



BREEDING PLANS

My History with Dogs

I've wanted a dog for as long as I can remember. My whole childhood was filled with begging, hoping, and dreaming. Through elementary and middle school, I lived for the moments I could catch a dog show on TV, and I spent hours poring over books and articles, completely obsessed with Shetland Sheepdogs. I knew their history, their structure, their personalities—I was the kid who had their breed picked out at ten years old.

But adulthood came fast, and opportunity didn't. Life was full of other priorities, and the right moment to finally bring a dog home didn't come until 2023. When it did, I dove right back in—only now I had someone else to factor in: my husband.

We went back and forth, weighing our priorities, reading everything the AKC recommended, and trying to find a breed that felt like ours.

At one point, I was set on getting a Spanish Water Dog. I know—nothing like a BRT! But my daughter liked it, and the breed had a low coefficient of inbreeding, so I thought: maybe this smart, healthy, driven dog with an off switch will work.

But something still didn't feel complete. I spent hours on the phone with a breeder—until 2 a.m.—asking every question I could think of, and she graciously answered them all.

But the day came to place the deposit, and I just couldn't do it. It didn't feel right. So I went back to the AKC website, this time combing through every breed one by one. Before, I'd relied on the dog books I grew up with—only to realize later that BRTs weren't even accepted into the AKC when those books were written.

But this time, there they were: the Black Russian Terrier.

Oh boy—it did not look like what I thought I wanted. But I picked up the phone anyway. I called a breeder that same day, and within fifteen minutes of talking to him, I knew.

I had found my breed.

What is a Preservation Breeder?

A preservation breeder is someone who breeds dogs (or other animals) with the goal of preserving the historical purpose, structure, temperament, and genetic integrity of a breed—not just producing pets or show animals. Here's what that usually means in practice:

- **Maintaining breed standards:** They follow established guidelines for structure, movement, and temperament, often based on a breed's original working function.
- **Protecting genetic diversity:** They aim to avoid genetic bottlenecks by carefully selecting pairings and sometimes using older or less common lines.
- **Prioritizing health and soundness:** Good preservation breeders do extensive health testing to reduce inherited conditions and promote long-term wellness.
- **Respecting history and purpose:** Many breeds were developed for specific jobs (herding, guarding, hunting), and preservation breeders work to maintain those traits even if the dogs are now companions.
- **Not chasing trends:** They avoid extreme looks or fad breeding that distorts a breed's original intent or compromises its wellbeing.

It's about stewardship—passing down a breed in its wholeness, not just in name.

What is an Ethical Breeder?

They prioritize genetic health.

- Perform all relevant health testing (OFA, genetic panels, hips, elbows, eyes, etc.)
- Avoid inbreeding and overly tight linebreeding just to chase a "look"
- Understand the difference between preservation and replication

They care about stable, sound temperaments.

- Breed for dogs that are predictable, trustworthy, and able to function in real-world homes—not just in show rings
- Temperament test litters and selectively place pups where they'll thrive

They raise their puppies right.

- Puppies are raised in clean, enriched environments (not kennels stacked in barns)
- Socialized, handled daily, and exposed to age-appropriate experiences
- Use protocols like Early Neurological Stimulation (ENS), Puppy Culture, Avidog, etc.

They educate buyers.

- Screen homes carefully and won't sell to just anyone
- Offer lifetime breeder support and take dogs back at any age, no questions asked
- Teach owners about grooming, training, structure, and long-term care

They breed with purpose.

- Aren't just making dogs—they're building legacies
- Can explain how each litter contributes to their goals (improving structure, keeping working drive, expanding gene pool, etc.)
- May show, work, or title their dogs—but don't only care about ribbons

They say no when needed.

- They won't breed every heat, won't breed unstable or untested dogs, and won't compromise just to sell pups
- They aren't afraid to stop a breeding program that's no longer helping the breed

How Can You Say You are a Preservation breeder?

We are preserving the function, not just the aesthetic.

- Black was chosen in the USSR to help obscure the dogs at night—not because black pigment makes a better working dog.
- A colored BRT that meets the breed's bone, head, movement, coat, and protective instinct is more "true" to its original design than a poorly built black one.

We are preserving genetic diversity.

- The BRT breed was formed from multiple breeds (all with color). Rejecting every dog with color shrinks the gene pool and risks health

-The Doberman Pinscher is a striking example. Originally, Dobermans came in a wider range of colors, including black, red, blue, and fawn (Isabella).

Over time, pressure to breed only the black-and-tan variety (especially in certain regions) led to shrinking the gene pool. As a result:

1. The breed now faces serious health issues like Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM), which has become rampant due to limited genetic diversity.
2. Some breeders are now reintroducing diversity programs to expand the gene pool—even considering outcrossing or bringing back historically present but disallowed colors.
3. The DPCA (Doberman Pinscher Club of America) has historically resisted these changes in conformation lines, but many working-line breeders are sounding the alarm that strict color rules are harming the breed's longevity.

This proves the danger: when aesthetic purity overrides genetic health, you're not preserving a breed—you're preserving a look. And a look can't work, guard, or live a long life.

- We are making intentional choices that strengthen the line, not dilute it.

We are preserving temperament and drive.

- A colored BRT that's stable, biddable, bold, and clear-headed is doing exactly what the early breeders valued.
- We are not breeding for trend—we are breeding for type and task.

There's an old saying in Europe that goes something like: 'We do not test our Black Russians to see if they can produce color. If they do, we do not use them again.'

What this quiet admission reveals is powerful:

Those dogs are good enough to use, to title, to breed—until color appears. Their structure, health, and working ability are all deemed worthy.

The color doesn't make them less of a BRT.

It simply makes their genetics more transparent.

So if the dog was valuable before the color showed, it's still valuable after.

Because preservation isn't about hiding what's in the blood—it's about choosing what's worth carrying forward.

Yes, I was originally drawn in by the color.

It caught my eye—that flash of difference in a sea of black. But the more I learned, the more I listened to breeders of both color and standard, the more I realized something deeper:

A lot of conformation is a game—played between handlers, judges, and politics. And too often, the best dog doesn't win.

What I started to see was that outside the spotlight, in the quiet corners of the breed, there were incredible traits waiting in the lines that carried color—bone, temperament, intelligence, longevity. Dogs that could work, that could protect, that had something real to offer.

I believe colors are a branch of the breed worth exploring. I want to see where it takes me. I want to uncover what's possible when we prioritize the whole dog over just the coat.

But I haven't left the blacks behind.

I'm committed to building a separate line there too—because I believe in the breed as a whole, and I want to improve on both sides. To preserve, strengthen, and pass on something better than I started with. Whether it's black or not.

I didn't walk away from the standard. I walked toward the full picture.

I'm new to the breed—but I'm not afraid of the deep end.

I'm diving in—listening more than I speak, asking questions that some people don't want to answer, and staying curious even when it's uncomfortable. I spend hours in the database, studying dogs, following lines. I feel every BRT I can get my hands on—every coat texture, every head shape, every tail set (even though it's not as many up here in New England, I've been to a kennel in Georgia to feel a few more). I devour any book or article I can find, and I'm always on the hunt for that elusive document—the one that supposedly said color dogs are unstable. Not just an unsourced comment in a article.

And as I search, I look down at the floor of my own home. There lies my Black and Tan—cuddled up beside the baby he's grown up with, steady as ever, gentle as breath. That's not instability. That's the kind of temperament I'd breed for a hundred times over.

If you're reading this and you have more to say—if you want to sway me—I welcome the conversation. I know all of us are passionate about what we believe in, especially when it looks like someone is coming in to break that up. That is not my intention. I want to learn. I want to understand what others see, what they've built, what they fear losing.

But I won't engage with anyone who only wants to shame or accuse. I'm here for growth, not combat. I know I have a lot to learn. But I also know what I bring to the table: fresh eyes, a hunger for understanding, and a deep respect for the legacy of this breed. I'm not here to rewrite history—I'm here to study it, to build on it, and maybe to uncover pieces that got left behind. Color is part of the story. I'm just choosing to read it, instead of pretending it's not there.

I hope one day someone can look at the dogs I've bred—black or not—and say: 'That's a solid dog. That's a BRT.' If I can get there, I'll have done something worth passing on.

Sources

1. Historical Doberman Colors

The American Kennel Club recognizes black, red, blue, and fawn (Isabella) as standard colors for the Doberman Pinscher, though blue and fawn are less popular in show rings.

 [AKC Doberman Pinscher Breed Standard](#)

2. Genetic Bottleneck & Coat Color Pressure

Though all four colors are technically allowed, heavy conformation bias toward black and red dogs has led to reduced use of blue and fawn in breeding programs—shrinking the gene pool. Blue and fawn dogs are often passed over due to aesthetic stigma or concerns about coat health.

 [DPCA FAQs on Color](#)

 [Doberman Diversity Project: Color & Genetic Diversity](#)

3. DCM in the Doberman Breed

Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) is a life-threatening condition affecting up to 60% of Dobermans. Studies link the high prevalence of DCM to limited genetic diversity and inbreeding, especially in tightly bred lines.

 [NCBI: Prevalence of DCM in Dobermans \(Wess et al., 2010\)](#)

4. Working-Line Breeders & Diversity Efforts

Some Doberman breeders, especially in working circles, are responding to the crisis by emphasizing diversity and exploring outcrossing or underused color lines to reintroduce lost genes. The Doberman Diversity Project is one such initiative.

 [Doberman Diversity Project](#)

5. DPCA's Resistance to Change in Conformation Circles

The Doberman Pinscher Club of America (DPCA) has historically upheld strict standards. Despite the breed's genetic health concerns, calls to ease color stigma or expand genetic lines have met resistance, particularly in show-focused programs.

 [DPCA: Breed Education](#)

 [DPCA Position Statements](#)