

# **OWNING A SAINT BERNARD**

## **GUIDELINES FOR BUYING A PUREBRED DOG**

Your first consideration in buying a purebred dog should be the knowledge that for the next ten or more years, that dog will be a part of your household. Unlike your automobile, he will not be traded in for a newer model. As a companion to your whole family, he will reflect the love and affection you show him. He will represent an emotional investment as much as a financial investment. Therefore choose him carefully. Know as much as possible about his breed and his breeder before you buy, and deal only with a reliable breeder. **AVOID** pet stores, as their puppies are usually inferior specimens, mass produced by unreliable puppy mills.

### **RELIABLE BREEDERS ARE THOSE WHO:**

--study genetics, nutrition, structure, and movement because they are primarily concerned with producing dogs which measure up against the breed's standard of perfection.

--see that all their animals receive the proper inoculations at the appointed intervals in consultation with their veterinarians.

--give evidence of their concern with the humane treatment of dogs by shipping only to individual parties, by shipping puppies in safe, comfortable enclosures with adequate ventilation, and by never shipping puppies under seven weeks of age. Many good breeders do not ship at all.

--give individual attention to raising and socializing each puppy in clean and healthful surroundings where it can learn to live happily with people and with other dogs.

--are happy to assist you with directions for the feeding, training, and grooming of your puppy.

--sometimes have young adults as well as puppies available and will help you select a quality animal at a price comparable with, and ultimately better than, that offered by a commercial pet store.

--breed selectively, often keep puppies for themselves, and provide shelter for dogs of their breeding that are temporarily homeless.

--will openly discuss pricing and any financial arrangements with you and will provide appropriate papers on a timely basis.

--NEVER mass produce puppies to be sold as a commodity.

--NEVER deal in gimmicks or unreasonable guarantees.

--NEVER use high pressure sales practices to sell you on a breed or a particular puppy. Rather, they will encourage you to study, visit other breeders, and attend an all-breed dog show before you decide.

### ***SHOULD I GET A MALE OR A FEMALE ?***

This is strictly a matter of personal preference. Both are equal in pet qualities. The male, being larger, is more impressive when first viewed. The female, however, must be considered his equal in all other respects. Modern veterinary practice recommends neutering of non-breeding animals of both sexes as a means to a healthier, better pet.

### ***HOW DO THEY HANDLE THE HOT WEATHER ?***

The dog will do well as long as there is a cool, dry place to nap and plenty of fresh, cool water. He will cut down both his food intake and his amount of activity during hot weather. It must be remembered that going from an air-conditioned place into the boiling heat can be disastrous. Abrupt changes in temperature are extremely hard on a Saint.

Perhaps by now you are thinking of purchasing a Saint. Congratulations !! A Saint is a perfect family dog: gentle, yet powerful enough to pull a sled or give a prowler second thoughts. Saints are wonderful with kids--serving as a combination baby-sitter and playmate. Those of us who own them find them true to their name--Saints.

But...although we believe the Saint Bernard approaches being the perfect dog, **SAINTS ARE NOT FOR EVERYONE.** The ownership of any dog involves responsibilities, and this is particularly true of the giant breeds. ***YOU AS A SAINT BERNARD OWNER, HAVE THE OBLIGATION OF CARING FOR AND CONTROLLING A DOG WHICH WILL PROBABLY OUTWEIGH YOU AND IS CERTAINLY GOING TO BE STRONGER THAN YOU ARE.*** Unless you take this responsibility very seriously and are willing to put the time, energy, and thought needed into raising your dog properly, your Saint will be a burden instead of a joy.

So, before you go any further, here is a list of things to consider. This is not meant to frighten you, but rather to make certain that you understand what is required of you as a Saint owner.

### ***ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE YOUR DOG REGULAR DISCIPLINE AND BASIC OBEDIENCE TRAINING ?***

We believe that any dog, and especially a large dog, needs regular day-to-day discipline. Every dog must grow up knowing that he has limits of behavior, that he must respect people and property, and that he is, after all, a dog.

House training should start as soon as your pup arrives home. Determine where you want him to sleep, and confine him to that area for the first few nights. He must learn at once what NO means, for, like all puppies, he will go through stages, such as teething, which will require firm discipline.

When you must correct him, say NO emphatically and then enforce your command. Don't be afraid to take firmer measures. Saints can be stubborn, but are usually eager to please once they understand what is expected of them. Teach your puppy his limits early, and many future problems can be avoided. Too often an owner does not discipline his Saint puppy because he is so cute, and soon he has a 180-pound dog over which he has no control. Then the dog becomes a liability rather than an asset. Special classes for puppies of 3-5 months of age are a wonderful way to start training your puppy.

Puppy training should be followed up with formal obedience classes when your pup is six months old. If you do not know where classes are held, call your breeder, local dog trainer, local kennel club, or Humane Society. These classes usually meet one night a week for 2-3 months and are quite reasonable in cost. Once you've started classes, don't be a drop out. The time you invest now will be repaid many times over in your enjoyment of the dog in the years ahead.

Treat your Saint puppy with courtesy. Show him affection; teach him responsibility. Punish him when you must, but accept him back into your good graces at once. ALWAYS reward him when he pleases you. Forgive him, if, in a burst of wonderful enthusiasm he upsets a lamp or makes some other clumsy mistake. After all, he is part of the family.

### ***WILL YOU SEE TO IT THAT BOTH THE KIDS AND THE DOG TREAT EACH OTHER PROPERLY ?***

Although Saints make excellent pets for families with children and although they are sturdier and more patient than most other breeds, they are not punching bags and are NOT meant to be tormented or harassed any more than is any other living thing. By the same token, the playful pup should not be allowed to jump onto the kids, pull their britches, or steal their toys. Too often, when the puppy still looks like a fuzzy toy, these antics are cute, but they aren't so funny when the dog hits 100 pounds. Do not let children ride dogs !!

### ***ARE YOU WILLING TO INVEST THE TIME NECESSARY TO RAISE YOUR SAINT ?***

Saints need human companionship and attention. If your idea of raising a dog is to tie him to a stake in the backyard and feed him once in awhile, do yourself a favor and don't buy a dog. He'll be miserable, you won't have any fun, and the dog will turn into a problem instead of a pet.

All Saints need regular grooming. This should be part of his routine from the time you get him home. Regular brushing will reduce the dog-hair problems, help eliminate any doggy odors, and reduce the chances of skin problems. If you don't know how to groom a Saint, check with the breeder or your veterinarian.

### ***ARE YOU WILLING TO PROVIDE A GOOD HOME FOR YOUR SAINT ?***

Although a Saint is happy to live in the house with the rest of the family, there are times when you will want to keep him outside. A fenced in yard or pen will be ideal when you are not outdoors with him. A SAINT SHOULD NEVER BE ALLOWED TO RUN LOOSE ! His size may frighten some children. His big feet and inquisitive nose can be disastrous to a neighbor's flower bed. He has no fear of cars and could easily become a casualty. A loose dog is an open invitation to dog nappers. Your Saint puppy represents a substantial investment--one which you should protect.

If your Saint is to live outdoors, be sure that he has fresh drinking water , and some protection from insects and the weather.

## ***WILL YOU PROVIDE PROPER VETERINARY CARE FOR YOUR DOG ?***

Your Saint will require routine health care. Dogs are subject to many of the same diseases as man, plus some of their own. In addition to your regular visits to the veterinarian for immunizations to protect against various diseases, a regular check up by the veterinarian is certainly desirable for your dog. Preventative medications against heartworm can also be provided by your vet. Your veterinarian should also be contacted whenever you see any signs of illness or abnormal behavior.

## ***ARE YOU SURE THAT ALL OF THE FAMILY WILL SHARE IN THIS VENTURE ?***

It is a big mistake to buy a dog for the kids when it requires management by responsible adults. It is also unfortunate for a pup to go into a home where it is resented by one family member who might have preferred another breed.

## ***UNLESS YOUR ANSWERS TO ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS ARE AN UNQUALIFIED YES, WE URGE YOU TO CONSIDER SOME OTHER BREED OF DOG.***

You may think it strange that we seem to be discouraging you. In a way, we are, but only because we want to be sure that Saints go only to people who will care enough to be suitable owners for Saint Bernard. A fine dog, like a child, does not raise itself...so please take the time to consider carefully whether you have both the time and the interest to devote to your Saint.

## ***A WORD ABOUT BREEDING...***

All too often, the owner of a dog will want to breed it "just to have puppies" or "to teach the kids about the facts of life." NEITHER OF THESE IS A REASON TO BREED A DOG ! In fact, your dog will be just as happy and will probably be healthier if it isn't bred, and the kids won't learn some very strange ideas about human reproduction from watching dogs.

Every year millions of homeless dogs are killed in animal shelters and pounds because no one wants them. Sadly, some of these dogs are Saint Bernard. Our goal is to help reduce this carnage by making sure that there are not more Saints than there are homes for them.

If you have bought your dog as a pet or if your dog isn't suitable for breeding, you should consider spaying or neutering. Don't believe most of the old tales about the bad effects of neutering animals. A brief discussion with your veterinarian will convince you that your dog will live a longer, healthier life and be a better pet if neutered.

Not every dog is suitable for breeding...only the very best. If you are considering breeding as a possibility, get the opinion of several knowledgeable breeders...and listen to what they say. If you are told that your dog isn't suitable for breeding, try to understand that your dog isn't any less lovable or wonderful, but that the dog has certain faults which it would pass on to its offspring.

If you love your Saint, it is because all the breeders of your dog's parents, grandparents, etc., cared enough about Saint Bernard to breed only the best dogs they possibly could. The responsibility for continuing this tradition is in your hands.

### ***Some Terms You Should Know;***

**Registration Papers**-The dog/puppy that you get is recognized as a purebred and is registered with the Canadian Kennel Club/and/or/the American Kennel Club.

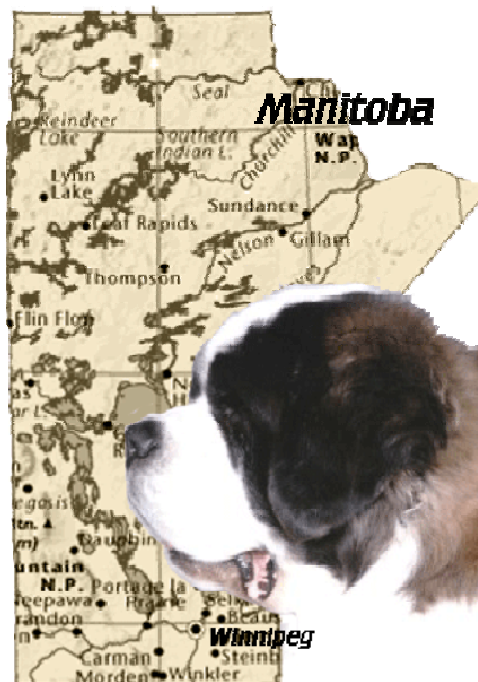
**Purebred**-All the dogs in your puppy/dogs family are recognized as purebred and are all registered with the Canadian Kennel Club/American Kennel Club.

**Pedigree**-Your dogs/puppy family tree.

***THE SAINT FANCIERS CLUB OF MANITOBA IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION WHICH ENCOURAGES; OWNERSHIP, SELECTIVE BREEDING, SHOWING, AND TRAINING OF PUREBRED SAINT BERNARD.***

***MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN TO EVERYONE WHO IS INTERESTED IN THE SAINT BERNARD, AND WHO AGREES TO ABIDE WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CLUB.***

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