



Why Buy from an Ethical Breeder

An article for buyers by The Country Griffon Bruxellois Club of NSW

A Good Start to Life

When you buy your Griffon from an ethical and reputable breeder you will purchase a healthy well-bred pup from a breeder who has taken time to plan and prepare

These are the things that the breeder will have done to ensure healthy pups:

- Carefully planned the litter well in advance, studying pedigrees to ensure that the pups will have the best possible combination of healthy bloodlines
- Used the best possible stud dog- sometimes their own but sometimes they will have sent the bitch to a dog interstate to the best dog. Sometimes dogs will even be imported from other countries
- Had full health checks of the mother before breeding to ensure heart, eyes, breathing, patellas etc are all good.



- Discussed the health checks that the stud dog has had – if not owned by the breeder
- the bitch will be fully vaccinated well before mating
- Fed the bitch the best possible food for a pregnant dog throughout her pregnancy and had regular vet checks.
- In most cases the bitch will not travel while pregnant but will remain safely at home so she is not exposed to any outside virus and possible infections
- The breeder will not have a lot of litters at the same time (maybe 2 at the most if that) – this will ensure that they can give full care and

attention to the pups and mother

- The breeder will usually only breed 1 or 2 litters a year
- The bitch will whelp in the house- not in a kennel and the breeder will give her 24/7 care for the first 3 weeks at least
- The pups will stay with the mother for as long as possible and the breeder will not sell them before 10 weeks of age- this allows the mother to teach them how to play and interact with other dogs so that when they go to a new home they will adapt and adjust more easily
- The breeder will give them a variety of experiences- they will not just be kept in a crate or cage but will be able to run and play on grass so that they learn how to be clean and this makes housetraining easier.

They will be able to get out into sunshine and fresh air on a regular basis to help healthy growth.

- They will NOT be desexed. No reputable breeder will sell a baby that has been desexed under 10 weeks of age. This is a form of cruelty and it not only places tremendous stress on a tiny baby it will affect their growth and development. Pups that have undergone extreme immature desexing do not grow properly, they usually remain smaller and weedy, they do not develop suitable bone and there is increasing evidence to show that the bones are thinner and more likely to break as an adult. A reputable breeder will ask you to keep your dog entire until at least 6 months – ideally 12 months
- The pup will usually be sold with a health guarantee
- An ethical breeder will give you follow-up support for the entire life of the dog- they will be there to always advise you and they will always take the dog back if at any time you are no longer able to keep it.

Bunty- a retired show dog



- With a good breeder they do not forget the dog the minute it has left their hands for a new home
- An ethical breeder may sometimes rehome an ex show dog but they will take great care to place it in the perfect home

But I only want a Pet- I don't want a show dog

This is a comment that breeders often hear from puppy buyers.

The fact is that all good breeders always breed dogs that are pets. The most important priority a breeder has when they breed a dog is that it will be a loved and well cared for pet dog in a wonderful family



Neville as a show dog

Some of them also become show dogs as well but just because they are a show dog does not mean that they are not a pet first.



Neville and friends – just being pets and getting dirty

The show dogs belonging to all the breeders in our club are all pets - after a day at a show they go home and sit in the lounge to watch TV with the family, they often sleep on beds and when not at shows they live the life of a well loved pet.



- It is very hard to breed a high quality show dog and in every litter there will be dogs that for whatever reason are not show dogs- it could be the size of their ears, the fact they don't like to show- any number of minor things that the average person would not even notice.



Mimi Mc Pherson

Elle Mc Pherson

I often tell people that the difference

between a show dog and a well bred non show dog is like the difference between Elle Mc Pherson and her sister Mimi- both are very nice but only one became a super model – that does not mean that there was anything wrong with Mimi- just that she did not meet the criteria for a super model and it is the same with show quality dogs

- While a well- bred non show Griffon still looks like an attractive Griffon- a poorly bred Griffon may be smaller or much larger, weedier or very heavy, have a strange mouth, have a variety of health issues or some don't even look like Griffons.



Are there poor quality breeders in Australia?

- Sadly, there has been an increase in the number of people who are only breeding Griffons for money in Australia and New Zealand
- Commercial breeders do not care about the breed, they do not plan breeding carefully and they do not take any responsibility for any pups after they have sold them. They only care about making a profit



Some examples of poorly bred Griffons- bulging eyes, fine weedy bone, crooked mouths, tongue protruding, roached back etc.

They may look cute to people who do not know any better but to an experienced person they look like potential health issues-eye problems and eating difficulties and potential vet bills. Sadly, buyers who do not have an experienced eye think these dogs with their health issues are cute and don't realise that by purchasing the pups, not only will they have a life of potential vet expenses but they are also encouraging unethical breeding to continue by putting money in the pocket of the poor breeders.



How can I recognise a Poor Quality Breeder?

- They often breed the 'rarer' colours because that is where the novelty is and in Griffons they frequently breed blacks. *(This doesn't mean that all people who breed black Griffons are poor breeders- just that you need to be extra careful)*
- They often have impressive web sites and they are more interested in getting your money than making sure you are the right home.
- They say things like 'no tyre kickers' or 'no time wasters' because they can't be bothered spending the time to discuss the pups with you.
- They try to pressure you into paying a deposit by saying that it will guarantee you a puppy or they have other buyers waiting
- They frequently carry out extremely immature spaying/ neutering of tiny puppies of about 6 weeks of age. They claim to do this as a welfare issue but no one who genuinely

loves their puppies would subject a tiny 6-8 week old pup of under 1 kg in weight to the stress of major surgery

- They sometimes have multiple breeds – usually the ones that are fashionable at the time
- They either do not show their dogs or rarely show them. They will tell you it is because of the nastiness at dog shows but in actual fact it is because they know their dogs are of such poor quality that they would not win at a dog show.
- They are not members of any of the 3 Griffon breed clubs in Australia or the Griffon Bruxellois club in New Zealand because the clubs are aware of their unethical breeding practices and will not allow them to join.

All 3 clubs have codes of Ethics and Conduct which all members should abide by. These codes act as a guarantee to puppy buyers.

- Commercial breeders frequently charge more for their pups than an ethical breeder and often charge far more for a puppy on Main register than on Limited register.
- If they are ANKC breeders, they sometimes charge for registration papers. It is obligatory



for any ANKC breeder to register ALL pups- registration costs about \$30 for Main register and Limited register. One dubious breeder has been known to charge an extra \$1000 for registration papers and another charges \$700 extra for pups on Main register.

- They often sell or buy pregnant bitches and have been known to sell or ship them on consignment in large batches – 2-3 to a crate with no care for the welfare of the poor dogs
- They almost always have pups

available because they breed in volume. Ethical breeders do not breed very often.

- They usually get rid of their bitches as soon as they are too old to breed from and they will have 5-6 litters from a bitch.
- They are often members of non-genuine registrations and give fake pedigrees or no pedigrees. Some even cross breed and lie to buyers
- They are often backyard breeders who have two pet dogs in the back yard and because they are irresponsible they breed them with no health tests or knowledge of even the pedigree. Some breed two different breeds and sell as pure Griffons so they can get more money.
- They don't provide a pedigree
- They want secrecy about the parentage and don't want buyers to say where they got the pup from.

Three generations of well bred Griffons from an ethical breeder- Grandmother, Mother and Grandson. Ethical breeders value their dogs and do not discard them when they have exhausted them from breeding



1. How Do We Know about these Poor Quality Breeders?

We know about these people because as a club we are frequently contacted by distraught owners of Griffons which they have purchased, at great expense, from a commercial breeder. These people have had issues arise with the Griffon and they have had no support from the breeder and in many cases the breeder has not answered emails or messages or has made excuses or told them it was their own fault.

The people who have contacted us have reported the following issues:

- Slipping patellas requiring expensive surgery
- Open fontanelles (at least two have been reported both from the same breeder)
- Seizures
- Undersized/ underweight and/or with weak bone (at least 3 examples)
- Kennel cough and respiratory tract infections
- Difficulty in house training
- Screaming for no apparent reason or when touched
- Death within two weeks of arrival
- Eye infections
- Stomach issues/gastric
- Poor coat- dull dry and sparse, dry flakey skin
- Scared of people or scared to be in the house
- Scared of children- screaming or shivering in fear
- Unable to interact with people- sit in corner or hide all the time
- Diagnosed with serious health conditions like SM/CM or hip dysplasia within the first 18 months

Buyer beware!!

We understand that Griffons are not always easy to get and there is sometimes a lengthy wait for them but sometimes impatience can be expensive and in the long run it is better to wait until a well-bred dog is available.

Always make sure the breeder is a member of at least one of the 3 clubs and if you have any doubts – contact the club and we can advise as to whether the breeder is a club member or a reputable breeder or not. The Griffons world is very small and most breeders know each other.

Never hand over any money until you have either seen the dogs or contacted the clubs for advice.

Features to look for in Healthy Well bred pups

- Dark sparkling eyes
- Strong sturdy bone
- Straight legs
- Glossy coat
- Firm well covered body- *(not pot bellied which is a sign of worms)*
- Cannot feel ribs or backbone or hips
- Open round nostrils
- Happy and playful behaviour
- Clean nose with no discharge
- Level strong back not roached
- Clean ears with no dirt inside them
- Clean healthy coat with no dryness, brittleness or flaky skin





Photos of well bred pups.

Strong, sturdy, healthy pups will not cost any more if bought from a reputable and responsible breeder

