

Bringing home an older puppy.

Some people seem to be reluctant to take home an older puppy. I can appreciate some of the concerns but I'm also baffled by the reluctance. We all have a romantic view of bringing a puppy home – a tiny bundle of love and puppy breath. Then reality sets in. Sleep deprivation from getting up 2 or 3 times a night for at least the first week. The seemingly endless howling during crate training. Accidents on the carpet. The constant vigilance required to get the puppy house trained. Obedience training frustrations.

With an older puppy from a good breeder you get a puppy that is crate trained, house broken and started training. The breeder can give you detailed descriptions of exactly what the puppy is like to live with and train – which will help you avoid many frustrations and launch you right into advanced training and a peace at home.

Its not just the big things that older puppies have to learn (like sit and down). In order to live peacefully in a busy household, older puppies have to learn basic manners and things like bathing, ear cleaning, teeth checking, nail trimming, not jumping on counters or jumping all over the furniture. They often get dragged along to dog shows and learn to stay quiet in an Xpen and be handled by many different people. Every time I train my older puppies to do something new – like have their feet cleaned when coming in from outside – I think of how lucky their new owner is going to be.

This is not to say that getting an older puppy doesn't have its challenges. It takes a little while for the puppy to adjust to the new surroundings – just like it would a younger puppy. However, you have the advantage of being able to get a full night's sleep and the puppy feels safe and comfortable in its own crate. You also both have to adjust to each other's routines.

You are right to exercise caution when buying an older puppy...you don't want to get one that has "issues" from lack of training or socialization. Get to know the breeder. If their dogs are well mannered, trained and socialized then you can be sure their puppies are the same!! Beware the very to moderately shy puppy that hasn't been out and about on a regular basis or doesn't like to be physically handled. All older puppies are not created equal. Training and socialization are critical to puppies between 8 and 12 weeks. Puppies that don't get this extra attention during this critical period are affected negatively for their entire life.

Most older puppies cost the same or a little more than an 8week old puppy.

When you consider all the extra, knowledgeable work that is put in, this is a bargain.

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