

This stems from a thread (continued from another post) on Oct. 23rd a portion of which was breeders asking where the public goes to find Pets.

**The questions I was presented with:**

- What websites did you search for when you were looking for breeders?
- Was there anything that came up that helped you research a breeder that you didn't know of before?
- Basically how can us hobbyists tailor our sites to be more informative to folks looking for a puppy?

I will share my own personal experience in where / how I found both of my Corsi.

Please understand this is my experience PRIOR to joining the CC groups on FB and my personal perspective on methods for marketing. There may be a few typos, and some individuals may or may not agree to my answers or suggestions. *I am okay with a difference of opinion and perspective on this subject. I certainly don't have all the answers and no experience in breeding – but here is my best after several hours of typing and review of it...*

I have put this into a document, as it is a bit long for a post.

**Here we go... - my answers / suggestions.**

I saw my first Corso in a Dog magazine (Dog Fancy I think). I wanted one! There were no Breeders listed in IL or even close to IL in that magazine in 2003. I found my first Corso in a newspaper ad that I just happened to browse through one day. I normally don't look there for pets, but the paper was 'calling to me' per se.

Please note, from my personal experience in working at a pet store, I would NOT buy a dog from one. Period.

There are many pet sites out there. Selecting one to sell on or to look for a puppy (if you don't know a breeder) can be a huge task. I would guess that most people try to find a breeder close to home first. Pending what they are looking for (show/pet/working) may greatly influence where or how they start their search. So I would advise understanding your target market (who are you selling to?)

People more invested in the breed MAY start with the AKC (or similar type) site.

People looking for a pet may start on eBay classifieds, petfinder.com, local newspapers (online or print), craigslist, puppyfind.com, nextdaypets.com, oodle.com, and FB / social networking sites – as examples.

Having your own website is good too, and there are many out there – question I have asked myself is anyone can have a website, so how do you know who to pick... That depends on the goal of the buyer, wanting a dog ASAP or finding a breeder they connect with.

Not knowing any Corso breeders, and not having seen any in the area, I turned to Google.

I searched for a puppy with the following:

- “Cane Corso puppies for sale in;
  - Chicago
  - Suburbs in my area
  - IL

I looked at the following in reviewing advertisements (on sites like Petfinder.com) – and will share what I thought about for each point and why from my marketing experience. (Most of what I have shared could also apply to websites):

**PHOTOS:** *Take them and take the time to take good ones!*

- Did the have a photo of the puppy?
  - No photos, bypass the ad – I can't see what you are actually selling.
- Was it a good clear photo, or mostly someone's hand or something else?
  - As a buyer, I want to SEE the puppy. If the pup is half covered by something else I wonder what you are hiding...
  - Cute happy looking pup – GREAT!
- What was in the background of the photo?
  - What is the current environment of the puppy?
  - Nasty poopy shredded newspapers, filthy whelping box, bypass the ad. This tells me visually that the seller doesn't really care about the puppy's health, IMHO. *Personal Bypass.*

**TERMINOLOGY:** *(Talking to your target market – to whom are you selling? Write your copy to them.)*

- What does your ad say and how does it read?
  - In all honesty this tells me about the seller.
    - Horrible grammar and spelling (I'm not talking about an occasional typo or misspelled word here), texting type acronyms and street/gangster type descriptions tells me (IMHO) your probably just in it for the money. *Personal Bypass*
    - A simple and clear ad can be written, and even be short! If you take the time to care about what you say, and how it's said tells me you care about the puppy and to whom you are going to sell him/her to.
    - A brief description of the puppy's personality is a bonus!
      - Examples: I like to investigate new things by poking them with my nose.
      - My nickname is Catchup because I am always trying to catch up to my siblings.
      - I am known as Dora the explorer and often find myself in precarious situations...
      - I am a little teddy bear who loves to snuggle more than anything else.
      - Like a cat, I pounce on anything that moves!
    - Multiple listings from the same seller stating each one are champion/show quality.
      - Not possible. (NOT saying they aren't all good or quality dogs, but they ALL can't suitable for show) Most buyers aren't that dense...
    - As a purchaser, when I read a pup is 'show/champion' quality, I may interpret this as also a good dog to breed if I want to.
    - Dam and Sire 'championship' acronyms
      - I may not have a clue what they mean as there seem to be many variances out there. Lay it out for me please. :o)
      - In my own busy life, I may not have the time or even know where to look to decipher them, if that is part of your advertisement – tell me what it means.
        - Champion / title for:
          - Showing
          - Pulling
          - Protection work
          - Etc...

**PRICE:**

- Range of pricing
  - I was seeing the range of prices, thinking (and felt I knew) that a good pure breed dog was going to be more than several hundred dollars. I figured a good range to look at was between 1-2,000.

- Other pricing factors would tie into location, what am I going to spend (and how) in transporting this puppy?
- Does this include shots? If yes, which ones?
- Does that price include anything else?

#### LOCATION:

- Where are you? (State, town)
  - Is shipping an option? If yes, what options?
  - With people's busy schedules, they may choose to only look in areas close to them rather than out of state.

#### CONTACT:

- Contacting the seller and their response time in getting back to the interested party.
  - Email is good
  - Phone number is good
    - If there is an ideal time to reach you as a seller, tell me
  - Website with all contact info (including State, town, country...)
  - Meeting (IMHO and preference)
    - I want to meet you, the seller if at all possible
    - I want to see and interact with the puppy
    - Can I see the parents and meet them too?

If you have your own website, here are some key things to consider;

#### SEO: (Search Engine Optimization)

- Search engine optimization is a methodology of strategies, techniques and tactics used to increase the amount of visitors to a website by obtaining a high-ranking placement in the search results page of a search engine (SERP) -- including Google, Bing, Yahoo and other search engines.
  - SEO helps to ensure that a site is accessible to a search engine and improves the chances that the site will be found by the search engine.
    - I would suggest doing a bit of your own research here, there is a lot of information regarding this on-line but it is worth the time investment.
  - Consider the way and wording of ALL copy that you write for your website. The content of what is put into your site is important.
  - Titles and or tags on photos, logos, images
    - Examples:
      - Cane Corso
      - Italian Mastiff
      - Cane Corso Italian Mastiff
      - Working line Italian Mastiff
      - Working Cane Corso
      - Show Quality Cane Corso
      - Protection dogs
      - Therapy dogs
      - Pets
      - Etc..
    - I was told one time to also include common misspellings: Kane Corso for example, if you want to include those who would misspell it in your target market...

#### TARGET MARKET:

- WHO is your target market? (In short)
  - Who are the people you want to sell your puppies to? These are also areas to seriously consider touching upon in your website if you want these kinds of buyers to find you.
    - Qualified / Approved owners only?
    - Show homes only
    - Pet homes, NO BREEDING only?
    - Police or other facilities that employ working dogs?

#### ADDITIONAL CONTENT TO CONSIDER:

- Do you have a contract agreement?
  - Buyer may want to see this prior to deciding to purchase
  - What does it cover (brief bullet points as you can send full one for review later)
    - Health
    - In the event the buyer can no longer keep the dog
      - MUST be returned to you for re-homing?
      - Can only go to a family member or must be returned to you?
    - Micro chipping required?
    - Spay/Neuter
    - Breeding rights (if any)
    - Consequences for breach of contract
    - Buyer support if they need help/have questions regarding the puppy or breed?
- Is a deposit required?
  - How much?
  - Is it refundable?
    - Is it refundable under certain circumstances only
      - Ex: You may not feel this is a good home for your puppy
      - Buyer may decide they don't want a puppy
      - Time limit on circumstantial refunds
  - Is there a current waiting list?
    - How long until I can get a puppy?
      - Some buyers are willing to wait because they have made a connection with the breeder and some want to find a pup now/ASAP.
- Do you require references regarding the buyer?
  - Vet
  - Trainers they have worked with
- Do you as the seller/breeder:
  - Let the buyers pick their own puppy?
    - This is more applicable if breeder just lists their 'lot' (5 M, 6 F)
    - If each pup is listed on a Pet finder site, the buyer may have already 'picked' and dissuading them from 'that' pup may be more difficult if you feel that pup isn't suited for that home...
  - First come first serve on pick?
    - Base pick order on waiting list / deposits?
  - Let the buyer pick their pup based on lifestyle criteria and why they want a pup (if applicable)
    - Family pet
    - Working
    - Show
    - High drive
    - Easy going
  - As the breeder/seller, YOU decide which pup is best suited for a home
    - Based on conversations and lifestyle conversations had with the buyer.

- Ears & Tails
  - If legal where you live, tell us the tails are Docked.
  - Ears; leave natural or crop?
    - What are the different cropping styles available now? (pictures would be great)
    - As a breeder can you recommend a vet to crop if I want that done?
    - Would you have them cropped –by a vet - for me prior to purchase?
      - If that is an additional cost, state that.
    - When is cropping ideally done if as I buyer I want that look? (age)

Why are you breeding? *Tell me what it is that you love about this breed.*

To say simply that you breed for “betterment of the Cane Corso breed” (or similar statement) is very vague and everyone can say that... WHY are YOU doing it? And if you are breeding for pet quality, then express that. Not everyone is looking for a show dog.

Example on some ‘why’s’ - I breed for:

- Temperament – tell me what that means to YOU / why is that important to ME
- Sound structure – (my terminology may be wrong but) – common physical concerns regarding this breed like hip/elbow dysplasia
- Working drive – what does this mean to YOU / what does it mean for me in purchasing one of your pups?
- Etc...

Listing links:

If you decide to list available puppies on other websites, such as Pet finder, it would be beneficial to include a link on the ‘Pet finder’ listing to your website, as well as a link from your website directly to the listed pup on Pet finder (or whatever site you may use.)

Contact info on your site should be easy to find, ideally on each page at the bottom at least.

Testimonials

FAQ’s on the breed for; general knowledge, training ...

Don’t present false or exaggerated information about your dogs – it could bite you in the butt later

Spell check! :o)