

# **Why Pay More For A Pet Puppy?**

## **The \$2,000.00 Puppy Versus the \$500.00 Puppy**

(original article courtesy of Bofelli Australian Shepherds)

The \$2,000 Puppy--both the sire and dam of this puppy came from top quality breeding stock which was developed over years and years of selective and knowledgeable breeding. Both meet the requirement of the written AKC (American Kennel Club, [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org), [www.australianshepherds.org](http://www.australianshepherds.org)) and ASCA (Australian Shepherd Club of America, [www.asca.org](http://www.asca.org)) standard for the breed in conformation (physical structure) as well as temperament and disposition. Each has a pedigree, which has been studied and thoroughly researched. These two dogs have been selected to breed to each other because they can both contribute to the excellence of the breed as well as complement one another.

The \$500 Puppy--the dam of this litter was purchased from a local pet store and originally came from a Missouri puppy mill. She was sick off and on the first year of her life due to many different types of intestinal parasites and malnutrition. The sire, an over-sized male, lives down the street and was purchased from an ad in the newspaper. Neither owner has ever heard of the AKC or ASCA written standards. Neither owner has seen a written pedigree. The female is skittish and snappy. Her owners hope that having a litter will calm her down.

The \$2,000 Puppy--before this breeding ever took place, both male and female had numerous tests including hip x-rays, eye tests and heart tests to determine that there were no known physical or genetic problems that might be passed on to the offspring. The breeder is well aware of the genetic problems to which the breed is predisposed and uses no animal for breeding unless it is certified clear of defects by a qualified veterinarian. The health of this breeder's pups is guaranteed.

The \$500 Puppy--the breeder is totally unaware of the genetic problems within the breed. Trips to the veterinarian, except for dire emergencies or yearly shots, are considered too expensive. The breeders' hope is to make money off the sale of the puppies. If he keeps expenses down, he can buy that new couch he's been wanting. Puppies are sold with no guarantee, sometimes with no papers.

The \$2,000 Puppy--the breeder is a professional and he has a good reputation to maintain. His goal is to produce beautiful and sound specimens, which anyone would be proud to own. Profit, if any is made, goes toward future breedings (always aimed toward the betterment of the breed) or for show entries, handler's fees, new equipment and important veterinary tests. Both the mother and pups are fed the highest quality diet. Many trips to the vet assure him that mother and pups are thriving under the very best care. The pups are raised in a busy part of the house where they are socialized, groomed and exposed to different kinds of stimuli. They are touched and talked to, cuddled and even sung to. They are never sold before they are seven weeks old. Every buyer is interviewed at length and pups are placed only in homes where they will receive the finest treatment. The breeder spends time with each new owner, educating and answering questions. Follow-up calls are made to make sure the pups are adjusting well. Each new owner receives a bill of sale and health guarantees, vaccination record, minimum five-generation pedigree, guarantee of registration with the AKC and ASCA and thorough puppy care and nutrition information. If the puppy is not

considered to be of such quality as it will better the breed the puppy is sold with a limited registration or non-breeding agreements. The new owners are encouraged to continue a relationship with the breeder, and to call and ask questions at any time during the dog's life.

The \$500 Puppy--these puppies are born in a box, in the garage and receive little care other than what the mother gives. To cut costs they are weaned on generic dog food and allowed to nurse on the mother as long as possible to keep food bills down. The bitch's health declines rapidly due to poor health and some pups are weak and runty. They are sold as quickly as possible because advertising and vaccines are expensive. They are sold without having had their dewclaws removed, without shots, parasite checks, vet examinations, guarantees or information of any kind. They are sold to anyone who has the cash. If the new owner is lucky he may receive an AKC or ASCA registration application. Although the puppy is of very poor quality, it is sold with full breeding rights. The new owner usually disappears with the pup, never to be seen again. If the market is not good, the breeder takes the leftover pups to the local pet shop or shelter.

The comparison you have just read is hypothetical, but very typical of what we see all too often. Although not every breeder who charges higher prices is reputable and ethical, pet buyers should keep looking until they find one that is. When I am asked why my prices are so much higher than those in some newspaper ads, I mail a copy of this article. Those buyers who respect the quality and excellence are wonderful customers and become "partners" in this hobby that I love so much. Those that are seeking pets deserve nothing less than a nice quality, healthy and trusting animal, as well as a breeder they can count on.

Anonymous