African Boerboel Dog Breed

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Rattings :

Ease of Training
7/10

Intelligence
8/10

Shedding
1/10

Watchdog
9/10

Guard Dog
9/10

Popularity
1/10

Size
10/10

Agility
7/10

Good with Kids
10/10

Attributes

Life Expectancy
12-15 years

Litter Size
7-12 puppies per litter

Group
Miscellaneous Class

Color
reddish brown, cream, all shades of brindle, tawny with or without a black mask with some white on chest acceptable.

Hair Length
Short

Shedding
Moderate Shed

Size
Extra Large : **Male Height:** 25-28 inches (64-70 cm) **Male Weight:** 154-200 pounds (70 and 90 kg) **Female Height:** 23-25.5 inches (59-65 cm) **Female Weight:** 154-200 pounds (70 and 90 kg)

Required Living Area
The African Boerboel does best with a large fenced yard and room to move and exercise.

Breed Details

Overview
The African Boerboel is a very large, muscular and impressive looking breed. They are often confused for a cross between a Mastiff and a Bulldog, however they are a unique breed that has been developed in Africa as a protection and working dog. In this breed males are distinctly masculine in appearance as the females are smaller, slighter and should be definitely female in all aspects. The African Boerboel is very distinctive in appearance. The head is very square in shape with a short, thick muzzle and wide massive head. The skull is somewhat flat between the high set ears and there is a stop that is noticeable but not sharp. The ears are triangular and folded, held very close to the head. The eyes are horizontal in orientation and can be any color of brown that is in keeping with the coat color. The skin around the eyes

should be dark regardless of the eye color. The area between the eyes is well filled and solid in appearance, as are the noticeable cheeks. The dogs may or may not have a black mask that covers the muzzle and the top lip. The top lip is somewhat fleshy and thick in appearance but should not hang down over the lower jaw. The nose is black with well developed nostrils. The head is one of the most distinguishing of the African Boerboel breed. The neck of the African Boerboel is arched and muscular, adding to the breed's appearance of strength and protection. The shoulders of the dog are very well developed and strong, with the neck positioned high on the shoulders. The chest is deep and broad, flowing into a well developed rib cage and a sturdy, yet not chunky or disproportionately heavy looking body. The front legs are completely straight when viewed from the side or the front and end in thick padded, ball-shaped feet. The top line is very straight without any noticeable sloping. The back is moderately long but balanced in appearance. The hindquarters are slightly sloping towards the high set tail. The tail is traditionally docked to the first three joints, but may also be left long and natural, in which case it curves up at the hock. The back legs are incredibly powerful with heavy muscling that is common in the Mastiff breeds. The legs should be well bent and carried under the hindquarters and unlike the front legs they should not be straight. The African Boerboel should move with purpose and a "buoyant" step. They have a fluid and athletic gait, not a heavy or shuffling gait. Their joints are well developed and not loose or bulky. They do not have the heavy wrinkles or deep folds of skin seen on many of the Mastiff breeds, however there will be slight wrinkling of the thick skin on the brow.

History

The African Boerboel has developed from several different breeds being crossed with the large Molusses type dogs brought by the Dutch throughout different areas in Africa. The original breed of dog brought to the Cape of Africa by Jan van Riebeeck in 1652 was known as a bullenbijter, and is considered to be a Mastiff type dog although not as large as some of the Mastiffs now seen. This dog then bred with the local dogs, producing several different types of hardy and strong dogs that virtually had to survive on their own. In 1820 when the English came to Africa they also brought large, mastiff type dogs as well as bulldogs. These dogs were bred with the already existing mastiff types. It is known that De Beers mining company brought champion line Mastiffs to Africa to work as guard dogs in the diamond mines, and they were crossed with the best of the local breeds. The English Bulldog and Bull Mastiff are considered key bloodlines in the development of the breed. Currently the African Boerboel is bred worldwide. They have to pass health tests as well as be vet checked before they can be registered with the South African Boerboel Breeders Association. This Association was formed in the 1980s to prevent the continued crossbreeding of the African Boerboel that was resulting in a decrease in the number of actual African Boerboels, even in Africa.

Character

The African Boerboel is a bit of a study in opposites. As a fierce and loyal watchdog they will bark and loudly announce strangers and strange animals in the area, however they will quickly learn who is friend and welcome them into the house when they have been introduced. The African Boerboel is also a guard dog, using their size and strength to defend their property and family with as much aggression and physical action as required. They are very protective of their yard and house and care must be taken to keep these dogs securely in a fence, as they will expand their area to protect should they get out of the fence or yard. The African Boerboel is a very loving family dog. They absolutely enjoy spending time with the family. Despite their aggression towards strangers the African Boerboel will play and romp with everyone in the family and are especially good with children. They are very tolerant of even rough play with kids and their large size makes them great companions for kids of all ages. The African Boerboel is exceptionally gentle with younger children although as with all dogs young kids should never be left alone unsupervised. They also tend to be very accepting of other pets including dogs, cats and even other small pets and livestock. Proper socialization is key for these dogs to help them learn how to differentiate between potential dangers and friendly visitors. The African Boerboel will typically be somewhat standoffish with new people, at least until they learn that they are to be considered a "friend". This is very important if the dogs need to be cared for if the family has to leave or if they have to be kenneled. Ensure that this breed has time to get to know their caregiver before leaving them with someone other than a family member.

Health Care

The African Boerboel is a very healthy breed due to the selective Breeding of the original dogs in Africa. In addition the African Boerboel has largely had to survive as a breed without veterinary care or specialized treatments, providing a sort of natural selection process. There are two different conditions that may be problematic in the breed although they are not fatal. The first condition occurs only in females and is VH or vaginal hyperplasia. This condition is genetic and occurs in different grades or levels of severity. Any female with abnormal tissue development of the vaginal area should not be used in breeding programs. The second genetic condition that is found in the breed is common in most dog breeds and is found in both males and females. Canine hip dysplasia or CHD as well as elbow dysplasia can be checked by vet examination and should be completed before the dog is used in a breeding program.

Grooming

The short, dense and thick coat of the African Boerboel is easy to care for. They can be groomed once or twice a week using a heavy pin brush or stiff bristle brush. Regular grooming both removes dead hair from the coat as well as massages the skin, allowing for increased circulation. The coat can also be groomed using a grooming mitt that is easy for

even kids to use to help with the grooming routine. During the grooming routine the African Boerboel should be carefully checked for any signs of fleas or ticks should they be present in the area. Fleas are often first noted by small, dried blood flecks in the coat next to the skin that are known as "flea dirt". The owner may also notice the dog licking, scratching or rubbing at the coat. Ticks are blood-sucking insects that will attach themselves to the skin of the dog, usually in areas such as the inner legs, ears and around the lower jaw. Fleas can be treated with monthly topical applications, flea powders and flea collars and ticks can be removed with the fingers or with tick pullers, similar in appearance to tweezers. The African Boerboel can also benefit from routine dental care. Just like with humans, tartar and plaque can build up on a dog's teeth, resulting in early tooth loss, bad breath and even infections in the mouth. Brushing the African Boerboel's teeth using a finger sleeve or specially designed dog toothbrush as well as dog toothpaste will help minimize tooth decay and prevent the need for costly tooth de-scaling procedures. Bathing the African Boerboel can be done whenever necessary using dog quality shampoo and following with a conditioner. Avoid over bathing as this can cause the hair to dry out and the skin to become dry and flaky. Some African Boerboel may also have an allergic reaction to some shampoos and conditioners, even specialized dog products. In these cases an oatmeal shampoo may help soothe and clean the skin without any irritation. The nails of the African Boerboel are very hard and durable and with regular exercising on hard surface the nails should stay trimmed naturally. If they need trimming a set of slotted scissor style trimmers or guillotine style trimmers are the most effective. Avoid using any type of human nail clippers as this can cause the nails to shatter and splinter.

Training

The African Boerboel is an intelligent dog that is very eager to work with the owner. They do have the tendency to try to dominate the owner until a hierarchy is developed. These dogs must learn as puppies that the owner is the boss, rather than allowing the dog to think that they are making the decisions about what he or she will do. This does not mean that the owner has to be mean or harsh with the puppy, rather they need to be firm and consistent and prevent the dog from developing any bad habits such as ignoring commands or "doing their own thing". The sheer size and weight of the African Boerboel combined with its natural protectiveness and guard dog tendencies means that the African Boerboel must be under control at all times. An untrained or poorly trained African Boerboel is a potentially dangerous animal if it ever gets out of the yard or fenced area. Obedience training is recommended at a very early age and socialization should be a key component of the training. Since this breed is a large dog and does have a tendency to be dominant it is not recommended as a first dog for a family. If you do not have experience in working with dominant types of dogs a African Boerboel from a rescue that is already trained and socialized may be a great option rather than trying to train and manage a puppy through the difficult teen years. The African Boerboel is not typically a problem barker. They can tolerate being in a kennel for short periods of time but may become prone to chewing, barking or digging if confined in a small space for long periods of time. The African Boerboel does best in training with a combination of exercise and training rather than just set training times. Allowing for play time and fun time during training helps with the bonding process as well as allows the dog to break the focus into shorter, more concentrated times.

Activity and Exercise

The African Boerboel, despite its large size, doesn't require a great deal of specialized exercise. They are good at exercising themselves if they have a large, fenced yard as they will patrol the area, ensuring that everything is safe. They play and interact with other dogs that are companions, providing additional exercise without any effort on the part of the owner. The African Boerboel is a great walking and jogging companion. They love to go with family members and are typically well behaved when out of the yard provided they are properly trained and socialized. As with all large breeds, especially those that are protective, it is very important to ensure that the dog is completely under control at all times. They can be intimidating but their calm behavior once people get to know them will quickly put people at ease. A favorite pastime of the African Boerboel is fetching and playing with the kids or adults in the household. They love to spend long periods of time chasing a ball or stick and bringing it back. A naturally affectionate dog the African Boerboel is usually willing to do whatever the family enjoys providing the dog is involved. They do travel well although they do take up a large area of a vehicle. As African Boerboel mature they become less active overall, so it is important to ensure that they receive structured, regular exercise is the owner notices they are staying inactive outdoors or are gaining weight without any changes in food or feeding habits. Regular exercise will help the African Boerboel lead a healthy and happy life.