registration with a number of 'Pedigree Dog Registration Schemes' (Kennel Club, Pedigree Pets reg, Dog Lovers Registration etc); the Kennel Club *² being the most widely known, having recently introducing a 'two-tier' registration system via 'standard' or 'assured' breeders. Other countries also offer similar registration schemes. This or any registration is in "no way a guarantee or recommendation of quality, health or breeding" ... It is just that the dog is allocated a number on a list and a record of its gender & birth date is recorded - Nothing More! "Thousands" of pedigree dogs (*together with cross-breeds/mongrels*) are registered with the Kennel Club each year.

d. *Health?*

Being registered with the Kennel Club or the Breed club does not mean the puppy will be healthy or grow into a balanced and healthy dog! The Breed Club, international breed club(s) and the Kennel club make "recommendations *³" on health tests, DNA tests and health schemes for individual breeds and pedigree lines 'before' dogs are bred.

The UK breed club in association with the Kennel Club (and in turn with the British Veterinarian Association) ask "ALL" Korthals Griffon owners in the UK to complete an 'annual' Breed Health Survey. The content of the survey is used to monitor and track the Korthals Griffon (breed) and pedigrees for any abnormalities, health issues and genetic anomalies. Generally the Korthals Griffon is a robust and healthy breed.

e. Why breed the Korthals Griffon?

Simply because there is a 'demand' and with this demand comes the 'potential' to make money for some. But in reality, dedicated & conscientious breeders strive to perpetuate and improve upon the Korthals Griffon without 'changing them' ~ There is much, much more to breeding than just putting a male & female of the same pedigree breed together to generate a litter of puppies! Some breeders will breed dogs as a 'second income', some as their main income, others for the breed itself. To breed any pedigree dog requires dedication, research and travel to perpetuate and improve upon the breed in the correct manner ... With little or no monetary gain; the 'reward' being, breeding a better dog to standard - for the hunt!

f. Should I look for "Show" or "Working" pedigree line (puppy)?

This is a damning indictment of British dog breeding - that there are "TWO VERSIONS" of the same breed! This can only arise if breeders incorrectly breed - It's that simple. While other dog breeds (particularly in the UK) have 'forked' into two visually similar strains, this is not the case for the Korthals Griffon; and should not be! Dedicated breeders across the world work very hard to keep the breed pure to it's origins as a 'Working dog for the hunt' along with being free from ill health and genetic / congenital abnormalities.

Now that you have found a Korthals Griffon Breeder. Make an appointment to 'see' the breeder and his Home & Kennel, along with the Sire and Dam (or Dam at least) BEFORE there are any puppies; this will help prevent the temptation of committing to a puppy from this breeder due to clouded judgment (nice fluffy puppies scampering around). You are doing this to find out and discuss the breeders 'philosophy', his/her 'breeding aims' and his/her 'breed objectives'; to see and hear if he/she is suitable as a good breeder. A good breeder will welcome this and also answer all of your questions without hesitation and will not have any vague responses. He/she will also 'question you' to see if you are suitable too - Expect to be 'turned down' as a future owner!

So how do you go about this and what questions should you be asking of the breeder?

- 1.** Do your research before your 'first contact' with the breeder. Ask other owners, Ask the Club(s), Ask the register keepers (Kennel Club, Pedigree Pets reg, Dog Lovers Registration etc). Ask local veterinarians, Field sport training clubs etc for references on breeders for the Korthals Griffon.
- 2.** What genetic health issues has the Korthals Griffon breed experienced in the UK and in General (know before you ask)? Has the breeder's particular bloodlines been affected?
- 3.** Does the breeder have proven (original documents) health screenings of the Sire & Dam? You will be looking for Hip and Elbow scores of 'both' Sire & Dam along with General health DNA screening. In addition the Breed club and many breeders "strongly recommend" the Sire & Dam undergo 'colour of coat' DNA testing. Accept no excuses if the breeder does not have these documents to hand ^{*3}.
- 4.** Is the facility/home of the breeder (and any kennel) clean, tidy and well maintained? Does the breeder have available and unrestricted access to the equipment needed for the Dam during pregnancy, birth and post birth care. Do they have experience of animal husbandry together with the available time necessary to dedicate themselves to a smooth pregnancy and follow-on (18 weeks +).
- 5.** Has the breeder you've found produced 'lots' of litters of the breed? Lots of litters per annum (three, four or five ^{*4})? Have any previous litters or puppies from those litters succumbed to ill health, ailments or untimely death?
- 6.** Does the breeder have registration documents, certificates and papers on the Sire and Dam? If so, it should include 4 generations of the family pedigree; other documents would be 'Export' and 'import' documents and 'breeding/pedigree' documents (with no breeding restrictions).
- 7.** The breeder 'must show you' their pedigree Korthals Griffons. Do one or more have achievement/working certificates, titled regional or national / international champions or recognised cups/awards? Are there any local, breed club, working club or regional training and working certificates attributed to the pedigree - the Breeder - the Sire - the Dam? Ratings can be fair, good, or excellent.

8. What is in the contract of sale? (*see note *6*). The contract of sale/certificate of ownership transfer MUST be clear and fair. There should be no 'clauses' that state you cannot re-sell or re-home the dog or any spurious demands or financial requirements in addition. You CAN EXPECT (registration keeper - Kennel Club approved) 'Endorsements'. There are two main restrictions; these are "not allowed to be bred", "not allowed to be shown". Other restrictions include .. "Not for export" etc ^{*5}

These may be assigned because the puppy does not meet the breed standard, it has a colour of coat abnormality, that now health issues are possible if the pedigree continues etc, etc. Ask the breeder 'Why' there are restrictions on the litter - for your peace of mind. Minor breeding faults keep a pedigree dog from entering the show ring such as colour markings or being too tall. These faults do not adhere to the breed standard and is discouraged from being passed on to the next generation. Conscientious breeders are expected to add restrictions such as these so as to protect the breed; so do not be alarmed.

9. Support? Will the breeder / does the contract state that there will be help and support for you with a new puppy! Such as free single official breed club membership for a year, free health insurance for one month or more, free money back guarantee and return to breeder if the puppy is found to have a congenital ailment or severe health issues within a fixed time period. Are 'puppy training classes' include, does the puppy come with a Microchip, does the puppy come with an initial health inoculation? Does the puppy come with veterinarian health check? A fixed period supply of food? Feeding & nutritional guidelines for the next six months? Discount Coupons or special offer tokens for food - training - equipment - vet' costs? Conscientious breeders will offer many of the above to you without question or additional cost.

10. Be completely satisfied! Make sure you ask the above and more of the breeder; be sure. Satisfy yourself they meet this basic criteria. Ask what age your future Korthals Griffon is released to you? they should not separate puppies from their mother earlier than 8 weeks. You are demanding a happy, healthy puppy that meets the requirement of a versatile hunting dog and its breed standard, to be your companion and best friend for many trouble free years and years to come.

What a Breeder Should and may Ask You !

When buying a Korthals Griffon, not only do you need to be selective of whom you purchase from, but the breeder should (and will) be selective of who they sell one of their precious Korthals Griffon puppies too. Be prepared for lots of searching questions that the breeder will ask of you. Breeders who care about the Korthals Griffon breed and the well being of their pedigree, also care about the success a new owner has with their carefully bred puppies. Breeders of this caliber will ask you good questions - sometimes uncomfortable ones, ones that you should have asked yourself before reaching this penultimate step in obtaining a Korthals Griffon puppy. And be prepared to 'travel' to find your breeder. Here are a few questions you'll likely be asked by any good and conscientious breeder before contemplating selling you a puppy. If the breeder does not ask or try's to convince you that 'this is an ideal breed for you!' Perhaps you should walk away now before its too late!

- 1.** How is the home stability? Is there a certain routine to your day that the dog can depend on?
- 2.** Will the puppy have access to companionship and nurture during his acclimation?
- 3.** Will the puppy have a dedicated 'safe place' to be and to sleep (away from children, other dogs etc). Where it will not be bothered?
- 4.** Are you looking for a family dog? Do you have children? The Korthals Griffon can be a great family dog after socialisation and patient training to achieve this.
- 5.** Are you looking for a personal hunting / field dog? Do you have other hunting dogs; what breed are they? The Korthals Griffon is one of the best hunting / rough shooting dog's available after socialisation and patient training to achieve this.
- 6.** Do you live in a house or apartment? If you live in an apartment or small property without a large garden; in a major town or city - Your dream of ownership may end here.
- 7.** Are other pets included in your household? Some animals are aggressive towards others (pigs, Muntjac deer, monkey's, parrots etc). Be sure the Korthals Griffon will be a good candidate and properly introduced and monitored if you have other animals.

8. Are you aware of the various costs associated with owning a dog? Veterinarian costs, food, grooming, Training, health insurance all add up quickly.

9. How will you maintain, exercise and train your new dog? This is a huge sacrifice in your lifestyle, so be sure you are realistic and accepting of the necessary task's and time needed.

Some Final Tips ...

Korthals Griffon breeders always hold a waiting list, this is extremely common if they're highly regarded breeder. If a breeder passes all the questions and answers above ... And he has a litter or puppies "available" ? Something is amiss and further detailed investigation into the breeder is needed. Many breeders will "sell you on" what they have.

Remember to search the internet carefully while researching. Some web sites will 'sell you' puppies and often something marvellous about themselves as breeders; as if they are selling used cars. Don't be clouded by any urge to own a Korthals Griffon.

Finally, examine the stability in your own home, your lifestyle, finances and the 'real reason' you want a Korthals Griffon versatile hunting dog? These all factor into the success of purchasing and keeping a well balanced and healthy Korthals Griffon.

footnotes:

*1 *Link : RSPCA report on pedigree dog breeders*

*2 *Link: Kennel Club registration offers access and eligibility to shows, field trial and exhibitions etc.*

*3 *Be offered some or more of ... K-locus, E-locus, DNA health, Hip-Elbow, Hearing etc.*

*4 *Link: Professional dog breeder? Local council approval?*

*5 *Link: Kennel Club endorsements. Restrictions from European registrars.*

*6 *Link: RSPCA puppy contract. A very good example of what is the minimum to expect.*

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