

BULL MASTIFF

ORIGINS:

Their history dates back to the 1860's when the breed was developed in England to serve as a companion and estate guard dog. Their purpose was to discourage the common practice of poaching on the numerous large English Estates. Their strength and apparent ferocity proved very successful in combating the poacher problem. Referred to as "the gamekeeper's night dog", the Bullmastiff would intercept poachers and their very strength and weight would hold the intruder down on the ground until their master arrived on the scene. This is an important point for fanciers to remember. Do remember that the breed standard calls for "a symmetrical animal, showing great strength, powerfully built, but active. The dog is fearless yet docile, has endurance and alertness".

Bullmastiffs are a man-made breed comprising of 60% Mastiff and 40% Bulldog (old style). The original colour of the Bullmastiff was brindle so as to blend with its background therefore making it undetectable to the poachers. The fawn colour appeared as more fawn mastiffs were introduced, and it is believed that the red came from the 'secret' interbreeding of the Dogue de Bordeaux. (extracts from *The Bullmastiff Fancier's Manual* by Bill Walkey)

Recommended Literature:

- The Bullmastiff Fancier's Book (Hard Cover) – Bill Walkey
- The Bullmastiff Today – Lyn Pratt
- The Mastiff Bullmastiff Handbook – Douglas Oliff
- Bullmastiff – Clifford Hubbard
- The Bullmastiff Fancier's Manual – Bill Walkey
- Peerless Protector – Jack Shastid, Geraldine Roach
- Bullmastiffs – Alan & Mave Rostron

GENERAL APPEARANCE:



The Bullmastiff typically has a powerful build, symmetrical, showing great strength, sound and active. A well socialised animal will be high spirited, alert and faithful. They will however, be wary and cautious of strangers or strange situations.

A hallmark of the Breed is its head. The skull is large and square. It should have a definite stop between its eyes its muzzle should be short and broad (see photo below). They should always have what is known as 'A Mask'. This is a black muzzle, black triangles around the eyes and black to darker than coat colour ears.



**Bullmastiff Bitch
fawn in colour**



**Male Bullmastiff,
Red in Colour**



**Bullmastiff Bitch,
brindle in colour, small
white mark on chest
evident.**

The breed comes in 'Three Colours Only', which comprise of any shade of Brindle, Fawn and Red. A small white mark on the chest may be evident but no other white should appear on them. The coat should be short not wavy, curly or long.

The Bullmastiff bitch is much smaller than its male counterpart. The Bullmastiff can measure between 25 – 27 inches (63 – 68cm) to the shoulder and weigh in between 110 – 150lbs (50 – 70kgs).

All Bullmastiffs have long tails, however there are some that may have been born with a genetic defect and possess what is known as a 'Crank' tail, which can appear to be a bend or twist in the tail, not unlike a British Bulldog tail. It may also be significantly shorter in appearance as well.

VARIATIONS IN TYPE

As the Bullmastiff was only developed in the 1860s it is still regarded as a relatively young breed, therefore variations in type do occur.

The main variation occurs with the head structure. There can be some longer muzzles and the overall shape can appear more wedge shaped rather than a square on a square.

Below are a few photos of Bullmastiffs with the longer muzzles and some with a less pronounced stop, however, they should still possess the black around the muzzle and eyes to varying degrees.



These photos are of puppies displaying a longer muzzle.

BULLMASTIFFS ARE CLASSED AS A GIANT BREED

Average heights
Males – 25 to 27 inches (to the withers / top of shoulder)

Females – 24 to 26 inches (to the withers / top of shoulder)

- Average weights of the Bullmastiff
Males – 50kgs to 60kgs (but can go up to 70kgs)
Females – 40kgs to 50kgs (but can go up to 60kgs)
- White markings – minimal, on chest or toes no where else
- Distinguishing Features –

Black muzzle, black diamonds around eyes (intensity of colour and coverage can vary);

Ear colour can be one or two shades darker than coat colour right up to being black;

Three coat colours varying intensities of red, fawn and brindle ONLY

Predominately short muzzle (however as listed before, some muzzle lengths can vary and be longer giving a wedge shape appearance rather than a square appearance)

• Appearance of tail – tail is long to the hock (ankle on back leg) slight variation can occur with the tail slightly shorter. The tail should not be docked (unless there was a birth defect or injury which may result in surgical amputation of a portion of the tail)

The height of the Bullmastiff varies between dog and bitch. Here is a large male Bullmastiff next to his female owner. The owner is 5'2" tall the dog measured 26 1/2 " to the top of the shoulder and he weighed in at 70kgs.



One other point to remember is that pure bred Bullmastiffs might have small to large splashes of white on their chests or a white toe but they do not have white anywhere else on their bodies.

It can be difficult for non Bullmastiff enthusiasts to identify a pure bred Bullmastiff. Often the unsuspecting dog purchaser has seen a litter advertised in a paper or on the net saying that the pups are Bullmastiffs or Bullmastiff crosses. There are unscrupulous folk that will misrepresent what an actual pup or dog is made up of just to make a sale and tout to the purchaser that they are a particular breed or a cross of that breed just to get the bucks.

There are also those that we term as 'Back Yard Breeders' who are usually not registered with a pure bred dogs State body) and who may or may not have started with a pure controlling bred Bullmastiff and crossed it with other breeds, then sell them as purebred or only refer to them as Bullmastiff Crosses, never divulging what the other components may be to the unsuspecting buyers.

If you use our photo guides as reference or visit our club web page at <http://www.bullmastiffclubofnsw.com.au/> you will be able to see many photos of purebred Bullmastiffs that may assist you with any identification.

If you decide to look at Bullmastiffs as your dog of choice to join your family and you respond to someone advertising Bullmastiffs for sale remember this, if it doesn't resemble the photos either in this document or on that web site, then we recommend that you don't purchase that animal as it could be a 'DOG OF UNKNOWN PARENTAGE' or a 'CROSS BREED'.

Ask to see the parents, as it's not only the look of the animals that is paramount it is also of utmost importance that they display a stable temperament.

Bullmastiff breeders who have been involved for a number of years understand and appreciate the difficulty that can come when people not familiar with the breed are told that a particular dog or pups are Bullmastiffs. You need to be 100% sure that the dog or pups you are looking at are pure bred. The best way to be assured of this is to buy from reputable breeders who are registered members of their state canine control council, as these breeders have a code of ethics that they are required to follow and they will be able to produce paperwork showing you that the dogs / pups are indeed pure bred Bullmastiffs.

Misidentification of the Bullmastiff can lead to a misrepresentation of what the breed is actually like, can often give the breed a bad and unwarranted reputation, and with the touting of 'Breed Specific Legislation', could cause the Bullmastiff to be placed on a dangerous dog list or be banned without fare or due consideration.

The Bullmastiff Club of NSW Inc and their sister clubs in all States of Australia are actively trying to educate those in the community interested in the Bullmastiff by providing correct and concise information on our breed.

*Here is a contact name and number that you can call at any time if you indeed have any questions relating to the breed.
The Bullmastiff Club of NSW Inc Club Secretary
Mr Phil Brown, 02 9569 3101 neokarma@bigpond.net.au*