Choosing A Litter: What is in the Genes?

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Newbies' News: *This section of TTRM is dedicated to the continuing elementary education of those who are new to the Rottweiler breed.*

Gir von Hause Milsped & Littermates

You have chosen your breed. You have chosen your breeder. Now it is time to choose your breeding. You have to decide from which litter you will get your puppy.
In order to determine which litter is right for you, first determine what you want in your ideal dog and then research what is in the gene pool that a potential puppy will inherit from its sire and dam.

Many prospective puppy buyers make a mistake of only considering the merits of the stud dog. It is important to remember that both the sire and the dam will contribute equally to their offspring's gene pool. Therefore, you want to carefully consider the dam of a potential litter as much as the sire. In fact, it is perhaps even more important to evaluate a litter's dam because while the pup will inherit fifty percent of its genes from its sire, and fifty percent from its dam, it will be imprinted with learned behavior from spending the first eight to ten weeks of its life with its mother.

When evaluating available litters, you want to spend sufficient time studying the litter's pedigree. A pup's gene pool determines the entire pup. The genes determine not only structure, type, cosmetics, intelligence and health, but also

temperament and character. While all pups and dogs are further developed through training, there are certain inherited traits in both appearance and behavior that are genetically programmed into the pup at conception and are unalterable.

It is especially important to study a pedigree thoroughly if there is any future possibility of breeding the puppy you are purchasing. You need to understand that every canine specimen has both a phenotype and a genotype. The phenotype is what you see and experience when you look at and interact with the dog. The genotype is what the dog looks like internally based on its genes. In every dog, there exist multiple dogs: parents, grandparents, great grandparents, etc. It is of primary importance that you learn as much as you can about the strengths and weaknesses of the dogs behind your puppy for at least three generations back in the pedigree. Generally, anything further back than the third generation is probably too diluted in the pool of genes to make a significant contribution unless that particular dog is linebred on.

One factor you should consider when deciding what litter you will purchase your puppy from is what type of breeding was used to produce the litter being considered. Is the litter the product of an "out cross" breeding or is it the result of a carefully selected "line breeding". An out cross breeding can be defined as the mating of two dogs who do not share any common ancestors in their first five generations. Line breeding can be defined as the mating of two dogs who share at least one common ancestor in the first five generations, but preferably in the first three generations. Of course, the common ancestor being line bred upon should be an excellent representative of the breed who is known for passing on his or her desirable traits to the descendants. By line breeding on the selected dog, you are attempting to "fix" certain desired traits in the gene pool. Of course, the inherit risk of line breeding is that you not only "lock in" the strengths of that particular dog but also its weaknesses which is why it must be a superb example of the breed standard. A dog should not be line bred upon just because it is a Champion. While Champion titles verify that a dog is a specimen of merit, it does not necessarily mean the dog is a great producer. It should be line bred upon only if it has