

GUIDE TO BUYING A TIBETAN SPANIEL



Tibetan Spaniel Association of Victoria Inc

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AIM

The Tibetan Spaniel Association of Victoria Inc (TSAV) has produced this handbook for the education of the general public as a guide to purchasing a companion Tibetan Spaniel. It reflects the values of TSAV.

This document refers to the Victorian Domestic Animals Act. Although rules may vary state to state, this handbook can be used as a guide nationwide.

BACKGROUND

TSAV was the first Tibetan Spaniel club in Australia, established in 1995 (there are now also clubs in NSW & Qld). TSAV abides by the Constitution, Rules and Regulations of Dogs Victoria, which is a member of the Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC).

INFORMATION

So, you have decided a Tibetan Spaniel (Tibbie for short) is for you. You have made a wonderful choice! But, where do you go from here? Whether you're looking for a puppy or an older dog, where do you buy your companion Tibbie?

OK, let's look at your options. Your choices are:

- 1. Registered (recreational) breeders**
- 2. Rescue organisations**
- 3. Micro breeders (backyard / hobby breeders)**
- 4. Pet shops / Commercial breeders**



1. REGISTERED BREEDERS

We recommend you buy your Tibbie only from a registered breeder. This means breeders who are registered with their state's controlling body (e.g. Dogs Victoria), not with a local council or any other association.

How to find a registered breeder

The [Dogzonline](#) web site lists most of the breeders in Australia who show dogs. You can narrow your search. For example, select a state, then tick the box "Breeder shows dogs" and other fields which suit you:

Tibetan Spaniel Breeders

Displaying Breeders From: ▼

Has puppies available (or due soon)
 Has a litter planned in the next 6 months
 Has an older dog available
 Breeder shows dogs

If you contact a show breeder who doesn't have any puppies available, they can often tell you who has. You can also email TSAV direct – tibbies@tsavaustralia.com.

Why choose a registered breeder?

Breeding is NOT just mating two registered dogs to produce puppies. It is a creative art that requires the study of genetics, conformation and bloodlines—much research that is both fascinating and time-consuming.

When you buy from a dedicated breeder—one who is striving to produce only top-quality dogs and to improve the breed—you have a chance to acquire a well-bred, properly raised puppy, offered at a fair price.

While the law requires all breeders to follow the animal welfare code, *breeders who are registered members of Dogs Victoria or other states' controlling bodies are more stringently regulated and scrutinised for their breeding practices*. Be aware that breeders may misrepresent themselves as registered when they are not. On Dogzonline, breeder registration numbers must be included. You can verify this in the advert with an automatic link to their state controlling body. In Victoria, microchip numbers must also be included if puppies are over 6 weeks old (or have a veterinary exemption).

The responsibility for future generations lies with the breeder. Even when outstanding dogs are mated, some of their puppies won't turn out to be outstanding. So, if the parents are not outstanding to begin with, you can imagine what happens as time goes on. Personality, disposition and hardiness—along with the good looks of the breed—get lost.

Why the Breed Standard is important

Every breed has a written Breed Standard—a description of the ideal member of that breed—and reputable breeders strive to meet the standard. While all puppies are cute, most don't grow up to be show dogs. Often, only one puppy in a litter turns out to be show quality, while the rest become nice pets. Whether or not a puppy is show quality depends on how closely he resembles the Breed Standard.

If you're thinking about buying a pet puppy, you may like to ask the breeder why the puppy is not show quality. You will probably find out that it's a simple matter that won't affect how great a pet your puppy will be. For example, the puppy may have the wrong eye colour or an incorrect bite (how the upper and lower teeth fit together), or he may be just a bit too big or a bit too small to be a show Tibbie.

As a matter of interest, you might like to read the illustrated *Tibetan Spaniel Extended Breed Standard* - <http://ankc.org.au/Breed/Detail/32>.

It shows you what a Tibbie should look like and also lists "faults".

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL

Extended Breed Standard of
THE TIBETAN SPANIEL

Produced by
Deidre Hunt – Melbourne, Victoria
in consultation with the
Tibetan Spaniel Association of Victoria Inc
on behalf of and in conjunction with
The Australian National Kennel Council

The Kennel Club (England) pre 1987 Standard
Standard adopted by the ANKC 1998
Breed Standard Extension adopted 2006
FCI Standard No: 231 adopted 11 May 1998

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Country of Origin ~ Tibet

Choosing a healthy puppy

Any Tibbie puppy you are considering purchasing should appear to be in good health. A healthy dog is bred for—not come across by accident—and both mother and pup must receive proper vet care. The breeder will give you the puppy's vaccination card, which will also have his microchip number. When you get your puppy home, have your vet check him over at his next vaccination. If there are any problems, make sure you take up any issues with your breeder.

Responsible Tibetan Spaniel breeders will have had their breeding stock DNA tested for PRA3 (Progressive Retinal Atrophy) by the Animal Health Trust, United Kingdom. This is important if you want assurance that your Tibbie will never develop PRA3. The breeder should show you the certificate/s, which any of the Office Bearers of the three Tibbie clubs here in Australia could verify as legitimate. Not having the certificate does not mean your dog will get PRA3, but having the certificate guarantees that it won't. For a list of Tibbies that have been tested, see the TSAV web site:
www.tsavaustralia.com/pratesting.htm.

(Note that the list may not be complete.)

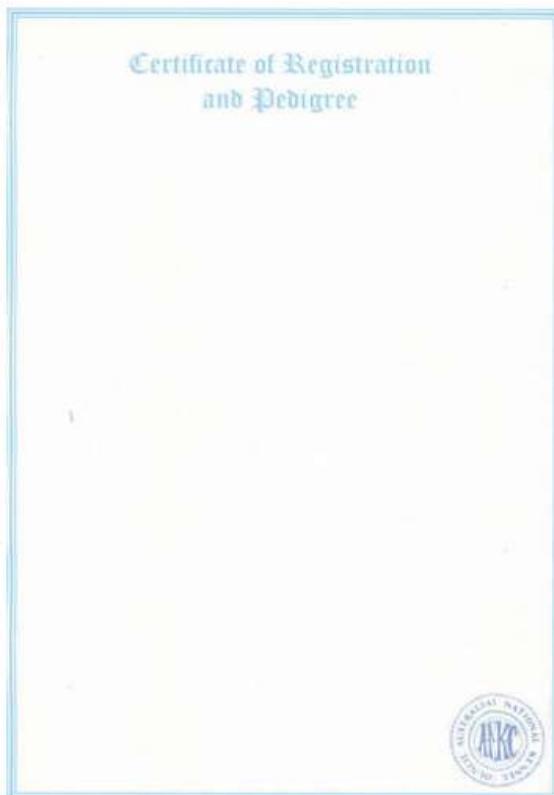
Please remember that buying from a responsible breeder doesn't guarantee that your dog won't have any health problems. After all, Mother Nature plays a significant role, too.

What is Progressive Retinal Atrophy?

PRA is an inherited eye disease that eventually leads to blindness. It is uncommon but incurable. Various forms of PRA have been diagnosed in more than 100 dog breeds. The PRA3 mutation is responsible for about 2/3s of all the PRA cases in Tibetan Spaniels. The mutation causing the remaining cases is not yet known and cannot be tested for at this stage.

Types of registrations

A pedigreed pure bred dog will be listed on either the ANKC Main Register (blue certificate) or Limited Register (orange certificate). See below (actual size is A4). Accept *only* the original certificate (*not* a photocopy) that has transfer details on the back.



Your puppy's registration paper will show the puppy's registered name and number and its pedigree. You can transfer the puppy into your name by completing the back of the form and sending to your state's controlling body (e.g. Dogs Victoria). Note that the official registration paper may not be available until the puppy is 3–4 months old. So, please be patient, but do make sure the breeder gives you the paper when it's available.

A dog on the Main Register can be shown in conformation shows in order to gain "titles" (such as Australian Champion"). It may also be bred to other Main Register dogs of the same breed, and their progeny will be registered as purebreds.

The Limited Register means that dog is pedigreed *but* it:

- cannot be shown at conformation shows
- cannot be exported from Australia
- cannot be bred and have the progeny registered as pedigreed puppies.



If you purchase a puppy on the Limited Register, most breeders will require you to spay or neuter the puppy. This protects your puppy. Spaying / neutering reduces the rate of testicular, ovarian and mammary cancer. It also protects the puppy from getting into the wrong hands and possibly ending up in a breeding facility.

How much does a pure bred Tibbie cost?

Breeders usually pick a puppy that they would like to show, and then sell the other puppies in the litter as pets. Since prices vary a lot between breeders, you will have to ask each breeder what price they charge.

Don't be surprised if a show and a pet puppy are the same price. It takes the same care, expertise and expense to raise each puppy in the litter.



A word about crossbreeds...

Pure bred dogs of different breeds mated together are known as crossbreeds. You may be surprised to know that people sometimes contact breed clubs thinking they have a pure bred Tibbie but instead have a "Tibbie cross" or a different breed altogether!

Crossbreeds are sometimes called "designer" dogs, quite possibly to make them sound more glamorous than they really are and to obtain higher prices. By paying thousands of dollars for dogs marketed as "designer" dogs, you are in no way buying a superior healthy dog. In fact, the opposite is often true because little or nothing may be known about the ancestors of these dogs and their potential for passing on faults or problems.

If you already own a Tibbie cross, he or she has hopefully inherited many fabulous Tibbie characteristics and will be a lovely pet for you.

Examples of questions to ask breeders

Never be scared to ask questions! Genuine breeders want only the best for their puppies and will be happy to answer any question you may have.

🐾 *Why do you breed Tibbies?*

Responsible breeders ultimately strive to better the breed, according to the Breed Standard. No-one should be breeding just to sell puppies.

🐾 *What price are your Tibbies?*

Prices vary between breeders. The dearest may not necessarily be the best, but be wary of those that are *very* cheap. Follow your intuition!

🐾 *Can we see the mum, dad and the whole litter?*

If possible, meet the puppy's parents and siblings. (Note that the dad may live elsewhere and was just used to sire the litter.) Ask to see some photos. Take note of the conditions they're living in. Check whether they appear to be in good health. Ask whether they have had any health issues and ask for a copy of any health certificates they may have. Assess their temperament. Make sure they aren't aggressive or overly shy.



✿ Can we play with the puppies?

Most breeders will let you play with the puppies if they are sure that no harm will come to the puppies. Be sure to sit quietly.



✿ How have you socialised the pups? Have they been around other dogs and people?

Socialisation is critical in puppies 6–16 weeks old. Well-adjusted puppies are those who have had much interaction with littermates and other dogs (even varied sizes and ages). Exposure to a variety of noise is important, too. However, remember you can socialise puppies in public only *after* they have been fully vaccinated. Consult your vet.



✿ Have any of the puppies in the litter been sick? If so, what were the signs, the diagnosis and treatment?

Besides getting the litter's health history, you need to know what guarantee the breeder will give you regarding your puppy's health. Ask what the breeder will do if the puppy is found to have a severe illness. This is a difficult topic but one that is a lot easier to cover up front rather than later.

- ✿ **Has the puppy:** 1) been examined and declared “healthy” by a vet? 2) had the correct vaccination? 3) been microchipped? 4) been appropriately wormed?

Puppies can go to their new homes at around 8–10 weeks old. You should have a clean bill of health from your breeder’s vet, but feel free to consult your own vet to have a general health check-up at the next vaccination. Ensure you have the vaccination certificate from the vet to prove the first vaccination date (specifying which vaccine) and to confirm microchip (showing the microchip number). Since most puppies are born with worms, routine deworming is essential.



- ✿ **Have the puppy’s parents been tested for PRA3 (Progressive Retinal Atrophy) or any other diseases?**

All Tibbies used for breeding should be DNA tested for PRA3 (Refer to page 5.)

- ✿ **Are there any other health issues to be aware of?**

1) It is not uncommon for a Tibbie puppy to have an umbilical hernia (which is an opening in the muscle wall where the belly button is located). These are usually not serious and can be fixed when your puppy is de-sexed. If your puppy has one, discuss it with your breeder and your vet.

2) Another issue can be cherry eye (prolapse of the gland of the third eyelid), usually in puppies or young Tibbies. It looks like a red blob in the corner of the eye and can occur quite suddenly in one or both eyes. It is not an emergency but do consult your vet ASAP. It may be treated with ointment at first but could require surgery.



🐾 *Do I sign a breeder's contract?*

Find out whether your breeder requires a breeder's contract and, if so, what is in it. Ask whether the breeder would be willing to take back the puppy at any time if you can't keep it.

🐾 *Do I receive a registration paper / vet vaccination certificate?*

When you pick up your puppy, the breeder should give you a vaccination certificate (which should include the microchip number) plus the appropriate ANKC registration paper. Note that, sometimes, the registration paper isn't available until later because it takes Dogs Victoria time to officially approve the puppies' names.

🐾 *Do I receive a diet sheet?*

Find out what is the breeder is currently feeding the puppy. Regardless of what they are feeding, you should continue feeding the same food for the first few days at home to minimize the risk of gastrointestinal disturbances. If you choose to change the diet, do it gradually. Ensure the breeder gives you a diet sheet.



Questions breeders may ask you

As a prospective new owner, do not be surprised if the breeder asks you lots of questions, too. Genuine breeders want to make sure that you, as a prospective new owner, will give one of their puppies a safe, happy home for the rest of its life. Examples:

- 🐾 Have you ever owned a Tibbie (or another dog) or currently have a dog?
- 🐾 How did you find out about the breed?
- 🐾 Have you met a Tibbie before?
- 🐾 Where will the puppy sleep?
- 🐾 Tibbies are avid climbers / escape artists. Is your yard fenced?
- 🐾 Will someone be home during the day to look after a puppy?
- 🐾 Do you have children? If so, what are their ages?



Making the big decision

A dog is a big commitment, so making the right choice is important. We encourage you to contact more than one breeder, ask lots of questions, confer with your breed club and use your common sense and intuition.

You need to feel sure that the puppy has had the best possible start in life. You need to feel sure that you can ask for and receive good advice when you need it. If things don't feel right, be prepared to walk away. Patience is a virtue!

Listen to your instincts. Not every registered breeder always lives up to expectations. If you are not happy with the people who are selling a puppy, do not buy! If you think the seller is more interested in monetary gain than improving the breed, walk away! Go home and have a think about it before committing. Do not feel pressured.

Also, listen to the breeder's advice. If the breeder says that a Tibetan Spaniel is not the right breed for you, you should seriously consider taking their advice. Tibbies aren't for everyone.



When you take home your puppy...

When you decide to purchase a puppy, here's a summary of the items the breeder should give you for your new puppy:

- Contract of Sale that details both the breeder's and owner's responsibilities to the puppy. Either before or at the time of sale, you must sign an acknowledgement of any restrictions that the breeder has placed on the puppy's records (e.g. Limited Register).
- Written advice on training, feeding, exercise, worming, flea control, health and immunisation.
- ANKC registration paper which the breeder has signed on the back. The registered ownership of your dog will remain in the breeder's name until you transfer ownership with the relevant state controlling body (e.g. Dogs Victoria).
- A vaccination certificate confirming which vaccination/s your puppy has received and which ones are still needed (your vet will confirm this).
- Copies of any relevant health certificates for the sire and dam (e.g. PRA3 certificate from AHT, UK) or others.
- Puppy pack including items such as food samples and toys.



So, you want an older dog.....

Breeders occasionally need to re-home older dogs. For example, the Tibbie may be one that has finished its show career, one that was returned to the breeder because its owner passed away, or one that would be better off living in a house with no other dogs so that they will get the love and attention they deserve.



You can search for older dog on the [Dogzonline](#) web site:

Tibetan Spaniel Older Dogs for Sale

Displaying Notices From: Australia

Older dogs may also be available from rescue organisations. See the next section on "Tibetan Spaniel Rescue Australia".



2. RESCUE ORGANISATIONS

When you adopt a Tibbie from a rescue organisation, you are giving a well-deserving Tibbie a second chance in a new, hopefully forever, home! Also, since rescue organisation adoption fees are usually less than a registered breeder's purchase price, a "rescue Tibbie" may be a good choice for you.

If you would prefer a rescue Tibbie, check out the "Tibetan Spaniel Rescue Australia" page on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/tibbierescueaustralia/> (if you are not on Facebook, please email tibbies@tsavaustralia.com).



Established by TSAV in 2016, the "Tibetan Spaniel Rescue Australia" Facebook page is the main rescue site for Tibbies in Australia. Volunteers from across the country, including members of all three Tibbie clubs, run the site. These caring individuals, who love our beautiful breed, have become a very active, responsible network of helpers.

The page basically covers all rescue sites / shelters around Australia. Whenever a Tibbie is in a rescue centre, the volunteers post details about the Tibbie on the Facebook page. You may still find Tibbies at other rescue centres, but our volunteers are on top of these and very quickly add them to our Facebook page.

You can be notified automatically when a Tibbie becomes available. Go to the page above and click "Following" under the main photo, then choose your preferences under "In Your Newsfeed" and "Notifications". You will be notified every time a Tibbie becomes available (if that is your choice).

If you are interested in a Tibbie you see on the page, you can directly contact the individual rescue facility where the Tibbie is located for information and adoption procedures.

In addition to the Tibbies in rescue centres, you may see Tibbies that need rehoming on the page. Owners who need to rehome their Tibbie (e.g. due to disability or other hardship) can contact the Rescue page by private message or email TSAV directly for help.



3. MICRO BREEDERS (BACKYARD / HOBBY BREEDERS)

We do not recommend purchasing from micro breeders. These breeders generally have little knowledge of Tibetan Spaniel genetics and often fail to check for genetic problems. Sometimes, they don't even have the pedigrees of their own breeding stock. When breeders don't know the faults in their breeding stock, they can inadvertently cause faults to be produced in future generations. If you ask micro breeders why they breed, the answers may be along the lines of: "thought it would be fun" or "the kids wanted some puppies" (or even "to make a little money"). Although they may charge less for puppies, there may be more problems in the long run.

While all breeders are required by law to follow the animal welfare code, *breeders who are registered members of Dogs Victoria or other states' controlling bodies are more stringently regulated and scrutinised for their breeding practices*. In contrast to micro breeders, registered breeders who breed to the "standard" strive to eliminate genetic problems through good breeding practices. (Again, the *Extended Breed Standard of the Tibetan Spaniel* is well worth reading.)

4. PET SHOPS / COMMERCIAL BREEDERS

There is no excuse for buying a puppy from someone who is exploiting a breed's popularity and whose only concern is to make a quick dollar at your expense and at the expense of the breed. Ask yourself, "Where was this puppy born, and in what conditions?"

Pet shops

From 1 July 2018, pet shops in Victoria can only sell puppies / dogs obtained from rescue organisations or registered foster carers / shelters. This is a very positive move; however, commercial breeders can still sell to pet shops in some other states.

Commercial breeders

Commercial breeding establishments often have hundreds of bitches producing puppies in a "farm like" environment, so you can imagine the conditions they are kept in. From 10 April 2020, new government rules will stop these breeders from having more than 50 fertile females—still too many dogs to care for properly. Contrast that to a registered breeder who may have only one or two (or even fewer) litters per year and raises the puppies in a loving home environment.

Commercial breeders still sell to pet shops in states other than Victoria. They also sell online (e.g. Gumtree) and in newspaper advertisements. Beware: Some breeders will tell you they are “registered” when they are not. You can ask for their registration number (if it does not appear in an advertisement) and confirm it with your state controlling body. Note that some legitimately registered breeders also advertise online.

Reasons NOT to buy from pet shops / commercial breeders

- Puppies are often dearer than from registered breeders.
- You cannot guarantee that your puppy IS actually a pure bred Tibetan Spaniel. Many puppies look like other breeds until they are older. That puppy may grow into something else entirely!
- You will not know the history of the parents, where they were born and what standard they were.
- Puppies are often not as healthy as puppies from registered breeders. You can't be sure that the puppy has had the appropriate worming medication and health checks.
- The puppy may well have been taken from its mum too early, causing it to miss vital nutrients from its mum's milk and critical socialisation.
- You are unlikely to get “after sales service” or breed-specific advice. If neither is offered, consider that yet another warning sign!

SUMMARY

We hope this guide helps you decide where to buy your Tibbie. We ask that you take on board the information we have provided so that you can make an informed decision and have a positive experience.

If you have already purchased a Tibbie from a non-registered breeder, don't despair. It does *not* mean that you WILL have issues. We are just trying to help you understand that you have a better chance of a healthy, quality puppy if it is bred from good stock that has been screened for inherited diseases, properly socialised and raised in a loving home environment.

Tibbies are fabulous little dogs, full of intelligence and personality. We wish you a long and loving relationship with your new Tibbie!





For any questions or more information, feel free to email the
Tibetan Spaniel Association of Victoria Inc – tibbies@tsavaustralia.com

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