



*Warren Johnson & Astra von Hause Milsped*

companionship and exercise, that doesn't make you a bad person. However, it does make you the wrong person to own this breed. Get a hermit crab instead!

#### **Can you afford the ongoing expense that is involved with responsible dog ownership?**

The initial cost of a quality Rottweiler puppy will range from \$1,000-\$3,000. If that price sounds outrageous to you, then you probably have not carefully calculated the annual cost of caring for a purebred dog. Let me say emphatically that it is expensive. After bringing your puppy home at eight weeks of age, there is still a series of 2-3 more sets of puppy vaccines that are usually administered. Of course, each time you return to the vet for the next scheduled set of puppy shots, you are also typically charged for an office visit and a routine exam. There is the monthly cost of heartworm preventatives as well as flea and tick preventatives. There is the cost of worming for internal parasites on a regular basis. It all adds up. Crates, collars, toys, leashes, bedding, treats, shampoos: all of these needed items costs you money. Responsible dog ownership is expensive but it is an investment of love. One of the most costly expenditures that you need to count on is that of feeding a healthy diet. In my opinion this is a must if you want to enjoy a long and healthy relationship with your canine companion. Please forget the grocery store dog foods with all of the additives and fillers. Then there is the cost of our breed's recommended health certifications. I'm not even going to get into the cost of club training, traveling, trialing and showing your dog. This can take a significant amount of money, but the costs of these activities are considered to be dollars well spent by true enthusiasts.

I am well aware that you can purchase a Rottweiler puppy for a few hundred dollars. The classified section of your local newspaper is filled with such ads. Nevertheless, I would strongly advise you not to go the cheaper route of a backyard breeder. Though the initial purchase price might be much lower, there is a high probability that you will pay much more in training bills

and vet bills due to inherited health issues and temperament problems that could more than likely have been avoided by buying a well-bred puppy with proven genetics from proven parents.

#### **Do you have the health and personality type that will contribute to the development of a well-balanced Rottweiler?**

The Rottweiler is a working dog by nature, and as such, they require regular physical and mental exercise. Healthy puppies are full of energy. With your proper guidance, they will release that energy in a constructive and acceptable manner. Without your good leadership, they will release it in an unacceptable and potentially destructive manner. How they release their energy daily is up to you, but release it they will.

Because of this breed's size and strength, it is imperative that they be brought under control. That does not mean they require harsh treatment or severe discipline. On the contrary, Rottweilers, like all breeds, respond well to positive training methods. However, along with beauty and power, they can also possess a stubborn streak. They will try to push the limits to discover where the boundaries are and therefore they need a firm but fair master. Training and discipline should be characterized by the three "tents." You will be successful at helping your dog mature into a well-balanced representative of the breed if you will be consistent, persistent and insistent.

Because of the temperament and power of this breed, they usually do best with owners who have the physical health and the mental resolve to maintain the upper hand in the handler-to-dog relationship. If you are easily intimidated, or lack the will to patiently work with your dog until the desired behavior is achieved, then this is probably not the ideal breed for you. Rottweilers MUST be obedience trained! Their strong minds and muscles must learn to work with and for you, not against you. So are you the type of person in body, mind and will that can channel the energies of this working dog?

Have my thought-provoking questions discouraged you from wanting to own a Rottweiler? If yes, then I am glad. Nobody should get a Rottweiler unless they are completely convinced that they are right for the breed and the breed is right for them. If after reading this information you are undeterred in your desire to own one of these magnificent creatures, then that is good also. Welcome to the fancy! You are sure to have a wonderful time with "Man's best friend!"

If the Rottweiler is to be your breed of choice, then the next important step is the choosing of your future puppy's breeder. This is a vitally important decision and one we will discuss in our next article, "Choosing a Breeder: Who Really Cares About Preserving the Breed?"

#### **Look for these future articles in upcoming TTRM issues:**

Choosing a Litter: What Is In the Genes?  
Choosing a Puppy: Which One is Right for Me?  
Preparing for a Puppy: Anticipating the Arrival  
Picking Up Your Puppy: Making a Good Transition  
Introducing Your Puppy: Confidence with Change  
Choosing a Vet: Are They All the Same?