



Deceptive Catch Phrases and Buzz Words

Puppy buyers have a daunting task to wade through websites, social media pages, and puppy ads to find a breeder that has what he/she is looking for in a pup. One of the biggest challenges facing buyers is deciphering the language and understanding exactly what common advertising buzz words actually mean. Here is a list of terms that you will probably encounter in your search: None insure a quality, purebred puppy.

Pedigreed: A dog's pedigree is a list of ancestors, like a family tree. Every dog comes from somewhere, so every dog has a pedigree, whether known or unknown. Anyone can print one out on their computer. There are a number of questionable registries that will also issue a pedigree, similar to the mail order diploma or service dog certificate scams, so if the puppies are pedigreed, make note of who issued the pedigree. The American Kennel Club (AKC) is a long-established dog registry, meaning it keeps records of purebred dogs so that their genealogy can be traced back for many generations and they only register purebred dogs. An AKC Certified Pedigree shows the lineage of a dog as recorded and verified by the AKC and validates that the dog is a purebred. Look for an AKC Certified Pedigree.

DNA'd: Much like pedigreed, DNA'd does not mean the dog is purebred. It may mean simply that a DNA sample has been sent in to identify a dog's breed. Any dog can be DNA'd, even the multiple mixed breeds found at a local shelter. In this scenario, the dog's DNA collected from a cheek swab is compared to the breeds in an in-company database and the results will show the closest match(s). While some companies have a broad database to compare the DNA samples to and results are fairly accurate, some have as few as 1/3 of recognized AKC breeds in their database. Results are not dependable, and the AKC will not accept DNA results as proof that a dog is a purebred. Neither should you.

Health checked or health tested: Health checked can mean pretty much whatever the breeder wants it to mean. This term often means only that a vet did an exam and said the dog was healthy enough to breed at the time. It does not mean the dog has been cleared of any inheritable genetic conditions such as hip dysplasia, hypothyroidism, cardiomyopathy, PRA, etc, which may be lurking in their genes and are not (yet) evident but may be passed on to their puppies. Responsible breeders health test for genetic disorders as recommended by the AKC, OFA, CHIC, or their Parent Breed Club. Recommended health screenings for each breed can be found by visiting the websites for the organizations listed above. Not all breeders pay the extra fees to have results listed online, but they should be able to provide copies of the results if asked. Do ask. Look for the letters "VPI" on the report to insure that the dog tested has been checked for some form of permanent identification, such as a microchip or tattoo that identifies that particular dog; otherwise, you have no idea which "Rover" was brought in for the test. Also, be aware that CHIC (Canine Health Information Center) will issue a number for any dog that has had all required tests done, even if the dog failed one or all of them. A CHIC number means only that a dog has been tested, not that it has passed or been cleared of genetic issues. Ask to see test results.

Champion or International Champion: There are numerous show organizations that offer titles, ranging from a conformation championship to titles earned for agility, obedience, hunt trials, and other performance events. The most well-known and prestigious show organization in the U.S. is the AKC. The requirements to earn an AKC title can be stringent and usually involve winning against multiple dogs in competition over a

course of several events. There are other organizations where a dog can earn a title, even a championship title, without ever competing against or defeating another dog. If a mediocre dog shows up, has no disqualifying faults, and completes the required number of shows, the dog can earn a Championship title, an International Championship title, or both, in only one weekend. Ask where and how the titles were earned.

Champion (blood)lines: Any dog with a champion in its pedigree, no matter how far back, can be said to have champion bloodlines or be from champion lines. It does not mean that the dog itself is a champion, of champion quality (or even of good quality!) and it does not mean puppies will be show/breed/champion quality. A dog with a single champion in 4 generations can legitimately be said to be from champion lines, while dozens of other ancestors may be of sub-standard quality. Check the pedigree.

F1/F2: These are terms used to describe offspring from cross breeding two purebred dogs in an effort to start a need breed, which has usually been given a cutesy new name. The puppies are not purebred even if both parents are, they are not a new breed, they cannot be AKC registered, and the F1 or F2 simply designates the first or second generation of hybrid (mixed breed) pups. If your neighbor's purebred Akita jumps the fence and breeds your purebred Tibetan Mastiff, you will have a litter of F1 pups. If you then breed one of those pups to someone else's Akita x TM mix, the resulting pups would be F2. They are still not a recognized breed and cannot be registered with the AKC. While it is possible to eventually gain AKC recognition for a new breed created through crossing existing breeds, it takes many years and many generations to create the kind of consistency required for new breed recognition. It won't happen in your pup's lifetime, so don't plan on ever seeing AKC papers for a cross-bred Tibetan Mastiff puppy regardless of what the breeder promises.

100% Chinese bloodlines: This term is relatively new to the Tibetan Mastiff. For centuries, dogs known as Tibetan Mastiffs originated in and have been associated with the country/autonomous region of Tibet, hence the name Tibetan Mastiff, not Chinese Mastiff. Within the last 15-20 years, with the advent of internet marketing and sales, what has been considered historically correct for the breed has been challenged by breeders claiming their dogs are "100% Chinese bloodlines" that are bigger, heavier, and have more bone, droopier eyes and flews, more wrinkles, more coat, and more mane than dogs previously registered and recognized as TMs. They in fact, look little like the working dogs that have come of Tibet and surrounding regions, and their build and structure would prevent them from doing the job that TMs have traditionally been bred to do. Breeders of these dogs are romancing the uneducated puppy buying public with the notion that "100% Chinese bloodlines" are more exotic and more desirable than the more "common" Tibetan Mastiff. There has been much speculation, and in some cases outright admission, that these are mixed breed dogs created by cross-breeding Tibetan Mastiffs with Chows, Newfoundlands, St. Bernards, Neopolitan Mastiffs, and similar breeds to achieve the desired color, coat, and size. Unfortunately, with the desired traits came many undesirable qualities as well: Health, structure, and temperament issues unlike those previously associated with the breed. In Tibet, these dogs are called "pig mastiffs"; in most of the rest of the world, they are called Chinese market types. But they are not actually a type of Tibetan Mastiff at all; for the most part, they are a mixed breed mess. These mixed breed dogs are now appearing in AKC pedigrees as purebred Tibetan Mastiffs. Buyer beware!

If you take away only one thing from this article, begin your search for a puppy armed with as much information as you can. Don't be unduly influenced by impressive sounding, but misleading or meaningless, terms or titles.

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Noble Legacy Tibetan Mastiffs