

Choosing a Stud Dog



Decisions, Decisions

Whether you line breed, inbreed, outcross or use a combination of breeding approaches, choosing a stud dog can have a significant impact on the breed because of the number of bitches that it is possible for him to breed and puppies he can produce. There is no single stud dog that's perfect for every bitch, so before you can even consider choosing the right one for your bitch there is a decent amount of homework to do.



Choosing the right stud dog takes time. You'll need months to do the right research and talk to the right people who can help you make the best decision. As a rule of thumb, start planning for a breeding during the heat prior to the one in which you plan to breed.

Evaluate Your Bitch

Using the breed standard, you should have a picture of the ideal Dachshund in your mind. Without it, it is like trying to assemble pieces of a puzzle. If you have no idea of what the completed puzzle should look like, it is next to impossible to piece it together.

It's important to take an honest look at the bitch you plan to breed. Absolute 'musts' are that she be healthy including appropriate tests/screenings, have an ideal Dachshund temperament and that she be of breeding quality. Using the Dachshund breed standard as your guide make written notes of her assets as well as her faults, especially the most important one or two faults you would like to improve by breeding her. This is a great time to reach out to a mentor to help you look objectively at your bitch. If her faults are disqualifying or serious ones, or if her faults outweigh her assets, ask yourself if breeding her is the right thing to do for your breeding program.

Since your bitch is the product of the dogs in her pedigree, do the same assessment of the dogs behind her going back at least three generations. Reach out to the breeders/owners of dogs you don't know to learn something about their assets and faults just as you did for your bitch. If you gather information on littermates, even better. The goal is to understand traits (good and bad) that may find their way into your upcoming breeding.

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It's also important to understand how her faults are passed genetically from one generation to the next. For example, trying to improve a front (a recessive trait) on a bitch with good fronts behind her might be possible to improve on some but not all her puppies in a generation or two by breeding her to a dog who has an exceptional front himself. But breeding her to a dog with a bad front and with no good fronts behind him will never produce a good front.

Create a List of Candidates

Depending on your preferred breeding approach, start a list of possible candidates. Start with photos which can give you some initial impressions. Of course, the best way to gather information on dogs and bloodlines is by putting your hands on dogs still living. For most of us, this is best accomplished at specialties – especially the National Specialty. You may have a chance to see the dogs themselves in the Specials or Veterans classes, and you can often get to see what these dogs are producing. If your goal is to produce a top-quality male; you should pay particular attention to the males that the stud dogs are producing and what the males are like behind the dog. Look at his daughters, dam, grand-dams, etc. for producing a top female.

Tip! Be sure to cast a big net in your search - the best dog for your bitch may not be in your house, living in your local area or still living. Fresh chilled semen makes cross-country breedings possible, and frozen semen allows you to consider good producing dogs of the past.

The chances of finding a stud dog that compliments every one of your bitch's faults is unlikely, but you should definitely rule out dogs that share too many of her faults, or pass those faults onto their offspring - this is especially important when it comes to your bitch's more serious faults. Ideally one of his outstanding assets is something he passes on when bred to other bitches, and that asset offsets one of the faults you would like to correct in your bitch. If he's just 'average', it's unlikely he will pass along anything outstanding to your bitch. Don't forget to assess each dog's temperament – it's as important to a well-bred Dachshund as any individual part of its anatomy. If you can't meet the stud in person, ask people that know him or have bred bitches to him what they think.

Just as you did with your bitch and her ancestors, make a list of all the assets and faults of the stud dogs you are considering along with their ancestors. Again, use mentors, breeders of the stud dogs and their ancestors as well as the breeders/owners of their offspring to accomplish this.

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Your goal is to learn:

- What assets/faults he puts on his offspring?
- Does he throw himself, better than himself or worse?
- Does he produce better with some bitches and not others? (If yes, look at the pedigrees to see if the good ones are comparable to yours)
- Are there offspring to look at? (If none are available, look at the stud dog's parents, grandparents, siblings and the siblings' offspring)
- Is the stud dog like his relatives, or is he unique? (In general, traits that are similar across relatives are more likely to appear in his offspring than traits that are unique)

Narrow your research down on each stud dog to their three best assets and the three worst faults. Assess each dog and decide if you can tolerate their faults if their strengths are what your bitch needs. Eliminate any dogs that don't pass this review. Then look at the remaining dogs to see which dog's top assets align with some of your bitch's assets and offsets your bitch's worst fault. For example, if your bitch has a soft topline, look for stud dogs with strong toplines and whose offspring have the same. You still need to look at the stud dog overall and what makes for a good Dachshund, i.e. don't choose the dog with a strong topline who lacks and produces narrow ribs. An important fault in your bitch won't be corrected by a stud dog overdone in the same area. You'll likely get puppies with both traits, not a happy medium. Your best choice is the dog that's better than your bitch in her most important faults and is most correct and balanced overall.

Tip! Don't fall victim to the 'Popular Sire Syndrome' – the big winning dog of the moment may attract lots of breeding interest, but his success in the ring doesn't automatically equal success as a producer. If you want to consider him for your bitch, be sure to give him the same scrutiny as every other dog on your list.

Talking With Stud Dog Owners

The stud dog owner is your most valuable resource in your search. Open, honest discussion is especially important. Explain that you have plans to breed your bitch and would like to learn more about their dog and if he could be considered as an option for you.

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Be sure to share everything about your bitch; her assets, faults, temperament, health/screenings, etc. Ask the owner to tell you about the same about the stud dog along with any traits he may be dominant for. Ask if the stud dog owner has kept any puppies from the stud. If not, why not?

The stud dog owners should want to see your bitch before agreeing to breed. Ideally, they should see her in person if possible, or on video, at least. Should any of the owners on your list decline to breed to your bitch, don't take it personally. Some owners may prefer to prove a young dog first with a bitch of their own to understand their capabilities. Owners with proven dogs may know which bloodlines go well with their dog or based on prior breedings and might advise you against a breeding to avoid doubling up on faults. Remember no stud dog is the right dog for every bitch.

Don't let personality conflicts with stud dog owners influence you if you can help it. If the stud is a good choice for your bitch, but you don't 'click' with the owner, do it anyway. Don't let personal feelings stand between you and a great litter. Both you and the stud owner should try to put personal feelings aside when deciding if the bitch can produce puppies you can both be proud of. By the same standard, stud owners or bitch owners should never breed to each other's dog simply because they like each other. The preservation of the breed should be the focus of every breeding.

Tip! Respect the stud dog owner's time. As we've said before, these conversations should happen months before an actual breeding. No stud dog owner will appreciate being rushed to decide if their stud dog is available or not.

Make Your Choice

Once you've chosen the perfect stud for your bitch, you should choose a back-up. You already have your asset and fault list, so this shouldn't be too hard. Contact the second chosen stud owner and see if they would mind acting as a reserve in case the first stud is unavailable at the time you need him. The first stud dog may be out of town showing, he may have a prior breeding commitment for the same time (someone else beat you to him), his sperm may not hold up for shipping, he may be ill, etc. A knowledgeable stud owner should not be offended by being chosen for second place and know all of the things that can happen between now and then with the first-choice stud. They should understand your decision and respect your honesty. Keep the second stud owner informed on the progress of your bitch when the time to breed gets close – just in case!

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Terms and Contracts

Stud fees are as wide ranging as the stud dogs themselves. Discuss all expenses involved in breeding to a particular stud and get every detail in writing. If the contract isn't acceptable, edit it and return it to the stud owner for correction or clarification. Be sure everything you discussed including contingencies are in the contract. Far more problems happen due to misunderstandings than dishonesty.

- If you are shipping sperm, find out who pays for collecting and shipping of the sperm.
- When is the stud fee due? How much of a deposit is required if any? When do you pay the balance? Can you send payments as soon as you know the bitch is pregnant? When will the litter application be signed?
- Sometimes the stud fee is paid with a puppy from the resulting litter, other times a straight fee. Agree who gets first pick, second pick, etc. Will the stud owner come and pick the pup personally, have someone else do it, or will they want you to choose?
- What about the what if's? What if only one or two pups are born? What if the breeding doesn't take at all? Find out in advance what the stud owners policy is for every conceivable scenario. Find out what is the minimum considered to be a litter.
- Return the finalized contract along with the deposit, if required. Stay connected with the stud owner on the progress of your bitch.

Tip! Be sure to circle back with a courtesy call to the other stud dog owners you spoke with and provided you with information during your search. Their dog might not have been the right choice for this bitch but could be the right choice for a bitch in the future. Always keep doors open!

Debby Krieg, Sept. 2020