

a perfect match?

Would you love to have a Cocker, but worry that you don't have the time, patience, or knowledge to raise a puppy? Or, would you be able to find room in your heart to provide a loving home for an older Cocker's later years? Maybe you would like to own a Cocker Spaniel, but cannot afford to purchase one from a breeder, or are one of those special people who has a burning desire to save an abandoned Cocker.

Perhaps the "right" rescue Cocker can be the perfect match for you.

Cockers are given up to shelters or rescue groups for many reasons, usually through no fault of their own. Often, there are major changes in the lives of their owners – i.e. illness, death, divorce, a new baby, a new home, etc. Sadly, many are rescued from deplorable situations such as inhumane puppy mills, or have been lost or simply abandoned.

Cockers fostered by American Spaniel Club representatives are carefully screened for health and temperament before they are placed in a new home. All dogs have had the appropriate health tests, and have been spayed or neutered.

If you can find room in your heart and home for a rescued Cocker, you will be rewarded by the wagging tail of a dog who will love you forever for giving him a second chance at happiness.

To find out more about rescuing a Cocker Spaniel, please visit: www.asc-cockerspaniel.org and click on the rescue button.

Right: Cockers are loving therapy dogs. Below: Cockers can be the perfect match for many kinds of humans.



now what?

Owning a Cocker Spaniel can be very exciting and rewarding, but making the decision to do so is also life-changing.

Before "taking the plunge," speak with as many Cocker owners and breeders as possible – at dog shows or through contacts made via the American Kennel Club and American Spaniel Club websites. People "in the breed" are often happy to share their knowledge about their dogs.

You may come to believe that a Cocker Spaniel would be the "perfect" addition to your life – or, you may realize that it would not. Sharing your life with a Cocker Spaniel - or any dog - means a total commitment to loving, caring for, training, disciplining, and protecting a living creature who depends on YOU. It's not a decision to be taken lightly.

Please visit our website and click on to the "So, You Want To Own a Cocker Spaniel?" button on the home page. After you have read the articles, feel free to contact the Public Education Committee. We will be happy to help you with your questions.

www.asc-cockerspaniel.org

ten reasons *not* to own a cocker spaniel*

- 1. You just saw “the most adorable Cocker” in the window of “Puppy Palace”.** A pet store or puppy mill or farm are probably the WORST places to buy a Cocker Spaniel (or any breed). There are many reasons for this:
 - Selling puppies is strictly a money-making proposition for these businesses.
 - The puppies have been taken from their mothers too soon, and haven't been socialized and evaluated properly.
 - These sellers have NO IDEA about the health of the pup and, just as importantly, that of its family.
 - The price is often higher than what you would pay a reputable breeder.
 - These sellers will rarely take responsibility for any problems that crop up – health, behavioral, or otherwise.
 - These sellers won't help you with the grooming that your Cocker will need.
- 2. You can't – or don't want to – add another category to your budget.** Owning a dog is not inexpensive. You must feed the dog, visit the veterinarian for regular check-ups, shots, and special care, and pay for boarding when you are away. For Cocker Spaniels, grooming will be another necessary expenditure. You can learn to do it yourself, but even then, grooming tools are expensive.
- 3. Your idea of grooming consists of hosing your dog off in an outside tub every month or so.** Cocker Spaniels are beautiful, but that beauty requires work. Typical owners who keep their Cockers in “puppy cuts” (shorter hair) bathe, brush, and trim their pets an average of once every two weeks. Longer coats require, at the very least, weekly brushing, bathing, and trimming. You can learn to do this yourself, or you can take your dog to a professional groomer. If you purchase your Cocker from a responsible breeder, the chances are that he or she may agree to groom the dog for you (for a fee), or can refer you to someone who will.
- 4. You are not prepared to make a commitment for the life of the dog.** A well-bred Cocker Spaniel lives, on average, twelve years. Remember that your Cocker won't always be a cute puppy or fun-loving middle-ager. Dogs age and develop the same infirmities as human beings.
- 5. A dog who wants to be your shadow would drive you crazy.** Cockers love their humans, and want to be with them as much as possible. If you aren't planning to have your new pup become a member of the family, and if you don't want a dog who wants to be your best buddy, a Cocker is not for you.



- 6. You are a clean freak and don't like dog hair.** Cockers have hair – LOTS of hair. No doubt about it. And let's not forget about the muddy paws and nose prints on the windows of your house and car, etc. If you are a confirmed neatnik and won't be able to relax about this, both you and the dog will be miserable.
- 7. You want a guard dog.** The best answer to this is – get another breed! Cocker Spaniels can be “living door bells” when a stranger arrives at your home, but will then want to be your visitor's new best friend.
- 8. You think that having a Cocker will help teach your children responsibility.** This is partially correct. Children often do form very strong bonds with their pets. But the ultimate responsibility in caring for a living creature usually falls on the adults in the family (often Mom!). Children can be taught to perform certain chores but will need adult guidance. Also, remember that children must learn to handle dogs properly. This can be especially critical with a dog like a Cocker Spaniel, whose long ears resemble tempting toys to small children.
- 9. You don't like to share your snacks.** Cocker Spaniels are foodies. They will eat anything and everything in sight, left to their own devices. Some have even been known to make their way onto the dinner table when their humans are not paying attention, gobbling down everything from filet mignon to sticks of butter!!
- 10. You are allergic to all exercise – including walking.** Since Cockers are such foodies (see #9), they do have a tendency to put on weight, especially as they age. Providing regular exercise for your Cocker – whether it be with a daily walk, participating in agility or field work, or by simply having a regular romp with him in the backyard, will make you BOTH happier and healthier!

* Adapted, with permission, from the author of “Top Ten Reasons NOT to Get a Golden Retriever” (<http://www.grca-nrc>)



the right way

No doubt about it, the BEST way to find a well-bred Cocker Spaniel is through a responsible breeder. A good breeder takes his dogs very seriously, and will only place or sell puppies to homes that he feels will be good ones.

Working with a responsible breeder means that you will be able to consult with him about grooming, veterinary care, health issues, diet, etc., etc. And, if there are problems, the breeder will want to work with you in helping to solve them.

You should speak with and visit the breeder or, better yet, several breeders. In fact, a good breeder will want to interview YOU! You will be able to see how his puppies interact with littermates and their mother, to see the conditions under which the puppy has been raised, and to see health certifications for the parents. Breeders will often provide a contract that will state your responsibilities as well as his own, and it will outline guarantees and spay-neuter requirements, if any.

If the breeder does not have any puppies ready for placement, he may be able to refer you to a fellow breeder who does. And, contrary to public opinion, puppies purchased from breeders are often less expensive than those from pet shops.

The American Spaniel Club, the national club for Cocker Spaniels, offers a breeder referral list on its website. Click on to “breeder referral” for those who are members in good standing of the Club.



Presented by the American Spaniel Club
www.asc-cockerspaniel.org



Funding for this brochure was provided in part by the Nestle Purina Petcare Company as part of it's Parent Club Partnership Program. Purina is the official nutritional consultant to the American Spaniel Club.

Special thanks to Pat Scully Design, New York City, for donating its services.

On the cover: Owen Hunt, photographed by Chris Hunt.



So, you want to own a Cocker Spaniel?

the joy of ownership*

A well-bred Cocker Spaniel is a joy to own. Gentle and loving, this beautiful creature wants nothing more than to please his master. Cockers are small dogs, fitting comfortably into a car, apartment, or a small home. They are, by nature, companion animals, but are frequently trained for the show ring, and for obedience, agility, and for field work. They make wonderful therapy dogs, too.

But even if you are simply looking for a dog to hug and curl up with on the sofa, a Cocker Spaniel can fit the bill perfectly.

There are three varieties of Cocker Spaniels: Black (including black and tan), ASCOB (an acronym for "any solid color other than black" – meaning buff, brown, silver, etc.), and particolor (black and white, brown and white, red and white, and tri-color). The average lifespan of the Cocker Spaniel is twelve years. Males typically weigh 25 – 30 pounds, and females, 20 – 25 pounds.

While veterinary science has made many exciting advances, Cockers, like other dogs, can have health problems. That is why it is so important to obtain your Cocker from a responsible breeder. These breeders take their dogs very seriously and try their best to breed happy and healthy Cockers.

Visit the website of the American Spaniel Club – the national breed club for Cockers - for detailed information and advice about owning a Cocker Spaniel: www.asc-cockerspaniel.org and click on "So You Want to Own a Cocker Spaniel?"

*Suggested by Ruth Kraeuchi's essay "Why I Prefer The American Cocker Spaniel", *The Cocker Spaniel*, 1956.



Photo: Jean Delisle, Kebec's Cockers