



LOOKING FOR A CAVALIER

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The Cavalier comes in four accepted colors: blenheim (red and white), tricolor (black and white with tan markings), ruby (solid red), and black and tan. The average Cavalier is 12-13 inches tall at the shoulder and 12-18 lbs in weight. They are indoor dogs, become members of the family, often sleep with their humans in bed, and are very sociable dogs. They do shed, but this can be managed by grooming. Cavaliers do best with company (human or other animals) rather than being left alone for long stretches of time.

There are two Clubs registering Cavalier King Charles Spaniels in the United States. They are the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club, USA (which was the original club before AKC recognition), and the AKC. In the US, any Cavalier you are considering purchasing should be registered with either the CKCSC, USA and/or the AKC. Steer clear of any unregistered Cavaliers or Cavaliers registered with "FIC" (which is the common registry used by puppy mills), APR or APRI, Worldwide Kennel Club, Krystle Kennel Club, Continental Kennel Club, States Kennel Club, ACA, National Kennel Club, or Dog Registry of America. New registries are cropping up every day, so be on the lookout.

Do NOT deal with anyone who is USDA registered. These are commercial breeding farms. DO NOT BUY FROM A PET STORE!!! Pet stores are almost always supplied by puppy mills/commercial breeding farms, no matter what they tell you. If you buy a Cavalier from a pet store, you are condemning its parents to a longer life of slavery and hell. DO NOT BUY FROM A BROKER!! A broker makes arrangements between seller and buyer. Always deal directly with the breeder. Reputable, responsible breeders never deal with brokers.

Always deal with a reputable, responsible breeder for the following reasons: such a breeder wants to follow the puppy for its lifetime; wants to place the puppy in the right home, and will turn down a buyer if it is not in the puppy's best interest to be placed with that person; may have certain requirements such as a fenced yard; will sell a pet quality puppy on a restricted registration or a spay/neuter requirement, preventing the owner from breeding that puppy; will require that the breeder is notified if the pup cannot stay in the home of the buyer for any reason and then the breeder will either help place the dog in a new home, or take the dog back. It is against the Code of Ethics for

breeders in the CKCSC,USA to sell to a broker or pet store, to provide a Cavalier for auction or raffle, and to buy a litter for resale.

Always buy the breeder first, then the dog. You want someone experienced and knowledgeable and with whom you will be comfortable for the life of the dog. The breeder should be there to answer questions, help with training issues, advise on medical problems, etc. The breeder will want to know of *any* problems you are having and will offer guidance and advice. Interview any breeder you are considering getting a puppy from. Ask such questions as: where were the puppies raised? (should be raised in the home as part of the family), what did the breeder do to socialize them?, what clubs does the breeder belong to?, why was this particular breeding done?, what good and bad points do these dogs have?, how are the puppies evaluated to find the best home for each one?, etc. If the parents are not being shown in conformation competition, ask who evaluated them as breeding quality (besides the breeder). Ask many questions BEFORE deciding whether to go meet a breeder or see puppies. Don't make an impulse purchase! INSIST ON SEEING CURRENT HEALTH CERTIFICATES ON THE PARENTS. This is critical to getting a puppy with the best chances at good health long into old age. Too many Cavaliers are suffering with and dying from genetic diseases when many could be prevented by testing the parents before they are bred.

The appropriate health certificates for Cavaliers are:

Heart--Mitral Valve Disease is a major concern in this breed. Both parents should be cleared (murmur free) by a CARDIOLOGIST (not a regular vet) within the previous year.

Eyes--sire and dam should have a current (within the last year) CERF (Canine Eye Registration Foundation) test by an OPHTHALMOLOGIST (not a regular vet).

Hips--hip dysplasia DOES happen in small dogs. Approximately 11% of Cavalier x-rays submitted to the OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) show hip dysplasia. Since the really bad ones are never submitted to the OFA, they estimate that as much as 1/3 of Cavaliers possibly have HD. An x-ray is taken by a regular vet and sent in to the OFA for grading of excellent/good/fair/borderline/or degrees of dysplasia.

Patellae--luxating (slipping) patellae (kneecaps) is a common problem in toy breeds, including Cavaliers. A regular vet needs to check sire and dam before breeding. This is done by physical exam (not x-ray). Certification can also come from the OFA -- at the least there should be a signed note from the vet that the patallae have been checked. The OFA website has some excellent information, and you can check the status on any dog that has passed by going to this website: <http://www.offa.org>

Another health concern that is starting to be seen in Cavaliers is syringohydromyelia. Your breeder should be knowledgeable about this and be able to tell you how (s)he is trying to avoid it -- by age of dog being bred, by outcrossing, by studying lines that are not showing symptoms, etc. Right now there is no DNA or genetic test to show if a sire or dam is a carrier.

<http://premiercavalierinfosite.com/syringohydromyelia.htm>

Be aware, however, that dog breeding and genetics is a complicated and inexact science. Even if a breeder follows all of the recommended protocols, there is NO GUARANTEE that the puppy you adopt will never have any health problems. The most important thing you can do is to find a breeder who is willing to talk with you about the health problems in the breed and what she is trying to do to better the odds of producing puppies that will be free of these problems. She should NOT tell you that "other" breeders have these problems, but that she has bred them out of her lines. This is virtually impossible. Breeding from tested and cleared parents is not a guarantee that your puppy will never develop health problems, but it certainly stacks the odds in the puppy's favor. When a breeder does not properly test her breeding stock (sires and dams), then every breeding is like playing Russian Roulette, as she has no idea if a dog has a problem or not, and may be passing on genetic problems. She may even be doubling up on the chances of producing puppies with health problems.

If possible, see both parents of the puppy you are considering adopting. It is most helpful to see at least the mother, as she will have greater influence on the puppies than the father. Make sure the mother has a good temperament. If you do not see both (many breeders do not use a male they have) you should still see the current health certificates on both.

Here are some **Red Flags**---if a breeder says anything like these statements, DO NOT DEAL WITH THAT BREEDER.

"I have any color, male or female, available right now." This is most likely a puppy mill or a broker.

"The whole litter is show quality." Next to impossible.

"The testing is not reliable." NOT TRUE!!

"If you don't trust my word, I don't want to deal with you." Remember--you need to SEE the health certificates on the sire and dam. Don't just take a breeder's word for it.

"My line has no problems." This is virtually impossible.

Here are some books which you might find helpful:

[The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel](#) by Norman Moffat

[Cavalier King Charles Spaniel](#) by Juliette Cunliffe

[Cavalier King Charles Spaniel](#) by Bruce Field

[Cavalier King Charles Spaniels](#) by John Evans

[Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Today](#) by Sheila Smith

[***Cavalier King Charles Spaniels](#) by D. Caroline Coile (paperback, inexpensive--excellent book)***

[How to Raise a Puppy You Can Live With](#) by Rutherford and Neil

[Before You Get Your Puppy](#) by Dr. Ian Dunbar

[After You Get Your Puppy](#) by Dr. Ian Dunbar

[Good Owners, Great Dogs](#) -- Brian Kilcommons

[How to Housebreak Your Dog in 7 Days](#) by Shirlee Kalstone

[Social Graces](#) by Margery West

Here are some sources of more information and some contact information:

1) Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club, USA at <http://www.ckcsc.org> The advantage of the CKCSC, USA is that this club has a Code of Ethics which breeders must abide by or risk expulsion from the club. The CKCSC, USA Code of Ethics is enforced. For non-online folks, call (513)-831-6755 for the Breed Information Service. They can send out a packet of info which is the same info that is on the website.

2) The American Kennel Club website for Cavalier Information: <http://www.akc.org/breeds/rebreeds/ckcs.cfm>

3) Quail Run Cavaliers at www.qspeed.com/cavaliers. This site has excellent in-depth information on what to consider when looking for a Cavalier and specific questions to ask breeders.

4) The Premier Site has excellent info on health issues and a list of breeders who are among those who do all testing. www.premiercavalierinfosite.com

5) Cavalier Rescue thru CKCSC, USA. Contact Linda at cavladylady@mindspring.com for information on adopting a shelter, found, or previously owned Cavalier.

6) You may want to consider joining the Hoflin Cavalier email list. This list is for breeders and pet owners to share stories, ask questions, seek advice, and obtain mutual support. To join, go to this site: <http://www.hoflin.com/Lists/DogLists.html>

I hope you have found this information helpful in your search for a Cavalier. I'd be happy to answer any further questions you might have or to "talk Cavaliers" with you. Please feel free to email me at any time.

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