

TRANSMONTANO MASTIFF

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The origin of this breed is connected to the history of the Iberian Mastiffs and its evolution is linked to the migration route of the herds towards new pasturages across the Iberian Peninsula.

In ancient times this breed established itself in the highlands of the north of Portugal, specifically in Trás-os-Montes, hence its name. This dog is a shepherd companion with the specific task of guarding the flocks against the attack of wolves, always prolific in the area.

In this mountainous region, of steep pasturages of difficult access by road, these dogs adapted themselves to the landscape, to the rough climate and to the breeds of sheep and goats which graze in these hills, adjusting themselves to the hardy conditions and to the specific tasks they were required to perform.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

Mastiff dog of great size, very strong and rustic, it stands out due to its impressive size, proud carriage and soft, steady expression. The body outline is square with long limbs, strong bone and naturally straight pasterns. The tuck up is evident and the rear angulations are moderate.

In this breed there is an evident dimorphism, and the males reach greater size and bulk than the females.

BEHAVIOUR/ TEMPERAMENT

In spite of its size and appearance this breed has a sound, docile, although quite reserved, temperament. It shows caution without being aggressive, always calm and serene. He is an exceptional watch dog when guarding the herds against the attack of wolves, very active and permanently attentive in its task.

Males live together with other males without conflict, imposing the hierarchy of dominance when living in the company of females. Shepherds favour males and it is a common sight to see them in larger numbers than females when shepherding herds, which is usually done by a pack of several dogs.

When they are faced with the contact of strangers, and once they overcome the initial reserve, these dogs allow themselves to be handled without causing problems and are extremely sensitive to human attention and kindness.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

The profile is convex and the body is square tending to be shorter than the height at withers. The relationship between length and height is almost equal.

HEAD

The head is large and massive but not too voluminous in proportion to the size of the body. The profile is convex with upper planes of skull and muzzle which are almost parallel and only slightly divergent. The muzzle, which is slightly shorter than the skull, is broad with convergent sides and in profile it ends bluntly. The jaws are strong and well developed.

CRANIAL REGION

The skull is moderately wide and slightly domed, tending to being flat. The stop seen from the side is moderate, but seen from the front it is noticeable due to the well arched eyebrows.

FACIAL REGION

Nose

The nose is oval in shape and large, with wide nostrils preferably black or dark.

Muzzle

The muzzle is conical in shape. Seen in profile the nasal bridge is straight. The length of the muzzle is almost 1.1 in proportion to the length of the skull

Lips

Well joined, not too thick, just slightly rounded in shape and moderately pendulous, with apparent commissure and a wide mouth. The membranes are well pigmented in black.

Jaws

Well developed and well muscled, with strong maxillary bones. Scissors bite.

Eyes

Not too large and almond shaped, honey to dark brown in colour, with a serene expression. They are set semi frontally and are slightly slanted. Eye rims are deeply pigmented in black.

Ears

The ears are of medium size, triangular in shape, slightly longer than wider, with a medium to high setting (above the line of the eyes), fleshy and with round tips. They are quite mobile, and are usually carried pendent, but can also be held drawn back and folded vertically. In attention they raise and fold towards the front.

Neck

The neck is of medium size, straight, strong and well muscled. The dewlap is apparent but not excessive. The skin of the neck is quite loose.

BODY

The body is strong but not too heavy, with straight top line, well muscled. The height at withers is equal to the length of the body. The underline is ascendant from the chest towards the belly, with evident tuck up.

Topline

Straight

Withers

Well set into the base of the neck with long scapula and moderate angulation (110°)

Back

Short, firm, straight, wide and well muscled.

Croup

Of medium length, moderately wide and inclined

Chest

Large but not too broad, well developed with well sprung ribs moderately arched. The thorax cage is voluminous but not barrel shaped. The depth of the chest reaches the elbows but does not descend beyond.

Underline

Rising slightly from the sternum to the belly showing a slight tuck-up

TAIL

The tail is thick and of medium length, well covered with hair, set at medium height. It does not fall beyond the hock joint. When hanging it curves sabre wise but can also present a curve in the extremity. In movement it is carried high and rounded and can roll over the top line.

LIMBS

Forequarters

Seen from the front they are strong, long, straight and parallel.

Upperarm

Strong, long and well developed.

Forearm

Long and vertical with round bone

Elbows

Well set against the chest, never turning out

Carp

With strong joint

Pasterns

Straight and almost upright

Front feet

Strong, large and round, with well tight and well arched toes. Pads are thick, large and resistant.

HINDQUARTERS

Strong and well muscled, seen from the rear they are parallel. The rear angulation is moderate.

Thighs

Long and well muscled

Legs

Long and muscular

Hocks

Very high large and strong.

Metatarsus

In proportion to the size of the legs, with single or double dewclaws.

Feet

Oval or even rounded in shape with strong, tight toes and thick pads.

GAIT/MOVEMENT

In spite of its size and bulk this is a light footed dog, with an energetic and well cadenced movement, far reaching in front and rear.

SKIN

The skin is rather thick in texture, loose around the neck area where it forms a single dewlap, as well as at the withers. The skin is much finer on the head than on the body.

COAT

The coat is thick , plentiful and of medium length.

Hair

Rather flat and dense , with evident undercoat. On the head, ears, muzzle and legs the coat is shorter and finer in texture.

Colour

The more common coat colours are white with black, yellow, fawn or wolf markings. These colours can be solid or brindled. White coats can be flecked or ticked as well as being tricolour, with black patches and tan markings on cheeks and eyebrows.

A half mask ,diluted black in colour, is commonly found on yellow, wolf and fawn coated dogs.

White markings on the head are a common occurrence.

Solid colours with total lack of white are not as desirable as marked coats.

Solid white or solid black coats are to be excluded.

SIZE

Males. 74cm to 84 cm

Females: 66cm to 76 cm

WEIGHT

Males: 55 to 65 kilos

Females: 45 to 60 Kilos

FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in direct proportion to its degree.

- yellow eyes
- drooping eyelids
- excessive or double dewlap
- weak or excessively inclined pasterns
- excessive length of body
- tail with hooked tip
- long, pointed muzzle

SERIOUS FAULTS

- heavy head, excessively large and wide in skull

- converging upper planes of skull and muzzle
- lack of pigmentation on the eye rims
- short muzzle
- domed skull
- round and big eyes
- low set ears excessively small and fine in texture
- wide chest reaching below the elbow
- barrel shaped chest
- flat feet
- coat lacking in density or too short on the body
- lack of undercoat

DISQUALIFICATIONS

Undershot or overshot jaws
Solid white or solid black colour

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum

Any animal presenting signs of physical or temperamental anomalies must be disqualified.

Translated 25/10/04
Carla Molinari/CPC