



Oh, the places we go ...

Picking a Puppy (Part 2: What's Important?)

Last month I (hopefully) convinced you all how hard it is to choose a detection dog and told you about my first decisions. Next, I need to decide what are the most important attributes in a dog / puppy. (Now don't get me wrong, I know most, if not all, of these things I want in an adult dog are impacted by nurture. But I think nature also plays a role. So, to have the best possible chance at the right dog for me, I want to start with a puppy that I think is likely to develop in a certain way.)

It's a personal thing, what a handler wants in a dog. My list of important qualities is different than another handler's lists. So, I made my own long list of attributes I wanted, along with why I wanted each one, and what could / would go wrong if I didn't have each one. That helped me to prioritize, decide where I was willing to compromise, and pare it down. My prioritized list of what to look for in a puppy (and its line) ended up looking like this:



1) Tenacity - Frankly, this work is hard. It's full of briars, and desert, and icy wind. It's looking for tiny tiny sources of scent and long hours with nothing to show for it. I need a dog that won't give up. And one who yells at me when I'm wrong.

2) Long term focus - If my dog is to find a tooth in an acre, this is important.

3) Clear headedness - When a dog smells a scent source, but is not quite sure exactly where it's coming from, they need to keep a clear mind to solve the puzzle of the source of the scent. Even if it gets really frustrated at not being able to find the source quickly or super excited with the possibility of a find / reward coming, my dog needs to stay thoughtful and not get "spun."

4) High drive, but not hyper - I want a dog that will go thru a brick wall if what they want is on the other side. But not one who is whack-o-doodle (see #2 & #3.)

5) An off switch - I don't work my dog every second of every day. In fact, my dog spends many hours a day with me in my cube or in conference rooms at work. I need a dog who is calm and comfortable when not working. It's something that makes the dog a pleasure to live with and this dog will be, before all, a member of my family. But flip the work switch, and I need ON!

6) Happy as Beta - I need to be the Alpha in my pack. I don't want a dog that will continually be fighting me for alpha status. Nor one who is a complete follower, constantly looking to me for directions. I want my dog to be my second-in-command, my Beta.

7) Emotionally soft(ish) - My dog needs to be biddable, but at the same time able to tolerate a lot emotionally. So one who listens, but no wilting flower.

8) Confident and rock solid stable - These dogs get asked to do all sorts of strange, and sometime scary, things. My dog needs to take strange people, strange noises, strange situations, strange everything, in stride.

9) Physically sound - Yah, I know many of you think I am crazy to put this so far down on the list. I retired my 1st search dog early due to elbow dysplasia and I lost my last K9 partner too young to hemangiosarcoma. But those things *may* end a dog's career early. If the dog doesn't have the things above, it *won't have any* career... But I am not crazy; health is on my list.

10) Preferably smaller, yellow and a male - Big dogs don't travel as well. Black dogs are hard to see at night.

And...well...I've just always had boys. While these are the characteristics a breeder tends to ask about (as they are more knowledgeable), they are things I would give up in a minute if I could get everything else on my list above (1-9).

Now that I have my list, next up, is finding a breeder and litter I think can deliver it.

Lisa ☺❤️🐾



Shade Cloth

Our vehicles are our offices and the dogs' place to be safe when we travel and work. We carefully choose our vehicles for our work. One of the most important things we look for is light exterior colors. It's not rocket science, just touch a black car that is sitting in the sun and then touch a light color car. We also use shade cloth when we park our cars to help eliminate the direct sun, as we cannot always find shade.

On one of our projects we were in Death Valley in July (long story). The temperature was 115°. We were on a 4-wheel drive road a long way from.... well, anything. You guessed it, we got a flat tire. First thing we did was open all the windows and put the shade cloth over the vehicle. The dogs were just fine. The people were a little annoyed that we had to fix a flat tire in the middle of a sandy, rocky road. You could not put the tools down on the ground because they would be too hot to touch. Needless to say we lived through it and the dogs were very comfortable.

If you look at the picture at the beginning of the newsletter you will see Piper in a reflective vest, from ChillyBuddy.com, made of the same material. It makes a big difference keeping the sun heat off the dogs too.

I even use it when camping to cover the tent, make shady sitting areas, or to cover the cooler to reflect the heat from it.

We have shared this product with archaeologists and other people who work in the field and they have gone right away and purchased it for themselves.

The manufacturer says the following:

"Aluminet™ is a highly reflective aluminized shade cloth that provides a radically cooler shade environment than other shade cloth. It acts like a mirror, reflecting the intense infrared radiation, heat, and light of the sun to provide a cooler climate by up to 14°. Many customers report double digit temperature improvements versus the shade cloth product they had used previously. In addition, the open-knit construction of Aluminet™ allows excellent air flow." You can find Aluminet™ by clicking on the Greenhouse Megastore logo or the Amazon logo below for two different ways to purchase Aluminet™ - bulk or precut sizes of different sun blocking values.

~ Adela ~



Healing wounds ...

Last year our cremains recovery team worked hard to help the victims of the Coffey Park fire in Santa Rosa who had lost the previously cremated remains of loved ones during the fires. The emotions were intense, in both the victims and the members of the recovery team. All of us felt the loss.

Returning from a recent trip to NorCal for some projects, Adela and I decided to take a little side trip through Coffey Park. The changes were huge ... a true rising of the Phoenix from the fire. We wanted to share what we saw, and hopefully the feeling of healing that we felt as we drove through. It was heartwarming to see homes that we worked had been rebuilt and, in some cases, occupied.

LynneE



Even the redwoods are healing.



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how our dogs might help locate human remains or burials.

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