

How much would a pup cost? The breeder's cost!

The following are 2 reports by 2 breeders. The main report is by a breeder who sells her pup for \$7000 and will explain why and how it costs her that much.

The second report is a brief submission by this site, Anubis Great Danes, which explains how he can reduce the costs and how an Anubis pup costs from \$1000 to \$2500.

The following "main" report was made by a famous breeder who sells her pups for **\$7000 a pup!** Yes, you can view it on line, they just had pups advertized on 3 sites last week.

I'll not mention the breeder's name for a second reason other than the obvious reason. That reason is the fact that the breeder compared her pups to ours claiming that they both are of the same top quality.

While I am of course flattered that a \$7000 pup breeder used us as a comparative reference (**in fact she stated that when it comes to top quality Danes in the whole world, there are only 6 breeders world-wide, we, Anubis Great Danes of Nanaimo, BC Canada, are one of them**) .. however, yes, her dogs are more than good - and I am sorry, I have to say, just that .. perhaps very good, but not the **GREAT** very top elite quality she claimed and certainly not as good as our Nifi & Anubis. I am sorry this is how I responded to someone who praised us as a reference). To whoever is interested, I'll send you pictures of their sire and dam and you be the judge (if you're familiar with Dane conformation).

Second note .. the writer (the breeder) is breeding for fun. They are a very rich family residing on a 45 acres waterfront and they have a large rancher house just for the Danes.

Having said that, expenses, no matter what you spend, will improve the condition of the pup but will not change its genetic characteristics or quality.

Please be patient and finish her "not-so-exiting" accounting report. You'll see with real dollar numbers how can the breeder's cost of a pup be \$6000+ (and that is even an average taken into account that the sire & dam will breed successfully for years with one pre-breeding setup cost. If the number of breeding was fewer, the cost of each pup would have been even higher, much higher actually. Please examine her report.

Please note again what she said; when she wanted to refer to top quality **GREAT** Great Danes. Clearly the reference to the Nanaimo Canada breeder is us

since there are no other Great Dane breeders not only in Nanaimo, but in that entire Island region. [Here is her report:](#)

A woman emailed me asking if I could sell her a pup for \$700 as this is all she can afford. Besides the fact that she can't afford to raise a Dane and shouldn't have one, I was so frustrated with the lack of understanding by some people who think that you would just get a male and female, they breed and you get a litter to sell and make money. Little do they know how ignorant they are, I couldn't resist grab a pen & paper and my Danes expense folder and calculate the breeding expenses.

Another email asked me, why do I charge \$6000 .. \$7000 and even \$8000 for a pup when you can get a top quality pup for \$2000 - \$3000

Well, again, the expense sheet speaks for itself. **Besides, what top quality Danes was that guy talking about and where did he see them? Let me tell you that there are only 5 breeders who have the Danes quality we do! Only five .. one in Stuttgart, Germany, one in Southern Hungary, one in New York, one in Nanaimo, Canada and the last one is an African-French line developed by a new breeder in Egypt.**

All the rest, and I have seen them all, are from just good (very few) to terrible (many) ..

Well, my accounting background will come in handy now as attempt to show why I charge \$5000 to \$7000 for a pup:

A) Basic costs – purchasing and raising the 2 parents to age 2 years:

1- Sire: \$4,600 + \$375 shipping + \$380 ears cropping + \$178 customs = \$5533

2- Dam: \$3,800 + \$375 shipping + \$380 ears cropping + \$178 customs = \$4733

We also signed to give breeders a pup from each of the first 3 breedings. That's why we paid under \$5000 for the stud (pup) and under \$4000 for the female pup.

3- Vaccinations "and associated automatic vet exams": (\$90+\$65+\$77+\$40+\$110) X 2 parents X 2 years. That's \$382 a year per dog = \$1528 for the 2 dogs in 2 years.

4- Medications during the first 2 years, such as de-worming, multi vitamins & minerals and 4- Other preventative items: \$28 monthly X 24 X 2 = \$336 a year per dog or \$1344 for both dogs in 2 years. (one third of this cost is taken into account below to present an average per breeding).

5- National Kennel Club registration: \$80 X2 (both parents) = \$160

6- Pedigree certificates: \$75 X2 = \$150

7- Municipal registration: \$40 X2 X2 = \$160

8- Micro-Chip ID surgery: \$120 X2 = \$240

9- Champion certification costs: $(\$120 \times \text{average 9 shows} \times 2 \text{ parents}) + (\$110 \times 9 \text{ handling} \times 2) + (\text{average } \$180 \text{ travel} \times 9) + \text{average } \$90 \text{ associated costs} \times 9$. If you did the math here, you're probably now surprised to see that getting the 2 championship titles costs \$3285 per dog, yes, \$6570 for both dogs over the 19 months it took.

10- food during the first 2 years, per dog: daily average: \$3 goat milk, \$4 raw meat, \$4 quality dog food = \$330 monthly per dog $\times 2 \text{ parents} \times 24 \text{ months}$, that's \$3960 a year per dog or \$7440 each dog in 2 years. I am sure not in her wildest dreams she thought we would be spending \$14,880 on both dogs in 2 years. And that doesn't even include the dogs recreational costs such as chewing toys and stuffed toys .. etc. Surely we're blessed financially, but even if you are not rich, you would have to be prepared for I would say a low average of \$4 a day feeding cost, \$120 a month, \$1440 a year. Even if you get the bargains here and there, get free or cheap raw meat scraps (careful with fat content) and even keep it to \$2 a dog daily, \$60 a month (I don't know how, but I was told is done), still, \$720 a year just basic food. Surely a Dane is not for a struggling person on assistance.

11- Average vet – maintenance & checkup: $3 \text{ visits annually} \times \$180 \times 2 \text{ parents} \times 2 \text{ years} = \$540 \text{ a year per dog} = \$2160 \text{ for both dogs in 2 years.}$

12- cost of occasional hired help & dog sitting & boarding: $\$210 \times 4 \times 2 \text{ parents} \times 2 \text{ years}$; \$840 a year per dog, it isn't cheap! \$4460 in 2 years for both dogs.

Ideally, if we were to talk strictly business, one should include the breeder's time every time he or she has to take the dog to the vet and the incredible amount of time and business time lost taken away by the dogs & pups need. **We did not take that into account** because even at minimum wage rate it would add up to thousands of dollars.

And, truly this is not an inflated or exaggerated list at all. Are you ready?! well, the total cost of raising the sire & dam to age 2 when they can be bred for the first time is:

\$ 8619 per each breeding dog annually = \$34478 for both the sire & dam in the 1st 2 years when they are ready for 1st breeding, and that doesn't include the high cost of each the actual breeding. Read on please!

Now keep in mind that the dam is bred from age 2 to age 5 years old. With average cycle every 8 months and taking into account 2 months pregnancy, plus the fact that you cannot breed the female every time (every year) = actual number of total breeding = 4 times maximum (that's if everything works perfect).

Taking the total cost of purchasing & raising the 2 parents to age 2 as explained above, dividing it over 4 breedings = \$8619 cost per each breeding. If we say that the average (blessed or lucky) breeding brings 7 healthy pups, **the cost of each pup so far before taking into account the breeding itself (and more as explained below) to \$1,231 cost per pup just up to this point ("A" only).**

Now you go over the expenses above, reduce and cut as you think it can be done, then show me how you can bring it under \$700 cost per pup just up to this point only.

B) Now the cost of pre-breeding setup (once, not annual):

- 13- whelping room can cost anywhere from a few hundreds to a few thousands. The cheapest setup is in the \$800 average if you have an area in a basement of an extra room to dedicate it to that purpose. You'll need special floor setup area with drainage, special heat lams setup, insulation, security, temperature control and monitoring system and fencing.
- 14- gram-accurate scale: \$125
- 15- lb accurate scale: \$90
- 16- equipment-general (scissors, pup feeding tubes, bottles, whelping box, anal thermometer and several other items: \$120
- 17- at age 2 years: each dog: hips x-ray:\$ 575 heart ultra-sound cardiac test: \$620 thyroid tests, gastric torsion, dilated cardiomyopathy DCM, tricuspid valve dysplasia TVF, CERF eye clearance, osteochondrosis dessicans (elbow), patellar luxation (knees), hypothyroidism and hip dysplasia certification = over \$1850 per dog (required once prior to breeding).

Total "B" = \$2985

- C) **Costs repeated annually:** #7, 10, 11,12 and 1/4th of #3 under "A" (\$40 local regist. + \$3960 food + 840 general/help + \$590 vacc & vet general= total annual per dog: \$5430 X 2 parents X 5 years of breeding gap = average breeding cost per pup (based on 4 breeding X 7 pups each)

= \$1939 per pup under this "C" category only.

D) Then the cost of each breeding (repeated every breeding):

- 18- medication purchased prior to whelping and for pups treatments at birth: \$310
- 19- blood analysis female pregnancy exam: \$320
- 20- ultra sound, female pregnancy exam: \$560
- 21- X-ray female pregnancy exam: \$580
- 22- whelping disposable equipment: \$110
- 23- 6 weeks sanitary supplies: \$24 per week X 6 = \$144
- 24- advertisements: web site: \$170 annual hosting + building & maintenance; \$180 district newspapers, \$230 national papers, \$105 kennel club, \$140 puppies sales sites = \$825 per breeding (and still, I know someone who sells cheap pups and still ended up stuck with 5 pups he couldn't sell).

- 25- Puppies diet during the first 8 weeks: daily, \$3 goat milk, \$2 ground beef, \$1 cheese & \$1 yogurt, special puppy dog formula & food \$2 = \$9 a pup daily = \$504 per pup in 8 weeks X average 7 pups.
- 26- De-worming twice, and one vet exam: \$65+\$18 per pup = \$83 per pup X 7
- 27- Vaccination (and vet exam charges): \$75 + 90 + \$45 = \$169 per pup
- 28- 4 days of 24 hours supervision and assistance (in nature, without it, the average survival is 2 pups per litter): 24 X 4 X \$7 = \$672 help per litter = \$96 cost per pup
- 29- part-time help for 3 weeks after: 3 wks X 7 days X 10 hrs X \$7 = additional \$210 cost per pup.
- 30- additional puppy-needed power/energy cost for 8 weeks 24 hrs/day: \$4 X 8 wks X 7 dys = \$224 = \$32 cost per pup

Total “D”: \$9917 = \$1416 per pup

E) Other / Additional costs:

- 31- shipping crate: \$145
- 32- shipping cost average \$280 inter-district
- 33- pup registrations: \$80 + \$45 + \$28
- 34- pup micro chip ID or tattoo: \$90
- 35- pup ears cropping: \$380 + \$120 associated treatments & exams.

Total “E” = \$1168 per pup

Now, the total “total” cost per pup (average throughout the parents’ active life)

“A”: the cost of the 2 parents raised to age 2 years, divided by average 4 breedings, with the hope that each breeding will be successful and will bring us 7 healthy pups = \$1231

“B”: breeding set-up; one time cost divided by 4 breedings divided by 7 pups each breeding = \$106 per pup

“C”: annual – continuous life time costs: \$1939 per pup

“D”: each breeding: \$1416 per pup

“E”: additional costs: \$1168 per pup

Total cost per pup (A+B+C+D+E): \$5860 per pup

.. and keep in mind that we didn’t treat it as a typical business by not taking into account:
 - the cost of personal time put into it.

- the possible or even often trouble during pregnancy which is very costly. One pregnancy, in its last 2 weeks involved a total of \$4600 vet bills.
- The fact that 7 healthy pups every breeding can be on the optimistic side.

In reality, that \$6000 pup cost can be well over \$7500 a pup. Now you tell me, without compromising the quality pup care, what would you do differently to reduce the cost per pup?

End of her report.

Our note:

Very briefly, how we can sell out quality pups for much less than hers?

Here are key cost areas by comparison:

- 1- the cost of the sire & dame, purchase, care and feeding is not included in our calculation. It is considered our pleasure, they are out pets anyway, and the pups are a bonus.
- 2- The cost of kennel club registration per pup is not included and is to be done by the new owner if he/she will be showing or breeding the pup.
- 3- Pedigree certificate, no costs. Copies of both parents' are given.
- 4- Micro-chip ID cost not included. Needed only if the pup will be shown/bred (for CKC papers).
- 5- The cost of breeding that she classified it under section "D" to be \$1400 a pup, is in our case \$375. We did not claim or include expenses that could be included if we were to look at breeding as a mere business project. It isn't, not for us.
- 6- Advertisement costs: \$50 per pup only
- 7- Pup food for 10 weeks: daily: \$1.5 goat milk, \$1 yogurt, \$1.50 dog food, \$1 raw ground beef= \$5 daily X 7 X 10 = \$350 per pup
- 8- Vaccinations, supplements, de-worming and vet exams: \$185
- 9- Shipping and ears cropping are not included in our price.
- 10- The cost of hired help is not included. It takes sleepless nights for 2 or 3 weeks by myself and my son.

As a result, a quick scan would show a cost of \$960 per pup. In reality, it can be between \$1250 to \$1800 taking into account a few other minor expenses that add up; but it can also be as low as \$800 to \$900 (again, not taking into account personal time and a few other related expenses, and as indicated, that's not taking into account the purchase price of the sire and dam and the on-going costs of raising and caring for the parents, which may be should be included, but would raise the actual cost per pup considerably).

Perhaps now you can understand why we can't do it for less and that really, there is no money in breeding.

We sell the average pup for \$1500 as pet, no showing or breeding CKC papers. For showing and/or breeding, the pup price basically more than doubles to about \$3500.

You can go to the puppies page and click on the "puppy sales contract" link on the left and read clause 5 (5-e is likely what you need).