

NEW COMBO-BREEDS

The most popular and successful of hybrid breeds is the Labradoodle, which already has its own breeder's organization and at 8,500, has the most dogs officially registered with the American Canine Hybrid Club. People say that the "breed" was developed from the traditional guide dog, the Labrador, crossed with the non-shedding Poodle, presumably as a companion animal for people allergic to dogs. Although it makes a nice story, the reasoning behind this is necessarily false because a dog's hair is not what a person is allergic to - it is the dander, the dead cells on the dog's skin. Even hairless dogs have dander, so while Poodles are one of the few breeds with hair that grows longer rather than falling out, this only means that they (and to some extent Labradoodles and other "doodles") do not shed hair, making them less messy but no less allergenic.

Currently, the second most popular Combo-breed in America is the Puggle, a mix between a Pug and Beagle. There are already several dozen Puggle breeders across the country and there are 7,500 of the dogs registered with the American Canine Hybrid Club. It's anybody's guess for how long the Puggle's popularity will continue to rise or at what point there will be temperament or health issues which will cool the enthusiasm. It usually takes three generations to stabilize the inherited traits in crossbreeding, but in ignorance and enthusiasm, breeders are cropping up to jump on this bandwagon without any provision for the inevitable genetic mishaps.

To envision where this combo-breeding is going, you need only look back to the 1970's when Cock-a-Poos were all the rage. Ever stop to wonder what happened to *that* seemingly unstoppable hybrid experiment? Undoubtedly the Cock-a-Poo temperaments

did not match up with their cute looks. The faddish Cock-a-Poo is rarely mentioned or seen anymore, while Cocker Spaniels and Poodles are no less prominent. On some level you can judge any breed by its staying power, because while many will go in and out of fashion, the committed educated breeders stay their course and the dog breeds of substance and quality do not disappear.

Word has it that the *Schnoodle* and *Goldendoodle* are not far behind. With today's hybrids commanding very high prices there is a big incentive for novice breeders to try to cash in on this mania for new breeds, with either no regard or no control over the outcome. Even the Queen of England has gotten in on the fad: apparently one of Princess Margaret's Dachshunds had an assignation with one of the Queen's Corgis, a combination they are calling the Royal Dorgis. The first question that comes to mind is why the Royal Family is not informed enough to know that they should be setting an example of responsible ownership by spaying and neutering all their dogs? This is doubly true if you believe what they say of the Queen's Corgis: that they are not palace-trained and relieve themselves at will, and also that they are disposed to using their teeth to interact with humans. Whether you ascribe to the developmental theory of "nature" or "nurture," the fact remains that these are not desirable qualities in a dog, especially not when joined with Dachshunds, whose repertoire can include snapping and who are notoriously difficult to house-train.

If you think things may be going too far with all the new mixed breeds that are cropping up, here's word from the canine grapevine about some of the newer hybrids we can look forward to:

Bloodhound + Labrador = **Blabador** (a dog who barks all the time)

Collie + Lhasa Apso = **Collapso** (a dog who folds up for easy transport)

Collie + Malamute = **Commute** (a dog who travels to work)

Deerhound + Terrier = **Derriere** (a who is true to the end)

Labrador + Curly Coated Retriever = **Lab Coat Retriever** (the choice of research scientists)

Malamute + Pointer = **Moot Point** (as in “The Seavers just got a Moot Point...oh well, never mind... it doesn’t matter.”)

Newfoundland + Basset Hound = **Newfound Asset Hound** (perfect for financial advisors)

Pointer + Setter = **Poinsetter** (the traditional pet for Christmas)

Spitz + Chow Chow = **Spitz-Chow** (a dog who throws up a lot)

Terrier + Bulldog = **Terribull** (a dog who makes awful mistakes)

Bull Terrier + Shitzu = well, you get the point...