



A guide to buying a **Weimaraner puppy**

‘Why do you want a Weimaraner?’

Unfortunately, far too many people reply, ‘I just love its colour’, and that it is the worst reason for wanting one of these special dogs.

Have you done your research?

Have you spoken with Weimaraner owners or visited an event such as a dog show where you can meet lots of Weimaraners?

Do you know what makes them tick?



The Weimaraner is not a beginner's dog. Looking after a breed such as the lab and retriever is a doddle compared with the Weimaraner. It a breed that needs plenty of attention, exercise and training. So, before you rush out and buy your puppy, take a long look at your lifestyle. Does it suit a dog? Be honest with yourself. The arrival of a dog will completely change your lifestyle, so think about the following points:

- Do you work? What will you do with the dog all day while you are out.
- Do you have a partner or family member who will be at home with the dog? The Weimaraner is not a breed that you can leave at home all day, nor does it take well to being kept in kennels. So don't even think about buying a puppy if you are out of the house all day, even if a dog minder comes round to give it a walk. It's just not fair to a dog. If you opt for doggie day care or a dog walker, consider the cost. In London dog walkers charge as much as £18 / hr to pick up and walk your dog.
- Do you have a garden? You really shouldn't buy a large dog such as a Weimaraner if you don't have a house with a garden and of course, a flat is usually unsuitable, unless its ground floor with a patio / garden.
- Do all the members of your family want a dog? It's important that everybody who will be living with the dog is in agreement about buying the dog in the first place.
- Do you have a young family? Can you cope with the demands of a puppy and young children? How will you manage to exercise the dog and give it the 1-2-1 training it needs while running around after equally demanding children. Obviously, there are many successful examples, but one of the more common reasons given for Weimaraners being rehoused is the difficulties of coping with young dogs and children. Will you mind if the puppy bites and scratches your children, or even knocks them over in its exuberance. And, of course, never leave the dog unsupervised with children.
- Can you afford a dog? It's not just the cost of buying a puppy, there's the on-going costs of keeping a dog. To start with your puppy will be to be vaccinated which costs about £70. Then there's food at £1/£1.50+ a day, pet insurance from £30+ a month, leads, collars, beds, feed bowls, toys etc. What will you do when you go on holiday?
- Can you afford £12-18 a day rate for putting the dog in kennels. So, all this could cost you upwards of £1000 pounds per year.

OK, you are convinced that you will make a great Weimaraner owner. Now you need to find the right puppy. Whatever you do, don't rush out and buy the first puppy you find.

Too many people make the decision that they want a Weimaraner puppy and then they want to buy one straight away. They look on websites such as Pets4U and Preloved and often end up buying a puppy from puppy farmer or a breeder just interested in making money. Take your time. There are plenty of Weimaraner litters around so don't panic.

There are a few tips:

- Look for breeders who are members of one of the four UK Weimaraner clubs. Members of these clubs follow a strict code of conduct. For example, the WCGB stipulates that members do not breed from their bitch before she is two years old and not after her eighth birthday, that she has a maximum of 3 litters and there is at least 12 months between litters. It is also recommended that the parents are hip scored. The breed average score is around 12.
- These clubs have details of members who have puppies for sale. If you can't find anything through these clubs, then look on reputable websites such as Champdogs.co.uk (dogs have to be health checked to have litters listed). Whatever you do, don't buy a Weimaraner puppy from a puppy farmer or through a pet shop (yes - some pet shops still sell puppies!) and avoid websites such as Pets4U and Proloved.
- How much should you pay? The price ranges between £800-£950. There is no need to pay any more unless the puppies come from an exceptionally good litter with show or working potential. Prices in London tend to be higher. Don't fall for puppy gazumping – there are stories of breeders increasing the asking price when there is a lot of interest. A respectable breeder will stick to the quoted price and not muck you around.
- There are plenty of Weimaraner puppies around. About 1,200 are born each year, that's approx 150 litters. There will be certain times of year where litters are few and far between, but during the summer and autumn months there should be plenty. However, you may have to be prepared to travel as there may be few litters in some parts of the UK.
- Docked or undocked. The majority of Weims are undocked as the breeders do not work their dogs. There is a Defra exemption that allows genuine breeders of working gundogs to dock their pups. It is expected that the majority of docked pups will be sold to working homes. Sadly, some breeders see docking as a way of asking more for a puppy and attracting interest as some people want a docked Weimaraner solely for their appearance and have no intent in working it. But beware, if the puppy comes from working lines and is docked it may not be as easy a pet as one from show or pet lines as it will be bred for field work, have more prey drive and require careful training and more exercise.
- A good way of finding a breeder is to visit a championship dog show, such as Crufts, or a breed show run by one of the Weimaraner clubs. You may not have any intention of showing, but these events are great as you can see lots of Weimaraners up close and talk to their owners. People at these shows are very friendly and more than happy to point you in the direction of owners who are planning litters. If you like a particular bitch, you can talk to the owner and see if they intend to breed from her and get on their list of potential puppy purchasers.

Some breeders have lists of interested puppy purchasers and often their litters are booked before the puppies are even born. Its fine to go on such a list, but don't feel obliged to buy a puppy once they are born.

Once you locate a possible litter, make contact with the breeder. Don't be surprised to be asked endless questions. The breeder will ask these questions to ascertain whether you are a suitable owner of one of their pups. A good breeder takes a lot of time and trouble to find the right type of purchaser as they want their pup to go to a forever home. They don't want the puppy to have to be rehomed. Remember to ask questions yourself as you need to find out about the bitch and the stud dog - their pedigree, hip score, eyes, general health, breeding record etc.

Check that the pups are Kennel Club registered.

Most breeders don't let people come and see the puppies until they are three or more weeks old. There isn't much point seeing them when they are very young as their eyes are closed and they just shuffle around.

When you visit, ask to see the bitch on her own before you see the pups. This way you can get a good look at her without the puppies getting in the way. When you see the pups, take your time and watch them play together before you interact with them. Pups tire quickly so ask the breeder not to play with them before you visit otherwise you could be faced with pooped out pups that show no interest in anything or anybody. Watch how the pups move, chase toys etc. You will probably find that one or two of the pups appeal more than the others. Most breeders use some form of identification (coloured ribbon collars or painted toe nails) so you can tell which puppy is which.

A camera is useful to help you remember which pups you liked. It sounds odd, but see if you get on with the breeder? Is he or she helpful? Are they going to offer support once you have handed over the money and taken the pup away, be at the end of the phone or email when you have questions and problems. This is an important aspect of puppy ownership, especially if this is your first puppy. Ask if you can make a second or even third visit, so you can see the pups develop. Finally, find out when the puppy will be ready to leave mum.

Which pup? Not all breeders will allow you to choose the pup. In many ways it is better for the breeder to make the final decision, taking your preferences into account. They spend all day with the pups so are in a far better position to match the puppy with the buyer. Some pups are more laid back than others and may be more suited to a family home, whereas people who want a working dog may choose the more outgoing pup who likes to explore at the bottom of the garden and may be a little more independent.

A show dog owner probably wants a pup that says 'look at me' and is a real show off. Breeders should produce a pack of information telling you about the pup's diet, microchip, vaccinations, worming advice and general info about dog training and socialisation. Make sure you get a couple of weeks-worth of food so you can continue the pup's diet during the stressful time of changing homes.

Make sure you get a receipt and a copy of the pedigree as well as the Kennel Club registration form (sometimes this comes later in post). You have to complete the transfer of ownership on the registration form and return it to the KC so that the ownership is put in your name. Some breeders produce a contract so read all the terms carefully.

Enjoy your puppy