

SO YOU WANT TO

Breed Better Aussies

Wisdom from successful breeders

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So you want to breed better Aussies

Here are some important steps to help you reach your goal.



LOVE THE BREED

Desire to positively contribute to the breed.

TAKE TIME TO LEARN FROM A MENTOR

Connect with an experienced breeder. That person does not necessarily need to be involved with Aussies, you can learn from someone in another breed. They can help you avoid making common mistakes and your breeding program can improve much more quickly.

HAVE A VISION OF YOUR IDEAL DOG

Go to shows, talk to breeders whose dogs you admire, look at many photos, study breed history, thoroughly understand the breed standard. Become a student of the breed and educate yourself through reading. There are many online resources to help you learn what's important in breeding better dogs.

SET YOUR GOALS

Before breeding your first litter, set concrete goals. Decide what you want to achieve long-term and determine how a particular breeding will help you reach that goal. If your goals are vague, the puppies you produce aren't likely to get you where you want to go. Along with other desired traits, health, longevity and good temperament should be your top priorities.

Every litter will be an enormous investment of time, money, and emotion. You want to make the best possible choice of sire and dam.



STUDY BLOODLINES

Study pedigrees. Research which qualities the sire and dam have consistently reproduced. Are those the qualities you want? What have the grandparents reproduced consistently?

Dig deep. If you can, see the aunts and uncles of the potential litter. The more dogs you see in person, the better your information will be. Photos can tell you about breed type and provide some information about structure, but they can't tell you anything about movement, temperament, or trainability.

BREED FOR GOOD HEALTH

Breeding for a long, healthy life means more years of physical comfort and enjoyment for the dog and owner. By choosing older, healthy studs, you can increase the longevity of the dogs you produce and decrease the risk of heartbreak of losing a dog prematurely to inherited disease. Genetic health testing is a vital tool that helps breeders more accurately assess mating pairs with the goal of producing genetically healthy puppies.

Wisdom from experienced breeders

"We do health testing for information in making our breeding choices, but know that genetics has a mind of its own. Health testing is purely conjecture on what an animal will actually pass on to its offspring."

"You can study pedigrees, test for everything possible, and have all of the preferred 'not affected/non-carrier' results you could ever want, but we can't predict if, when, or where an undesirable trait will pop up. We can't test for two major health issues in Aussies, hemangiosarcoma and epilepsy, because their inheritance is highly complex."

"Health problems in a breed are intensified by many people breeding to the same top winners."

*Soundness in health,
mind, and structure are
paramount.*



Sound temperaments are essential for dogs to live safely and happily in homes, on farms, and in public.

Temperament and trainability are strongly influenced by genetics. Breeding dogs with poor temperaments allows serious behavioral problems to be passed to the next generation.

Dogs with good temperaments are more easily trained and are a pleasure to live with.

PRIORITIZE SOUND TEMPERAMENT

Sires and dams should have confident personalities and be intelligent and easy to train. Temperament is highly heritable so it needs to be high on your list of priorities.

Experienced breeders say

“Reserved is not shy. Reserved means the dog is confident but not necessarily eager to make friends with strangers, but the dog will accept being handled by the judge, the vet, and others. I want a dignified, sensible dog.”

“Reserved means they know who their owners are. They are willing to say hello and be cheerful. But they are never confused as to who they belong to. You don’t have to watch them in a crowd because they’re not going to be shy or sharp. But mostly you don’t have to watch them in a crowd because they are keeping their eye on you. Their priority is you and your family. ”

“A dog you have to watch because you are uncertain how he will react to people is not *reserved*. He is shy and/or sharp. That’s a lack of confidence. The correct temperament is confident and adaptable.”

Behavioral issues are a leading cause of dogs being rehomed or euthanized. Breeding for sound temperament means you’re not contributing to this serious problem.

Do your research first. Learn from people who are generous with their advice, then start with the best quality you can.



FOCUS ON STRUCTURAL SOUNDNESS

Look carefully at your bitch and assess her strengths and where she needs improvement, then ask for the opinion of a trusted, experienced breeder. If your bitch has many faults that need to be corrected, don't breed her. Get a better bitch.

It can take years of dedication and several generations of breedings to get to the top. When you start with an excellent quality bitch, and a good mentor, you'll be ahead of the game and have a much better chance of reaching your goal.

Wisdom from experienced breeders

"The biggest key to success is based on your foundation bitch. Exceptional mothers produce exceptional mothers. A bitch who whelps easily and effortlessly, who is an outstanding mother and has a wonderful steady influence on her puppies is priceless. Make sure your bitch has a great temperament, excellent health, and who came from a superior dam."

"Don't allow your emotional and financial investment in your bitch prevent you from giving her an unbiased evaluation. Get an outside opinion or two before breeding."

"Broaden your search for a stud dog outside the winner's circle and look for a dog who produces well in the area you need. When looking for a stud dog, ask yourself, 'Would I be happy if all the puppies in the litter had his type, structure, and temperament?' Focus on his virtues."

"To correct something on the bitch, choose a sire who is correct in that trait and not the exact opposite. For example, many people think if the bitch is small, they should breed to a very big male. That's not the road to success. Breed to what is *correct*."

A dog with performance titles will tell you they have a work ethic to stick out training and trialing.



PAY ATTENTION TO PERFORMANCE

“A dog who excels in performance must have good structure to avoid injury and must have an excellent temperament.”

“Does the dog have a natural herding style, and does he want to work? Does he have drive? I want a dog that digs in when the going gets tough.”

“A dog with performance titles will tell you they have a work ethic to stick out training and trialing, especially as they move up in the levels of competition.”

ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS

“If you want to have a successful breeding program, find and utilize a MENTOR (and, yes, you can have more than one). Not just any mentor, you should search for people who have been in this a LONG time, are respected in the fancy, and who have a proven history of being consistently successful over the years in your area of interest.”

“Ask tons of questions and glean all you can from them. I have been blessed to have several mentors that have been essential in teaching, guiding, and helping me make decisions that led to where I am in my program and what my dogs have accomplished. And, no, these people were not tossed into my lap, I actively sought them out.”

*You will spend a lifetime
gathering knowledge about
breeding and showing*



BUILD FRIENDSHIPS

“Go to shows and learn how to win AND lose graciously. Be kind to others. If you make mistakes in the ring, it’s ok—we all do. Apologize and move on. I’ve accidentally run up on or stacked my dog a little too close to another handler. I apologized each time and tried to learn from it and improve my skills.”

“Volunteer at your local clubs, they need and want all the help they can get! Build relationships and work together to make improvements in your program and the breed. Isn’t that why we are all doing this? For the love of the dog!”

ENJOY THE RIDE

“Don’t try to be an overnight sensation. As you gain knowledge you may change your vision. Find friends in other breeds and learn from them. Ribbons are great but in the end it’s about loving the dogs.”

These recommendations will make you, your program, the breed and the dog fancy stronger and you’ll gather the necessary tools to not only help yourself, but to pass on to those in the future (you may become a mentor) to preserve this breed we love.