

It's a good thing that the breed has become better known and better understood. As evident by its competitiveness in all-breed competition, the tides have turned in favor of the Chesapeake. —*Nathaniel Horn, Columbia, Md.*; kcboy0@yahoo.com ♦



## Curly-Coated Retrievers



Guest columnist Mary Kay Morel acquired her first Curly in 1996. A breeder-owner-handler, she competes with her Curly-Coated Retrievers in conformation, field, agility, and rally, and does therapy work with them.

### Reserving Puppies for Prospective Buyers

If your heart is set on a Curly-Coated Retriever puppy, you will likely find that the process of acquiring one can be somewhat different than with more common breeds. Curly-Coats are relatively rare in the United States. In 2007, only 15 litters and 97 pups were registered with the AKC. Curly breeders are sparsely distributed across the country. Acquiring a Curly usually involves locating a breeder, being interviewed, being accepted onto a waiting list, and finally sending the breeder a deposit to hold a puppy for you—often long before the litter is even bred.

Prospective buyers rarely get to visit the litter and pick out the pup they want. After evaluating the litter when the pups are 7 to 8 weeks old, breeders usually match available pups to homes according to conformation, personality, and the pup's intended use (such as pet, field, or show). A new owner might have to travel a long way to pick up their Curly puppy, or they may have it shipped to their sight unseen.

The Internet has made finding a Curly breeder easier. Smart puppy buyers do their research on health issues and pedigrees, and are willing to wait several months or longer for a well-bred pup from a reputable breeder. However, in today's instant-gratification society, too many prospective buyers don't do their homework—all they care about is

finding the first-available and geographically closest pup. Some even try to increase their chance of getting a pup sooner by getting onto several Curly breeders' waiting lists, unbeknownst to the individual breeders. If three different breeders each expect to sell a pup to the same buyer, two of them are going to be scrambling for backup homes.

To avoid this problem, most CCR breeders will now ask for a puppy deposit once they agree to reserve a pup for a prospective buyer. Some breeders require a deposit before placing prospective buyers on their waiting list. Others wait until the pregnancy is confirmed via ultrasound or even until pups are on the ground before taking deposits.

Deposits vary from a couple of hundred dollars to half of the purchase price of a pup, and the money may or may not be refundable, depending on the breeder's policies and the situation. For example, a reputable breeder will generally refund a puppy deposit in the case of a missed breeding or a small litter that does not produce enough pups to fulfill their waiting list of prospective homes. (Many breeders will give the prospective buyer the option of waiting for their next litter or will help them find another Curly breeder who can provide a puppy sooner.) However, if a prospective buyer backs out of the deal, chances are that the deposit will not be refunded, or the refund may be delayed until the breeder sells the pup the person had committed to purchase.

Many Curly breeders have been burned by having prospective buyers back out of verbal agreements to take a pup. Requiring a puppy deposit (as well as having an agreement in writing) is a way to ensure that inquiries are serious and promises are kept on both sides.

The Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America's web site ([www.ccrca.org](http://www.ccrca.org)) provides a wealth of breed information, as well as a breeders list to help prospective owners find Curly breeders and available puppies or dogs. Details about



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rescues and referrals are also available on the site. —M.K.

Thank you, Mary Kay, for sharing this with us. —*Ann Shinkle, Grand Island, Fla.*; annshinkle@aol.com ♦

## Flat-Coated Retrievers



The Northeast Flat-Coated Retriever Club has put together the finest calendar on the breed that I have ever seen. Titled "A Year of the Gamekeeper's Dog," this 2009 calendar is a treasure of historical images from the private archives of Elizabeth "Bunny" Millikin. It features a collection of paintings and photographs of people as well as dogs, accompanied by fascinating and informative text. The calendar was compiled by Bunny, Lori Nevins, and Virginia Shreve.

The following is a thank-you to Bunny from Lori and Virginia.

### Collector's Edition Calendar

"The Flat-Coated Retriever could not have a better patron than Bunny Millikin if they special-ordered one