



WHY CHOOSE A SHIH TZU?



WHAT TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE YOU SERIOUSLY START LOOKING FOR A DOG COMPANION



Why do you want a dog? What is your lifestyle? How much time do you have to spend with a dog? What type of dog activities interest you? What are the rules of where you live or the bylaws of the City you live in? Answer these questions honestly. Dogs are not a disposable item!

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ADD A DOG TO YOUR FAMILY:

- You will have responsibility for a long time as Shih Tzu can live 10 – 18 years;
- You will incur expenses that include veterinary expenses with regular immunizations, spaying/neutering and the unexpected events in life, a quality dog food, training school, regular grooming at a salon and/or grooming tools if doing it yourself; and
- You will need time in your daily schedule to exercise, socialize, train, and to build a bond with your new family member.

HISTORY:



Originating in China and raised in the Imperial Palaces by eunuchs for the pleasure of the nobility, this is an old breed. They are distantly related to the Pekingese and other Tibetan Type dogs. According to the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC), the first Shih Tzu registered in Canada was a male in 1952. Since that time, the Shih Tzu is in the top ten most popular breeds from the 175 recognized CKC breeds. They are shown in the Group VI or Non Sporting Group and you can review the breed standard at the Canadian Shih Tzu Club website*.



TRAITS/CHARACTERISTICS:

Since the beginning of time, Shih Tzu have been bred for love and companionship only. They are small but sturdy little dogs that give unquestionable love and attention. They are very adaptable. They are happy to go for a walk, or sit on your lap and watch TV. They are capable to be active enough to meet your exercise habits but will get enough exercise for themselves running around the house. The important thing to them is that they are part of the family. Because they are small but sturdy, they make good children's pets. They can teach children love, compassion and responsibility, however, don't expect your children to be the only one responsible for their needs. They can be trained to eliminate outside in a designated area, or to an area in the house using training pads.



INTELLIGENCE/TRAINABILITY:



Shih Tzu are very smart and are being successfully shown in obedience, rally and agility rings across the country. Although they love to learn, they need to know that the trainer loves it too. Any training requires patience and consistency. If you enroll in any training school, you will quickly learn that the Shih Tzu is very smart and willing to please but can be very stubborn. The secret is to find what motivates them (whether praise or food) and to convince them you both are having fun. Remember that Shih Tzu have only been bred to love and give companionship; not to herd, track or hunt.

HEALTH CONCERNS:

No one can guarantee the workings of nature. All dogs, or any species for that matter, suffer from health problems, genetic and acquired. Some of the more common problems in the Shih Tzu are: renal dysplasia and various eye problems. Much has been written on various health concerns but this is where it is crucial you pick a responsible, experienced, knowledgeable breeder. They can give you sound advice on many topics and your written guarantee adds to their credibility.



GROOMING NEEDS:



The Shih Tzu naturally has a long flowing coat, with a thick undercoat. The hair on the head is tied back to keep it out of their large, round, expressive eyes. If kept in long coat, they require daily brushing and to have their top knots done up. They should be bathed regularly to keep their coats and skin clean because if the hair is dirty it will mat. Many find it is much easier to have their Shih Tzu professional groomed and in a “puppy clip” which makes the coat much more manageable. Professional grooming should be done every six to eight weeks.

HOW TO FIND A REPUTABLE BREEDER:



Having decided that the Shih Tzu is the breed for you, talk to ethical breeders listed on the Canadian Shih Tzu website* (all members are required to be Canadian Kennel Club members and both the Canadian Shih Tzu Club and the CKC have mandatory codes of ethics). **DO NOT BE IN A HURRY.** Reputable breeders do not have puppies available all the time, but they may have both parents of planned upcoming litters. Make an appointment with the breeder to:



- ✓ Ensure their kennel is clean and dogs are healthy and well cared for;
- ✓ See how they raise their puppies and handle their adult dogs;
- ✓ See both parents, if available, but in the event that either the sire or dam is not on the premises, ask for permission to contact their owner directly to arrange to see them at their location;
- ✓ Discuss their routine testing done on their breeding stock;
- ✓ Review their written health and general guarantees;
- ✓ Review pedigrees that include both sire and dam's registration numbers; and
- ✓ Recognizing a Veterinarian's very busy schedule, ask if the breeder's vet clinic would be willing to provide a reference.

When you purchase a purebred Shih Tzu, it comes with registration papers at no additional cost, within six months of the date of sale. This is the law in Canada, under the Animal Pedigree Act.

You also need to understand that the Breeder will have certain requirements from you:

- They may wish to visit your home to ensure the puppy is going into a safe environment;
- You will be required to sign a Non Breeding agreement if you are purchasing a pet only and to provide a copy of the spay/neuter receipt from your veterinarian; and
- Some breeders will require that you sign an agreement that if rehoming becomes necessary, you return the puppy/dog to them to be placed in another new suitable home.

Reputable breeders have incurred many expenses to produce a well planned litter, starting with health tests on both parents, stud fees, transport costs for the stud dog or shipping costs for the dam, pre and post natal care, registrations for the litter and individual dogs, to mention but a few. They get satisfaction knowing that they have produced sturdy, sound representatives of the breed and want to ensure that they are in loving, responsible homes. Reputable breeders are guardians of the breed and their responsibility doesn't end when the puppy is sold but rather they will be there for you when you have questions or concerns next week or ten years down the road.

“DESIGNER”, “IMPERIAL” DOGS VERSES PUREBRED DOGS:



Designer Dogs are created by combining two purebred dogs and claiming that this has produced a superior new breed, while in fact a mixed breed has been created eradicating the characteristics that make each breed unique. One such example is the “shih poo” a Poodle/Shih Tzu mix. These two breeds are dramatically different in temperament, structure and coat type. If you love the Shih Tzu, you would not be getting the qualities that attracted you to it in the first place and although getting qualities of the other breed, you are also getting its undesirable qualities. “Imperial” is the catch phrase



that some breeders may use to entice people purchasing Shih Tzu. They breed below the standard of size and try to make people believe they are special or unusual. Our standard states that the Shih Tzu is not a toy dog. Backyard breeders try to cut costs by not registering puppies, providing little or no healthcare to their breeding dogs and puppies and not testing their breeding stock to ensure they are breeding healthy dogs. They offer puppies at a discount “without papers”.

PET OR SHOW:

Most puppies are sold as pets but if you are considering showing your puppy, you should discuss this with your breeder in advance and ask their opinion to help in the choice of a puppy and tips for the show ring. Showing a Shih Tzu is a huge commitment of time, money and dedication; however, it can be very rewarding in personal satisfaction.



Alternatively, there are many other dog activities that will give you and your new family member enjoyment and exercise and it will deepen the bond between you. Obedience, Rally, and Agility, are but a few. Again, ask your breeder for their thoughts and guidance.

*We invite you to visit the Canadian Shih Tzu Club website or www.canadianshihtzuclub.ca for more information and a complete list of members across Canada.

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