

So you would like to own a dog ?! JANUARY 2010 ISSUE

By Sophia of www.onthescent.com

People buy or re-home dogs and puppies for all sorts of reasons, companionship, exercise, for work or simply because they were brought up with dogs as a child and want to embark on the 'dog ownership' journey themselves. The list goes on.

'Journey' I hear to ask ? Yes owning a dog is a journey, from making the decision to be a dog owner to researching the different types of dogs available and then the journey as you bring the dog home and start your new life together.

Newspapers, the internet, veterinary surgeries and even pet shops advertise all sorts of puppies and dogs for sale and it is a mine field as to which one to choose.

I suggest to people who email me regarding this matter of taking on a dog that it is a good idea to ask yourself some serious questions before doing so.

Research: It is very important that you research the breed or mixed breed you would like. It is always a good idea even when taking on a mixed breed(if you know the mix)to research the individual breeds in the mix, this will give you an idea, although not set in stone, what the breeds were bred to do, temperament and coat type and much more. If you don't like long hair then this is something to consider as a long coat can soon get matted and tangled.

There are large, medium and small dogs, some which are more demanding in time, money and care than others. For example, a German shorthaired pointer will need more time spent for exercise *and* mental stimulation than a Lhasa Apso and the German Pointer is better suited to country living than the town or cities, whereas the Lhasa will still need exercise and mental stimulation but to a lesser degree, but the Lhasa will need more grooming and as it has a long thick coat.

Go on line or chat to people in the breed and ask them for the negatives as well as the positives so you have a clearer picture.

Cost: Re-homing or buying a puppy is only the start of it, there is dog bedding, leads, collar, name tag(required by law), micro-chipping and/or ear tattoo, pet insurance, vet fees including inoculations and annual boosters, kennel fees if you are not going to take your dog with you or have a reliable friend to look after it. Food, dishes, toys, car harness, dog guard or crate for travelling, dog training classes, neutering or spaying. The list is endless.

Time: Regardless of the breed *all* dogs need to be trained in good manners and life skills. As an owner you owe this to your dog. So find a good dog training school in your area preferably *before* you collect your dog.

Exercise: It will need mental as well as physical stimulation and leaving it home alone to its own devices for long hours is both unkind and irresponsible.

Speaking from experience, dogs are re-homed for a number of reasons from owners moving abroad to the arrival of a new born baby, but sadly quite a few are re-homed due to the owner not researching the type of dog they have taken on nor the time and commitment needed to give the dog the life it deserves and find they simply cannot cope with the demands.

All that said, would still like to join millions of people through out the world and own a dog....then 'Welcome' to one of the most exciting times you may have in your life, for they bring joy, laughter and lots of fun to a family or people living alone, as well as the opportunity to meet like minded people.

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