

The Dogue de Bordeaux (DDB or French Mastiff) is an outstanding companion and is a guardian breed, but ownership of a DDB carries much greater than average legal and moral responsibilities, due to traits possessed by this breed, their size and strength. The information in this FAQ is offered as a guide to prospective DDB owners who may or may not be aware of all the special qualities possessed by this breed, both positive and negative, so that they can make an accurate estimate of their needs in relation to the demands of DDB ownership. The DDB IS NOT a breed that fits into every home.

Your first consideration in buying a DDB should be the knowledge that for the next eight or more years that dog will be a part of your household. Unlike your automobile, you can not trade in your Bordeaux for a newer model. As a companion to your whole family, your French Mastiff will reflect the love and affection you show him. He will represent an emotional investment, not just a financial investment. Therefore, choose him carefully. Know as much as possible about the breed and his breeder before you buy. Deal only with a reputable breeder!

Is a DDB the right dog for me?

The DDB is growing in popularity. Don't be swept up by the fact that your neighbor, aunt, sister, or best friend has one. This is a large, powerful dog and along with ownership comes much responsibility. DDB require extensive socialization from an early age. Are you willing to carry your puppy for several months, (he shouldn't be walking in public places until he is fully immunized at around 16-20 weeks), exposing him to the sights, sounds and people he will encounter as an adult? Because of their size and strength, obedience training for your is a must. A weekly group class for 6 to 12 months is generally considered a minimum. DDB are "people" dogs and need to live in the house with their family, not just be thrown out in the backyard to stay.

They want to be with their masters. As a working breed, the DDB requires daily exercise, a good walk twice a day at least. Left alone without interaction from their family they can become overweight and possibly destructive.

How are they with children?

A properly bred DDB who receives adequate socialization and training will generally get along fine with children, but tolerance will vary from dog to dog. He must be taught early on what is acceptable behavior and what is not, as should the child. Because of their large size DDB should always be supervised around children. A minor "bump" can cause serious injury to a small child. Also, some DDB have a high degree of "prey" drive (the instinct to chase moving objects), therefore should never be left alone with children, who naturally will want to run and play. Some breeders recommend waiting until the children are at least school age before introducing a DDB into the home. The amount of space in your home, the age of your children and the amount of time the dog will be in contact with the children should be part of your decision.

Are they vicious?

A properly bred, socialized and trained French Mastiff should not inherently vicious. The rapid rise in popularity of the breed has attracted many irresponsible breeders who are only interested in making a profit, and don't care what damage is done to the breed in the process. so are not breeding for proper temperament.

Are they good with other pets?

Problems should be minimal when a DDB is raised from puppyhood with other pets, but that is no guarantee. This breed can be dog aggressive and may only show this after fully mature. Introducing a new pet when there is an adult DDB in the household should be done slowly and with care. Dog to dog aggression is influenced by the early socialization of puppies, their bloodlines and sex; males are less tolerant of other males than they are of females. Bitches may also be intolerant of other dogs. The DDB is intelligent and trainable, but some may not live peacefully with other animals. This is not to say that they can not be trained to have manners around other animals when going for a walk on leash or say at the vets.

What kind of training do they require?

It is very necessary to establish your control of the animal and obedience training is often the easiest and most rewarding way to do so. Your breeder should be able to provide you with guidance in the selection of a training class, however, avoid the very rough trainer, no matter how highly recommended. DDB can often be controlled using verbal reprimands alone, and while they occasionally require physical corrections (collar correction), some trainers tend to be much rougher on large breed dogs than is necessary. Women have been very successful with the dogs in obedience training. Physical mastery of the dog is generally less important than sensitive, patient and positive training methods. Patience is an important factor in training a DDB.

What about discipline?

The DDB is a sensitive, intelligent and loyal animal and usually wants to please its owner. Occasionally, it can be quite stubborn though, and requires more attention. It is imperative that training is consistent and firm without being overly rough. Ownership isn't for the timid or very busy person who cannot or is not inclined towards careful supervision of his/her pet and willing to spend the time to train and exercise.

Do they require much exercise?

The yard is essential if a puppy or young dog is being acquired; it will help to keep the dog exercised and reduce boredom which in turn may prevent destructive behavior. If you don't have the space, consider a smaller breed. Personal commitment on the part of the owner is the most important thing. People willing to walk their dog on a regular basis will find a more personal and bonding relationship developing than just letting them run by themselves in the yard. Your DDB will require a minimum of two good walks each day (10 to 20 minutes each). Adequate exercise is necessary to maintain the good health of your DDB, as they can gain weight without proper exercise.

Do they drool a lot?

Yes, they do drool, but not like in the movie *Turner & Hooch*. If you are a neat freak this is probably not the breed for you.

Do they shed?

They do shed, but being a short coated breed it can be kept to a minimum with proper brushing and diet.

Are they noisy?

DDB will bark to announce the arrival of people on the property, and maybe at animals and birds in the yard, but they generally don't bark without reason or in excess.

Which sex makes the best pet?

Opinions vary on this topic. Most breeders would generally recommend a female, especially for first-time owners. Females are smaller, easier to control and somewhat less dominant. Males are stronger, more powerful and dominant, and therefore can be somewhat harder to train and control.

Where should I buy my puppy?

There are various places where you may acquire a DDB puppy, but only ONE place where you should - from a responsible breeder. Pet shops acquire their puppies from puppy mills, brokers and back-yard breeders. Their puppies are separated from their dams and litters at too early an age, they are not properly socialized and may well develop serious health problems.

Puppy mills, brokers and back-yard breeders have only one priority - to make a profit. They are not interested in the welfare of the puppies they breed. Beware of pet shops that advertise "we get our puppies from private breeders." No responsible breeder would ever broker puppies to a pet shop. Don't perpetuate the puppy mill problem - steer clear of pet shops.

How much can I expect to pay for a DDB puppy?

Show quality puppies will generally sell for \$1,500 to \$2,500, with pet prices being less and on a spay/neuter contract. This will depend on the bloodlines and health clearances.

Adoption of a rescue dog-

If you are not set that you have to have a puppy, there are wonderful dogs in our breed rescue program that need homes. These dogs have been brought into the program for many different reasons and make great family companions.

Resources -

Dogue de Bordeaux Society www.ddbs.org