

# The DOGUE DE BORDEAUX

**A.1.** I think the DDB breed standard is one of the most detailed standards across all of the breeds. However, given its complexity, mostly relating to the head, it is somewhat long and can take a considerable length of time for a breeder to fully understand. There is even a 32 page commentary to the standard written by Prof. Raymond Triquet (in the Saga of the Dogue De Bordeaux) to explain it further. In spite of the level of detail given within it, I still see breeders trying to "mould" the standard to fit their dogs rather than accepting what is not perfect and mould their dogs through diligent breeding to become more closely aligned with the standard.

**A.2.** The Dogue should 'trot' which is the preferred gait. Within this gait there should be good reach of the forelegs (not high, but far-reaching) with a great deal of drive coming from the rear (hindquarters). As the Dogue gets comfortable in his gait, you should see the head drop with the topline inclining towards the front, and the front feet moving towards the median plane. Single tracking is acceptable as the trot quickens, but crossing over in the front or the rear is not. Adult Dogues who appear to be trotting with their front end and cantering with their rear end should be penalised as the drive from the rear is defective.

It a text written by the author of the breed standard Prof. Raymond Triquet, he uses equine to describe a Dogue; "the Dogue is a plough horse, NOT a thoroughbred".

It would be wonderful to see judges request of exhibitors to show their Dogues as per the breed standard. It is quite unnatural for the Dogue to trot quickly with his head held high in the air as some other more 'graceful, elegant' breeds do such as the Afghan Hound.

**A.3.a.** The main health problems are hip dysplasia and elbow dysplasia. Other problems noted in the breed which should be monitored are heart, skin and eye problems. The Australian breeders are in a fairly good position (health-wise) compared to the rest of the world, as the earliest fanciers of the breed here were diligent in their health testing and for the most part, poor breeding stock was eliminated. Obviously with popularity, it is emerging there is less control in this area. Thankfully, there are breeders who research their lines well before importing, on the flip side of that there are also dogs imported who would have been best left in their country of origin.

**A.3.b.** On the topic of construction/conformation, there are only a small number of breeders who really seem to be paying attention to the overall conformation, balance and harmony of the Dogue. This is aided by awarding

Dogues with obvious faults in construction which is evident in movement as well. The Dogue should have a "well-angulated" rear, this is often replaced with Dogues who show stilted movement coming from straight rears without any drive, essentially they move around the ring on their fronts.

Toplines are another area of confusion in our breed. The topline should be as straight as possible with a 'very slight' rise towards the croup. Whilst puppies tend to show 'bum over shoulders' when stacked, it should even out in maturity as the growth plates fuse and muscles and ligaments strengthen. Females may lose strength in their toplines following multiple litters, but I do not accord any excuse to males with weak toplines.

The correct head for a Dogue is possibly one of the biggest areas of confusion for breeders and judges alike. An article has been dedicated to this subject matter within this breed feature to try and help everyone gain a better understanding. Some breeders are tackling the head very well, and others do not seem to apportion any importance to it!

I would like to see judges be bold and take a tougher stand on nil awarding Dogues they feel are not meeting the standard adequately. There are too many champions out there who cannot move correctly, have poor construction and even lack breed type.

**A.4.** Given the standard is so detailed on the head, most of the points should appear there for me, whilst remembering a dog cannot move around the ring on its head!

There must be a trapezoid shape, a visible chin, to have this the Dogue must also have a good degree of undershot (upper and lower incisors must have no physical contact) with curve of the underjaw (rependous). A strong stop, well defined and a broad muzzle. Body type is also very important and movement cannot be left off so mine is 6 points and not 5.

1. Trapezoid head shape
2. Undershot, chin mark, repandous
3. Well defined stop
4. Broad muzzle
5. Body type
6. Movement

**A.5.** Many judges seem to struggle with correct head type and thus pick what I as a breeder term an "All Breeds" Dogue versus a "Breed Specialist" Dogue. All Breeds judges tend to select Dogues with flatter underjaws, less undershot, and movement which is too showy for the Dogue (or not at all, stilted) and not exhibiting the required reach and drive. A breed specialist will always delight to see there is trapezoid shape, good chin mark and curved underjaw. A breed specialist will select

## We asked Breeders

**Q.1.** Do you think the Dogue De Bordeaux standard is detailed enough?

**Q.2.** How would you describe, in your own words, the movement of the Dogue De Bordeaux ?

**Q.3.** What are the main problems in the breed currently in A) Health and B) Conformation and are they being addressed ?

**Q.4.** Can you list five important points (breed hallmarks) that judges should look for, and list your order of priority?

**Q.5.** What is the most common mistake made by Judges when judging the breed ?

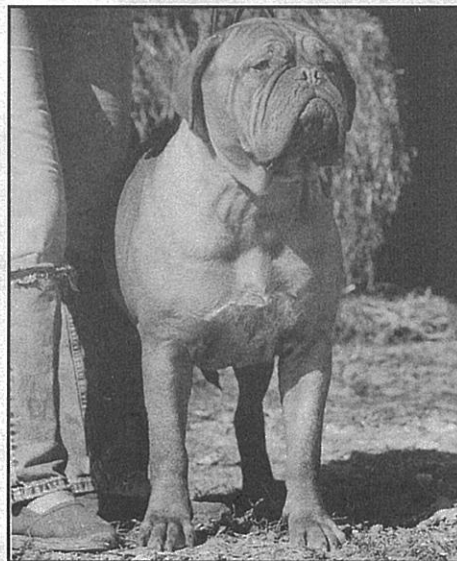
**Q.6.** Could you name the dog or bitch that in your opinion is the best example of the breed you have seen and explain your choice?

"breed type" over movement as that is what distinguishes the breed from any other molosser. However from the All Breeds' judge perspective, I understand the dilemma when the BOB Dogue must then go on to compete for Group placement and possibly beyond. Understanding and accepting that the Dogue should not move like a Doberman would be a milestone for our breed.

**A.6.** This is a question I ponder with great difficulty because there are no "perfect" specimens out there. It tends to be a case of extremes more often than not in this breed.

I am fortunate that I have travelled to Europe many times over the years to view the breed first hand at the specialties. This has enabled me to see past the glitzy photography on websites and see an untainted view of each Dogue's strengths and weaknesses.

Probably my opinion of a female I have seen who is most closely aligned with the standard overall would be



Vassia de l'Aube Rouge in Belgium. I saw her in 2002 and she had almost everything one could wish for including a strong head and naturally, she was highly decorated in the showing. She was simply stunning, although she had days whereby she did not wish to be shown.

A male whom I greatly admire for some fantastic traits is Signore Kwan de la Seigneurie des Chartrons in France.

He is a dog of extremes, but his head would be agreed by any breeder in the world to be outstanding and "show stop-



ping". Signore displays great athletic ability and is probably one of the most admired and respected Dogues in our breed for a very long time. He is noted in current texts written about the breed as one of the most influential sires in the world. Signore won BISS at the French Specialty in 2004 from an entry of 209 Dogues.

Both Dogues mentioned would gladden any Breed Specialist's heart and indeed have during their impressive show careers.

**Deborah Bloom Ataraxia**

**A.1.** It is very detailed in aspects regarding the head but does lack a little on the overline and rear angulation. Some things become a little lost under our judging system because we are not used to such a descriptive standard and some of the terminology is different.

**A. 2.** The breed should show a reaching side gait while tracking up straight but it should not be a fast gait - it has been described aptly as 'trotting like a lion' with that long, reaching gait without wasting excess energy. From the front there is some allowance for convergence of the front feet (towards the centre line), from behind they should not move close. The standard calls for the head to drop when moving and the topline to incline forwards which unfortunately our judges don't want to see.

At the same time though I believe there are Dogues who are unable to move with their head up due to poor