

Thoughts from Breeders



A Common Goal

Whether we breed to compete in conformation, field events, agility or obedience, we all have a shared responsibility to produce dogs that preserve the Dachshund's original form and function. Ask any successful Dachshund breeder and they will tell you that having a good foundation of basic knowledge of the breed helps you understand what makes for a good Dachshund and where your own dogs may fall short. We all know it's not about luck and it's not about instant success. Here are a few thoughts to keep in mind.



Remember the Dachshund is a Hunting Dog

The Dachshund originated in Europe as a low-legged hunter bred to 'go to ground' to remove badgers (and eventually rabbits when the miniatures came on the scene.) In order to be successful in those tasks, the Dachshund was built with a unique structure to enable it to collapse itself to get into the badger's den, have the heart and lung capacity to work underground, and to back out successfully with the prey in tow. We're very fortunate that our dogs can still use some of their hunting instinct in field trials and earthdog tests, but as breeders we should always strive to produce dogs with the right structure and temperament that could still confront a badger if called on to do so.

"Correct structure is a big part of a Dachshund's hunting ability which means a balanced dog without exaggeration. Temperament that is courageous to the point of rashness is equally important. Whether or not we make the personal decision to hunt our dogs, as breeders we should always focus on both points in our dogs."

Lynn Cope – Jerics Standard Wirehairs

Thoughts from Breeders, continued



Commit the Breed Standard to Memory

The Dachshund Breed Standard (both written and illustrated) is like a set of blueprints that lay out how the ideal Dachshund should look, act and perform. Successful breeders know the details of that blueprint and use it to construct an actual dog though their knowledge of genetics, pedigrees and the right pairings of brood bitches and stud dogs.

"In order to create blueprints for your own line of dogs, a breeder must know the dogs in a pedigree to compare their qualities and characteristics. The first three generations are the most important, as traits will come through the stud dog or brood bitch. It is important to know as much about these dogs through photos and/or videos. Most important is to start with a good brood bitch that is as close to the Dachshund breed standard as possible as she carries about 80% of the blueprint you will work with."

Shirley Ray - Raydachs Standard Wirehairs

Brush Up on Dachshund Anatomy

Knowing the individual components of the Dachshund's anatomy is a 'must' to understand the breed standard and create an actual dog. Understanding terms like 'keel', 'prosternum', 'croup', etc. help us understand each individual part and how the pieces come together to create the ideal Dachshund.

"Correct anatomy is like a board puzzle. All the pieces must fit together and work together to create a correct Dachshund. Changing the shape or placement of one piece of the anatomy such as a short upper arm or keel, or too much leg creates a negative effect on other parts of the anatomy, leading to a lack of balance and proportions."

Carlos Puig– Hundeleben Standard Longhairs and Miniature Wirehairs



Know What Sets the Dachshund Apart from Other Breeds

The Dachshund's structure is like no other breed. Breeders need to know the attributes that make the Dachshund unique and work hard to lock them into their breeding program. These include a wraparound front, deep keel and well sprung ribs, good front and rear angulation, long and low proportions, the headpiece, and courageous temperament. It's equally important to avoid too much of a good thing- more isn't always better- just more. Examples include over-angulated rears, long legs, exaggerated length of neck, and pretty heads at the expense of a strong underjaw.

"Knowing those very unique to Dachshunds parts and pieces is an essential element for success. Most important to start with is the Dachshund front, where terms like dimples, parentheses and wrap around front appear, the front requires significant effort to comprehend. It is the hallmark of the breed and requires attention. In order to select for correct you must know what correct is. This is where study and perseverance is needed to fully understand what the standard describes and sets those willing to do the work apart from others."

Cyndy Senff - Dynadaux Miniatures

Have a Plan to Fix Faults

There are faults and there are faults. If you are going to make good choices of stud dogs for your bitches, you'll want to understand which faults are more serious than others so you can work to eliminate or avoid those, while possibly living with minor faults for a generation. Let's start with disqualifications like knuckling over as well as specific eye and color disqualifications for the piebald pattern. Serious faults include straight legged fronts, forward set fronts, no discernable prosternum, shallow keel and short ribbing, round eyes, weak underjaws, over or under angulated rears, coat faults such as single coats on Wires and Longs, and too profuse a coat in Longs. Additionally the Breed Standard includes wall eyes (except for dapples), overshot or undershot bites, body that hangs loosely between the shoulders, and any display of shyness as serious faults.

Thoughts from Breeders, continued



"There are Faults and there are faults. We consider Faults (Big F) things that detract from the essence and uniqueness of the breed while honoring the standard. Front end and outline both freestanding and on the move are must haves! Faults (little f) are the secondary issues that we wish we did not have but are generally more easily corrected and do not detract from the overall breed type of the dog.

When it comes to correcting faults, knowledge is power. You need to know the strengths and weaknesses of your line of dogs and the qualities of the stud dogs, their produce (hopefully with comparable bloodlines or breed type) and what is behind them for at least three generations. We never double up on the thing that we are trying to correct but sometimes will trade characteristics that we can correct through the strength of our line. Lastly, we try hard to never carry forward the same fault for more than one generation for fear of becoming pre-potent for that fault!"

Karyn & Jeff Dionne - Wagsmore Miniature Longhaired Dachshunds

Have a Vision of Your Ideal Dachshund

The most successful breeders have a vision of an ideal dog in their mind. They use it to help choose breeding pairs, prioritize faults to work on, and measure progress from one generation to the next. Without that dog in mind, breeders can have a difficult time deciding which dogs to include or exclude in their breeding programs or make breakthroughs in their breeding programs.

"In your mind's eye get a good idea of the ideal Dachshund, and only breed toward the ideal as you see it. There are no half-way measures. Don't breed to correct one shortcoming in your dog. Always breed to the best dog possible."

Diane Poranski – Kochana Standard Smooth Dachshunds