

BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG



Species

Canine

Colour

Tri-coloured. The ground colour is jet black. Tan markings on the cheeks, over the eyes, on the limbs and chest. The muzzle, tip of the tail and the feet are white and has a white blaze.

Breed group

"Pincher and Schnauzer – Mollosid breeds" group, FCI group 2

History

The origins of the Bernese Mountain Dog are not well documented. The breed apparently originated from the mastiff type dogs brought by the Romans when they came into Switzerland around two thousand years ago.

The Bernese Mountain Dog has been a farm dog of the midland region of Switzerland, mostly around the city of Berne. It was primarily used as a companion and watchdog to the farmer and his family. It alerted its owner to unfamiliar visitors. It may have been used as a dog to pull a cart. A large dog, well-muscled and with sturdy bone, was needed for this task. It may have been used to accompany cows to pasture but not for long distances as dogs which work on a range. As most Swiss farmers had a small number of cows, the dog was not required to manage large herds. The temperament of the Bernese Mountain Dog was never to be sharp or shy.

Since Roman times, these dogs remained as general-purpose farmers' dogs, but little attention was paid to preserving the type or developing the breed which resulted in near extinction of the breed by the 19th century.

Around the turn of the century, several Swiss dog fanciers brought Bernese from various isolated valleys in their home canton of Bern, and promoted the general interest in these dogs. The breed was originally called the Schweizerische Dürrbach-Klub; after the name of the inn of Dürrbach, Switzerland where the dog was first developed.

In 1902, 1904 and 1907 subjects of this breed were exhibited at dog shows. In 1907 a few breeders of the region of Burgdorf decided to promote the pure breeding of this native dog by founding the "Schweizerische Dürrbach-Klub" and fixing the characteristic traits of the breed in a first standard. The Dürrbächler (eventually called "Berner Sennenhund" to follow the naming convention of other native Swiss breeds) progressed steadily in Switzerland, and eventually found admirers in other countries as well.

Temperament

The Bernese Mountain Dog was bred to be the farmer's companion, and today, a Bernese Mountain Dog will want to be by your side at all times. They are known for their sweet and mild temperament. This breed is often used as a therapy dog for this reason. They are loyal and devoted and will strive to please you. Because he is so willing to please, the training methods should be very gentle. They are excellent with children that know how to handle them. They are extremely intelligent, and they need to be mentally stimulated. They are gentle, easygoing, good-natured, affectionate, and docile. They are incredibly devoted to their own family, and generally aloof towards strangers. A tendency to be shy runs in the breed, and early socialization is important. Most Bernese Mountain Dogs do well with other dogs and cats.



They need daily exercise, but not as much as some more energetic breeds. They don't enjoy playing fetch and certainly don't make good jogging partners. In warm weather, they will dig holes to try to get at the cool earth, and this will often happen in your favourite flower bed. In general, they love to be outside, as long as you are there with them. They always want to be part of the family and will demand a lot of your attention. Inside, they are usually quiet and calm, though their wagging tail will often find your cup of coffee. They do not bark unnecessarily, but will announce a stranger at the door, so they make good watchdogs. They are very protective of the members of their family.

They are slow to mature, and can have "puppy-like" behaviour for several years. The younger Bernese Mountain Dogs are very active, and the older ones are pleasantly mellow, though they still take a lively interest in family business. They do not do well when left alone for a longer period of time. Canine separation anxiety is a pressing concern for this breed.



Physical characteristics

The Bernese Mountain Dog is a large, sturdy and agile dog. The body is compact and slightly longer than tall. The expression is intelligent and animated. The eyes are dark brown and oval in shape. The ears are triangular and medium in size with curly fur. The teeth meet in scissor bite.

The neck is strong and muscular and of medium length. The chest is deep and broad. The back is strong and broad. The croup is broad and rounded at the base of the tail. The tail is feathered, and should

never be carried or curled over the back. The tail should reach the hock joint or below. The front and hind legs are straight, strong and muscular. The dew claws on the hind legs often need to be removed. The feet are round and compact with well arched toes. Height in males is 61-70 cm (24-27 ½ inches), females 58-69 cm (23-27 inches) Weight in males 38-50 kg (85-110 pounds), females 29.5-43 kg (65-95 pounds) Life expectancy is average of 7 years. Litter size on average 8 puppies.

Grooming



Bernese Mountain dog is a double coated breed. They shed all year round. Brushing 2-3 times a week is sufficient to remove the dead hair. During the heavy shedding period, a daily brushing will be required. Just think of it this way, the more you brush, the less hair will be in your home. You should always brush in the direction of hair growth.

The tools you will need to use for grooming are: bristle brush, slicker, medium-toothed comb, rake and shedding blade.

Use a firm-bristled brush to brush the coat. Use the slicker and comb to untangle hair. Line brushing consists

of holding hair up and out of the way and then brushing/detangling a small amount of hair, a line or a row, at a time from underneath. Always work from the inside out on a coat and from the bottom to the top of the hair. Use one hand to brace the skin of your dog firmly while working out knots.

Use the rake to pull out the undercoat.

Bathing should be done as needed. Always use specially formulated dog shampoos. While bathing, be careful not to get shampoo in the eyes.

Many dogs have periodontal disease due to lack of brushing. Cavities and gum disease are painful for your dog; they diminish its pleasure and ability to eat.

Brushing the teeth daily with enzymatic toothpaste will help keep the teeth and gums healthy and tartar free. Do not use human toothpaste.

Nails that aren't trimmed can splinter and infect the quick or grow and curl into the flesh. This can be painful for your dog to walk on. It will affect its gait, posture, and eventually it's skeletal and ligament health. Nails should never touch the ground. When your dog is standing its nails should rest above the ground. If you hear clicking on the kitchen floor, clipping is overdue.

Health problems

This breed is prone to hip and elbow dysplasia, cataracts, entropion and ectropion, bloat, allergies, Von Willebrand's disease and cancer.

Cancer is one of the biggest killers in this breed. In an effort to breed out the cancer, breeders work hard on selecting healthy dogs for the breeding program.

Reference:

www.bmdca.org

www.justdogbreeds.com

www.berner.org

www.bmdcc.ca

www.dog-obedience-training-review.com