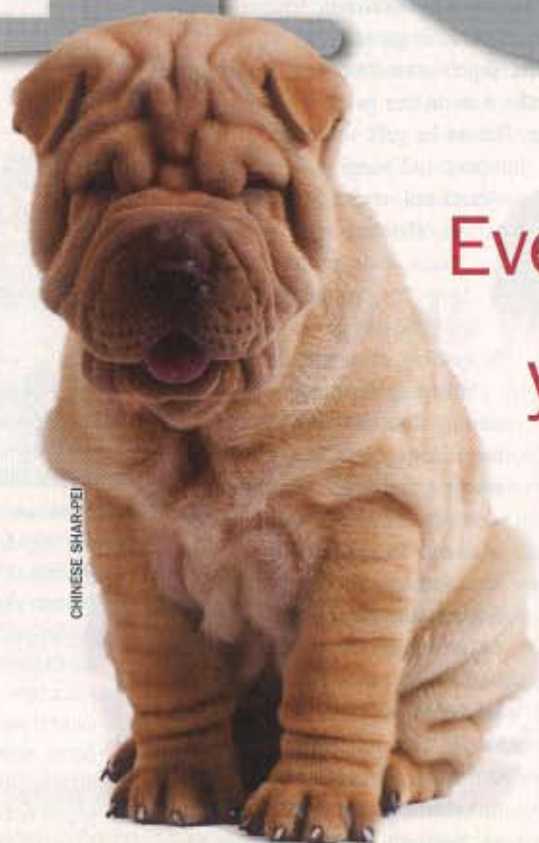
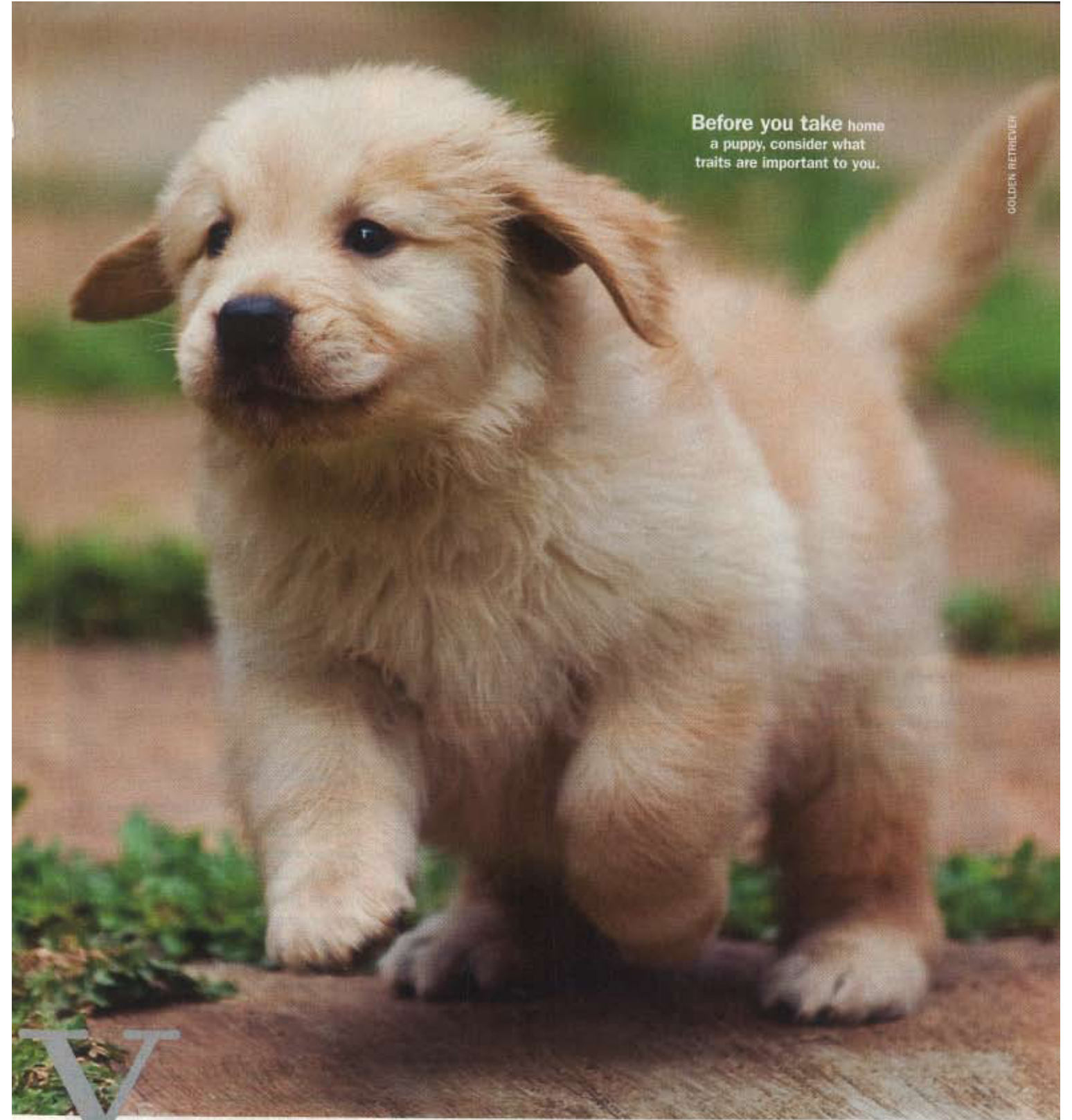


PUPPIES



CHINESE SHAR-PEI

Everything
you need
to know
about your
new best friend.



Before you take home
a puppy, consider what
traits are important to you.

GOLDEN RETRIEVER

You've finally made the decision: It's time to get a dog. But now what? We went to the experts for answers to four important questions every puppy-owner-to-be should know.

1 What kind of dog should I get?

Selecting the right breed is critical, not only for your dog's well-being, but yours, too. Millions of dogs end up in animal

shelters each year, many the victims of their former owners' unrealistic expectations — and poor breed choices. Think about it: Some dogs can live longer than 15 years — longer than many marriages, so it pays to pick well.

■ **Launch a smart search.** Draw up a list of your ideal dog's characteristics, says Rachel Malamed, DVM, veterinary behavior resident at University of California, Davis, Medical Teaching Hospital. Do you want a laid-back dog? A dog

who doesn't shed? Would you prefer a dog who laps up attention, or one who is more independent? What about his ideal size?

Now jot down some honest realities about your lifestyle. Do you live in a house or an apartment? How much time can you devote to exercising and training your dog? Are you physically capable of handling a dog? Do you have kids? Allergies?

■ **Study your list.** Review your wants and lifestyle realities, and research several

BY
MAUREEN
KOCHAN

Do your research: Your first step should be to decide which breed or mix of breeds is right for you.

CHARLETTE JOHNSON/GOLDEN RETRIEVERS

breeds that might fit the bill. Take your top picks, and learn more about each breed's history, including any characteristics that might complement — or complicate — your life.

Now for the ultimate caveat: A dog's breed or mix of breeds provides important predictions about his future size and temperament, but no guarantees, Malamed says. Your Labrador Retriever puppy could turn out to enjoy lounging on the couch more than splashing in the lake.

"Like kids, pets have personalities," says Debra Horwitz, DVM, president of

the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. "Sometimes it is the owner who may have to alter an expectation."

To get your breed list started, take our Dog Breed Selector quiz at DogChannel.com/breedfinder

2 What's the best way to find a puppy?

Once you have your wish list narrowed down to a couple of breeds or breed mixes, it's time to start shopping breeders, rescue groups, and shelters. Here are some ideas:



■ **Your local shelter.** Many purebred dogs and great mixed-breed dogs pass through animal shelters every year. Most never leave. It's likely you can find just the right dog for your family at a nearby shelter. It may take some effort and time, but you'll not only get a great new canine friend, you'll also save a dog's life.

■ **Contact local breed clubs.** Check out www.akc.org or www.ukcdogs.com for a list of breed clubs. Most national clubs have local chapters that offer referrals to reputable breeders or rescue groups in your area.

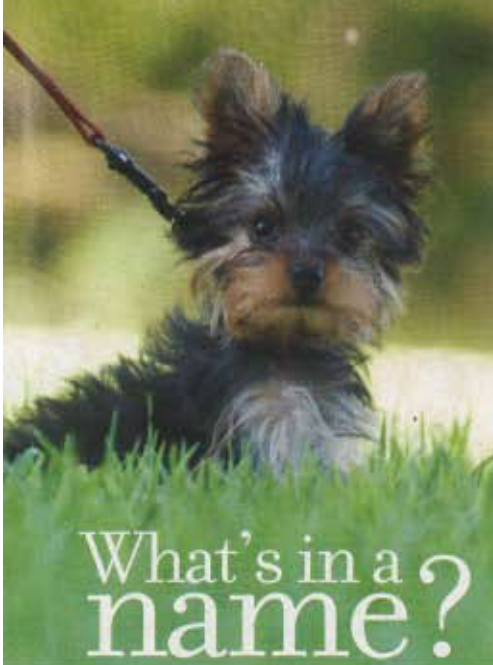
■ **Seek out fellow dog lovers.** Visit www.meetup.com to find social groups devoted to particular breeds in your area. These casual groups attract members (and their dogs) to regular play dates at dog-friendly hot spots, and give prospective owners like you a chance to meet lots of dogs of the same breed. You'll also gain valuable advice — and rescue or breeder contacts — from been-there-done-that owners.

■ **Check out a dog show.** Most dog handlers and breeders consider themselves breed ambassadors and enjoy educating

Visit the breeder or shelter to spend some time with your potential puppy.



FIONA GREEN/DACHSHUND



What's in a name?

Rover and Spot are so last century. Popular dog names today often mimic human ones, like Sarah or Jackson, or celebrity ones like Paris or Miley — perhaps in keeping with society's elevation of dogs from pets to family members. Do dogs care what they're called? No, says Rachel Malamed, DVM, veterinary behavior resident at the University of California, Davis. Pick a name that's easy for him to understand, and avoid names that contain sounds you'll use often such as Stay — so don't give your puppy a name like Stacy.

the public about their dogs' great — and not-so-great — qualities. The best place to meet handlers and breeders? At one of several hundred dog shows that take place around the country almost every weekend.

Watch the action from the sidelines, then approach several handlers (some may also be breeders) after they've left the ring, and ask a few questions. If you click with someone, ask for referrals to good local breeders or rescue groups.

For a list of 10 questions to ask a breeder before buying a puppy, go to DogChannel.com/breederquestions

3 What supplies will I need for my puppy?

The sky's the limit when it comes to stuff you can buy for your dog, but here's a look at some important basics.

■ **Puppy food.** Puppies require more protein than adult dogs because they're growing and burning loads of energy by, well, being puppies. Until you take your new



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PAULETTE JOHNSON/LABRADOR RETRIEVER



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PAULETTE JOHNSON/COCKER SPANIEL PUPPIL, PUPPIL, PUPPIL

Your puppy needs plenty of attention, and places to sleep and play. Have everything ready before picking up your new pup.

pup for his first vet visit, feed him what he was eating at the breeder, rescue, or shelter. Virtually all puppies should eat a food labeled "Puppy" or "Growth," and some need "Large Breed" puppy food.

■ **Crate.** Most dogs love sleeping in a crate at night, or for short periods during the day, if introduced to one as a puppy. "Dogs are den animals, and the crate, if gradually introduced in a positive manner with toys and treats, can be a secure and safe place for them to rest when the owner can't directly supervise," Malamed says.

■ **ID tag and microchip.** Always keep an ID tag on your pup. When it's time to spay or neuter your puppy, ask your veterinarian to microchip him — if the shelter or rescue group hasn't done so already. "If your puppy becomes lost, the microchip can be read by a scanner at a local adoption center or veterinary practice," says Nicholas Trout, DVM, a surgeon at Angell Animal Medical Center in Boston and author of *Tell Me Where It Hurts* (Broadway Books, 2008).

■ **Collar and leash.** There are flashy ones, sporty ones, preppy ones — you name it, and the collar and leash are out there. "It's important to purchase a durable collar and lead made of a material such as

nylon that will remain strong over many walks," Trout says.

These supplies, along with a brush and a couple of toys, are the minimum every puppy needs. For a complete list, go to DogChannel.com/puppysupplies

Consider the supplies you are going to need: grooming tools, toys, and food dishes are just a few of the basics.



4 We're taking our new puppy home! Now what?

Your months of searching have finally paid off! Here are some things you need to do:

■ **Puppyproof your home.** Puppies can get into amazing jams — and dangerous situations — given the chance. Block stairways with gates, put a lock on cabinets

that contain toxic chemicals, and secure electric wires with tape. If you have house plants that might make your puppy sick, put them up high where he can't reach them.

■ **Prepare a schedule.** Your puppy will learn faster, and your job will be much easier, if you plan his feeding, play, and potty times in advance. Consistency is the key, so enlist your entire household to help. If you need some ideas for getting started, check out the puppy schedule at DogChannel.com/puppyschedule

■ **Housetrain from day one.** The minute you walk in the door with your new puppy, take him to his potty place — whether it's in a corner of your backyard or on a pee pad in your apartment's bathroom. It's important to prevent your puppy from peeing anywhere else. Keep your puppy in a crate when you can't supervise him.

"During crate training, the owner teaches the puppy to eliminate outside [or in a specific indoor spot] by taking him out frequently and rewarding the puppy promptly each time it eliminates in the desired location," Malamed says. Your puppy shouldn't roam inside the house unsupervised until he's had at least four months of successful housetraining.

■ **Start basic training.** Begin teaching foundational commands like Sit, Stay, and

Come, using a positive attitude, treats, praise, and lots of patience.

Now is a good time to enroll your puppy in a puppy kindergarten class. "Puppies as young as 8 weeks old can go [to kindergarten] if they've had at least one set of vaccinations," Malamed says. It's equally important to socialize your puppy to all kinds of people, noises, and places.

(Turn to page 40 for a complete guide to socialization.)

■ **Visit the vet.** Take your puppy to the veterinarian within a few days after getting

and heartworm preventives. Your puppy will likely need deworming.

This is a good time to discuss what kind of food to feed your pup, how much, and how often. "It's important for your new puppy to consume food that ensures healthy growth at a controlled rate," Trout says. "If your puppy grows too fast, it could lead to orthopedic issues later in life."

■ **Enjoy your new dog.** "Engaging in activities such as play, training, and socialization is a great way to have fun, relax, and build a trusting bond," Malamed says.



KRISTIA DROOP/COLLIE

Have fun bonding with your new puppy. He'll be grown before you know it.

him. During your first visit, the veterinarian will give your puppy a physical exam and discuss a vaccination schedule with you. Core vaccines recommended for all dogs include distemper, canine adenovirus-2 (hepatitis and respiratory disease), canine parvovirus-2, and rabies. Your vet may also recommend additional vaccines, including ones for kennel cough and Lyme disease, based on conditions in your area, and your pup's particular situation.

Use the appointment to talk to your veterinarian about potential problem behaviors you may be noticing in your puppy, such as difficulty housetraining or overly fearful behavior. "We are there to set any of your anxieties to rest," Trout says.

Your vet will also recommend flea, tick,

"Although it is important to have structure, it is also important to let puppies be puppies by allowing them to play and explore." Take him for walks and hikes, or visit a dog park or beach. Toys, from chewies to balls, can also be fun — for both of you.

"Having a puppy should be fun and enjoyable, first and foremost," Malamed says. ■

Maureen Kochan, the former editor of DOG FANCY, is a freelance writer and editor who lives in Southern California.

Think you know puppies? Test your puppy IQ with a fun quiz at DogChannel.com/extras

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