



LOOKING FOR A CAVALIER

Reprinted by **Greater Chicago Cavalier Rescue**
with permission of the author

info@gccavalierrescue.org
www.gccavalierrescue.org
630-553-2810

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 standard for the 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, 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 usually 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 puppy 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 at least two and a half years old before being bred and cleared (murmur free) by a **CARDIOLOGIST** (not a regular vet) within the previous year. The grandparents of the puppy should be five and cleared before the breeding.

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 12% 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 many 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 patellae have been checked.

The OFA website has some excellent information, and you can check the status on any dog that has passed tests by going to this website: <http://www.offa.org>

Another health concern that is starting to be seen in Cavaliers is syringohydromyelia (SM). 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. However many concerned breeders are doing MRI's and trying to only breed A-rated dogs. <http://www.cavalierhealth.org/syringomyelia.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 good 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 that you might find helpful:

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

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

[The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel](#) by Margaret Workman

[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)***

[Small Dogs, Big Hearts](#) by Darlene Arden

[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

[Your Outta Control Adopted Dog](#) (includes info on separation anxiety, shyness, barking, chewing, digging...) by Eve Adamson

[All Dogs Need Some Training](#) by Liz Palika

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

[Social Graces](#) by Margery West

[Second Hand Dog](#) (great for rescues!) by Carol Lea Benjamin

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. You STILL need to ask to see proof of parents' testing.

2) The American Kennel Club website for Cavalier Information: <http://ackcsc.org/>

3) Quail Run Cavaliers has some informative links on housetraining, using a crate, and choosing a vet. <http://quailruncavaliers.com/id17.html>

4) Roycroft Cavaliers has some good info on buying a puppy and a list of some of the breeders who follow all testing protocols.
<http://www.roycroftinformationcenter.com/Cavalier%20Infosite/Cavalier%20InfoCenter%20Welcome%20Page.html>

5) Consider rescue. There are always some Cavaliers down on their luck and needing loving homes.

<http://www.gccavalierrescue.org/>

<http://www.cavalierrescueusa.com/>

6) Lots of Cavalier health and other info here -- www.cavalierhealth.org

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.

Linda E, AKC Breeder of Merit

Ozark, MO

SchoolCKCS@aol.com

Schoolhouse Cavaliers (conformation, obedience, rally, agility, pet therapy)

www.schoolhousecavaliers.com

Member/Instructor Springfield MO Dog Training Club (www.smdtc.org)

Member No AR Kennel Club (www.nakcharrison.org)