

DOGUE DE BORDEAUX

The following is the Standard or descriptive 'blueprint' for the Dogue De Bordeaux. This is the English translation of the Standard adopted by the Federation Cynologique Internationale [FCI]. I have taken the liberty of correcting what I see as an error in the translation in regard to the parallel lines in the head.

In the FCI Standard, the first sentence of the paragraph under the heading **HEAD** is as follows:

Voluminous, angular, broad, rather short, trapezoid when viewed from above and in front.

I have changed that to read:

Voluminous, angular, broad, rather short, trapezium when viewed from above and in front.

As we know a Trapezoid is a four sided figure with no sides parallel and a Trapezium is a four sided figure with two sides parallel. Clearly Trapezium is the correct word.

The Standard is in **bold** and comments / explanations are not bold. Diagrams, photographs and comments marked [1] are taken from the book The Saga Of The Dogue De Bordeaux by Raymond Triquet and published by Bas Bosch Press. That book is accepted as a foremost authority on the Dogue De Bordeaux.

I hope you find this informative and helpful in understanding the characteristics of this great breed.

Lionel Bleakley

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY :

The dogue de Bordeaux is one of the most ancient French breeds, probably a descendant of the Alans and, in particular, the alan vautre of which Gaston Phebus (or Febus), Count of Foix, wrote in the 14th century, in his Livre de Chasse that "he holds his bite stronger than three sighthounds". The word "dogue" appeared at the end of the 14th century.

In the middle of the 19th century these ancient dogues were hardly renowned outside the region of Aquitaine. They were used for hunting large game such as boar, for fighting (often codified), for the guarding of houses and cattle and in the service of butchers. In 1863 the first French dog show took place in Paris in the Jardin d'Acclimatation. The Dogues de Bordeaux were entered under their present name. There have been different types : The Toulouse type, the Paris type and the Bordeaux type, which is the origin of today's Dogue.

The breed, which had suffered greatly during the two world wars, to the point of being threatened with extinction after the second world war, got off to a fresh start in the 1960's.

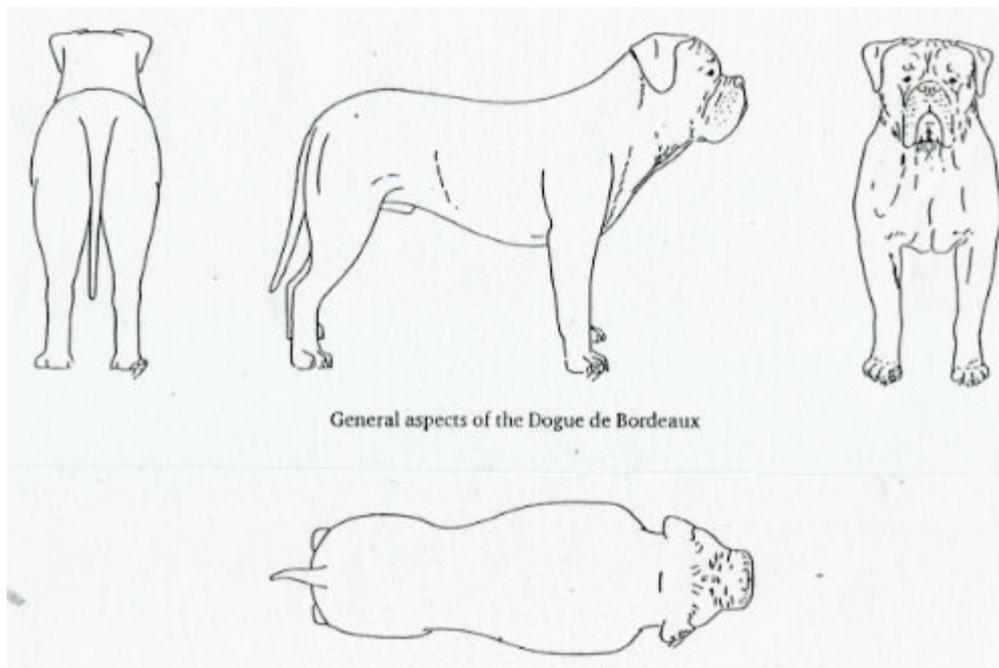
1st standard ("Caractère des vrais dogues") in Pierre Megnin, Le Dogue de Bordeaux, 1896.

2nd standard in J. Kunstler, Etude critique du Dogue de Bordeaux, 1910.

3rd standard by Raymond Triquet, with the collaboration of Vet. Dr. Maurice Luquet, 1971.

4th standard reformulated according to Jerusalem model (FCI) by Raymond Triquet, with the collaboration of Philippe Serouil, President of the French Dogue de Bordeaux Club and its Committee, 1993.

Precisions were added in 2007 by Raymond Triquet (Honorary President of the SADB), Sylviane Tompousky (President of the SADB) and Philippe Sérouil (committee member of the SADB).



[1]

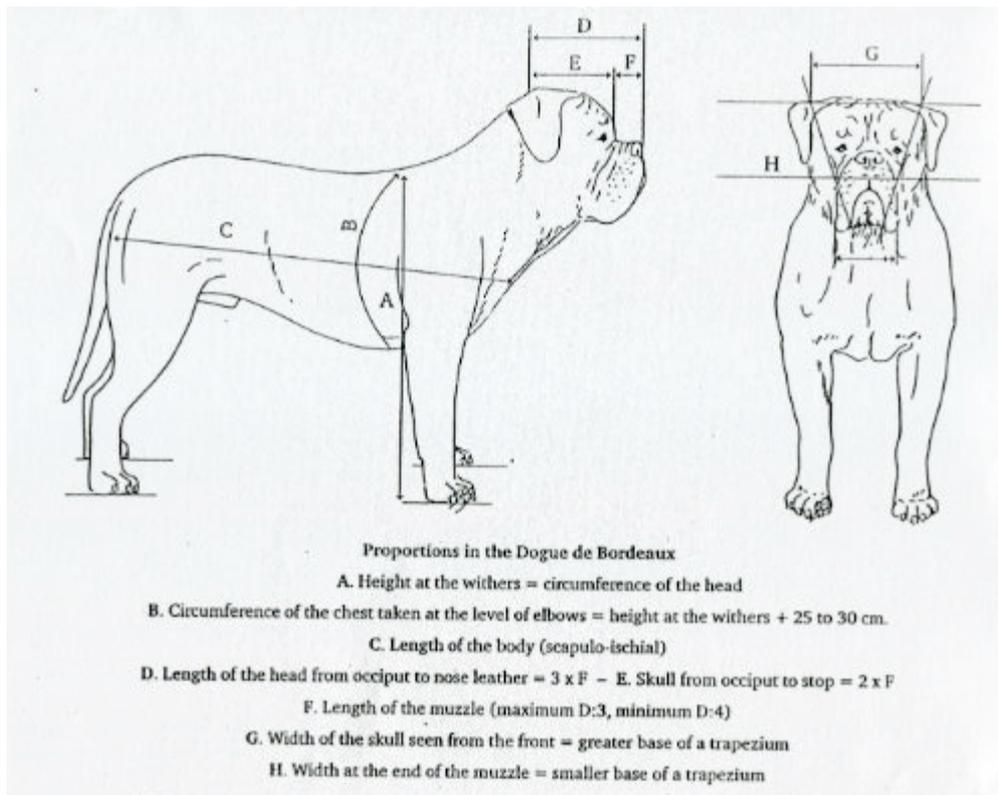
GENERAL APPEARANCE :

Typical concave lined brachycephalic molossoid [short-headed Mastiff type]. The Dogue de Bordeaux is a very powerful dog, with a very muscular body yet retaining a harmonious general outline. It is built rather close to the ground, the distance sternum-ground being slightly less than the depth of the chest. Stocky, athletic and imposing, it has a very dissuasive aspect.

Some have difficulty understanding the term '*very dissuasive aspect*'. To me it means simply that an adult DDB on his property alerted to the approach of a stranger would adopt a stance that would dissuade the stranger from entering. This relates to the guarding instinct of the DDB but does not mean aggression.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS :

- *The length of the body, measured from the point of the shoulder to the point of the buttock, is superior to [greater than] the height at the withers, in the proportion of 11:10.*
- *The depth of the chest is more than half the height at the withers.*
- *The maximum length of the muzzle is equal to one third of the length of the head.*
- *The minimum length of the muzzle is equal to one quarter of the length of the head.*
- *In the male, the perimeter [circumference] of the skull corresponds more or less to the height at the withers.*



[1]

BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT :

An ancient fighting dog, the Dogue de Bordeaux is gifted for guarding, which it assumes with vigilance and great courage but without aggressiveness. A good companion, very attached to its master and very affectionate. Calm, balanced with a high stimulus threshold. The male normally has a dominant character.

HEAD AND SKULL:

Voluminous, angular, broad, rather short, trapezium when viewed from above and in front. [Trapezium means a four sided object with two sides parallel.] The longitudinal axes of the skull out of the bridge of nose are convergent (towards the front). The head is furrowed with symmetrical wrinkles, each side of the median groove. These deep ropes of wrinkle are mobile depending on whether the dog is attentive or not. The wrinkle which runs from the inner corner of the eye to the corner of the mouth is typical. If present, the wrinkle running from the outer corner of the eye to either the corner of the mouth or the dewlap should be discreet [not pronounced].

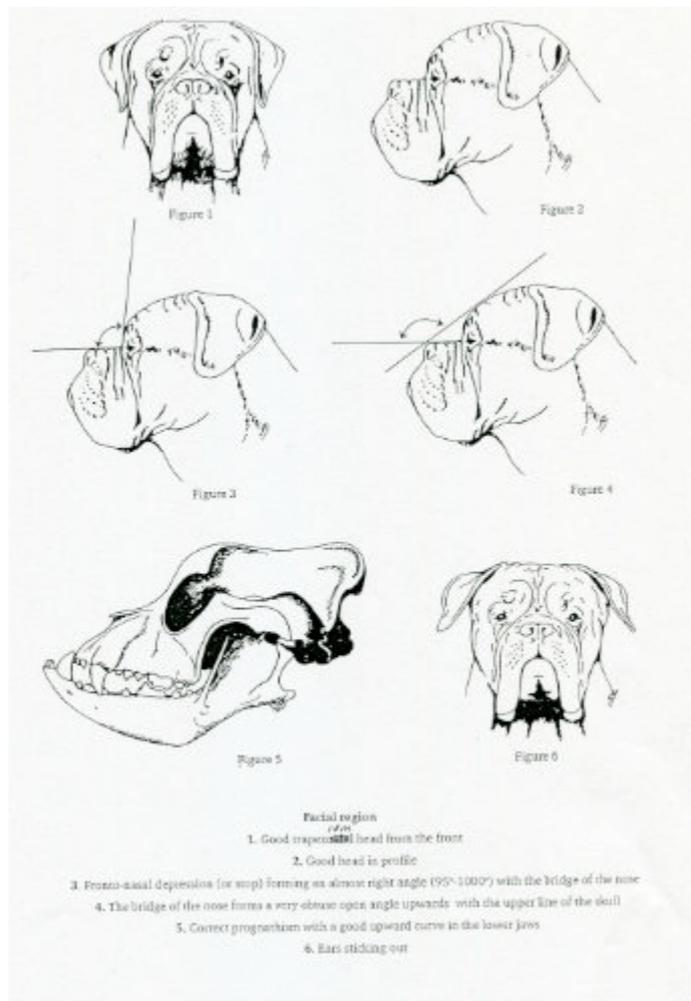
CRANIAL REGION :

Skull :

- *In the male: the perimeter [circumference] of the skull measured at the level of its greatest width corresponds roughly to the height at the withers.*
- *In bitches : it may be slightly less.*

Its volume and shape are the consequences of the very important development of the temporal [bones of the temple], supra-orbital arches [over the eye sockets or eyebrows], zygomatic arches [bony ridges forming the lower edges of the eye sockets] and the spacing of the branches of the lower jaw. The upper region of the skull is slightly convex [arched] from one side to the other. The frontal groove is deep, diminishing towards the posterior end of the head. The forehead dominates the face but does not overhang it. However it is still wider than high.

Stop : *Very pronounced, almost forming a right angle with the muzzle (95° to 100°).*



[1]

FACIAL REGION :

Nose : Broad, well opened nostrils, well pigmented according to the colour of the mask. Uprturned nose permissible but not if it is set back towards the eyes.

Muzzle : Powerful, broad, thick, but not fleshy below the eyes, rather short, upper profile very slightly concave, with moderately obvious folds. Its width hardly decreasing towards the tip of the muzzle, when viewed from above it has the general shape of a square. In relation to the upper region of the skull, the line of the muzzle forms a very obtuse [blunt] angle upwards. When the head is held horizontally the tip of the muzzle, truncated, thick and broad at the base, is in front of a vertical tangent to the anterior face of the nose [the end of the muzzle is in front of the forward edge of the nose]. Its perimeter [circumferences] is almost two thirds of that of the head. Its length varies between one third and minimum one quarter of the total length of the head, from the nose to the occipital crest. The limits stated (maximum one third and minimum one quarter of the total length of the head) are permissible but not sought after, the ideal length of the muzzle being between these two extremes.

Jaws : Jaws powerful, broad. Undershot (the undershot condition being a characteristic of the breed). The back of the lower incisors is in front of and not in contact with the front face of the upper incisors. The lower jaw curves upwards. The chin is well marked and must neither overlap the upper lip exaggeratedly nor be covered by it.

Teeth: Strong, particularly the canines. Lower canines set wide apart and slightly curved. Incisors well aligned especially in the lower jaw where they form an apparently straight line.

Lips : Upper lip thick, moderately pendulous, retractile. When viewed in profile it shows a rounded lower line. It covers the lower jaw on the sides. In front the edge of the upper lip is in contact with the lower lip, then drops on either side thus forming an inverted wide V.

Cheeks : Prominent, due to the very strong development of the muscles.

Eyes: Oval, set wide apart. The space between the two inner corners of the eyelids is equal to about twice the length of the eye (eye opening). Frank expression. The hawk must not be visible. Colour : hazel to dark brown for a dog with a black mask, lighter colour tolerated but not sought after in dogs with either a brown mask or without a mask.

Ears: *Relatively small, of a slightly darker colour than the coat. At its set on, the front of the base of the ear is slightly raised. They must fall down, but not hang limply, the front edge being close to the cheek when the dog is attentive. The tip of the ear is slightly rounded; it must not reach beyond the eye. Set rather high, at the level of the upper line of the skull, thus appearing to accentuate its width even more.*



Rano de l'Aube Rouge. Breeder/owner: Vandermynsbruggen-Hustia, Int. Champ. 1997

[1]

NECK : *Very strong, muscular, almost cylindrical. This skin is supple, ample and loose. The average circumference almost equals that of the head. It is separated from the head by a slightly accentuated transversal [crosswise] furrow, slightly curved. Its upper edge is slightly convex [arched]. The well defined dewlap starts at the level of the throat forming folds down to the chest, without hanging exaggeratedly. The neck, very broad at its base, merges smoothly with the shoulders.*

Because it is so strong, the neck is very often likened to that of a bull or a wrestler.

It gives the dogue great power to shake whatever he holds in his mouth. The neck is almost cylindrical, but not too short. Otherwise the dog has a head set in the shoulders, and that gives him the look of a Mastiff or a Saint Bernard. Such dogues are often powerful.

What's important (and sometimes even 'experts' don't have an eye for this) is that, from the front and with the dog standing upright, it must be possible to see this bull's neck widening to the base and then smoothly merging with the shoulders. This outline is beautiful and gives an impression of power. It should be found in all dogues of top quality. These beautiful contours must not be spoiled by too much dewlap. [1]

BODY

Topline : *Well sustained.*

Withers : *Well marked.*

Back : *Broad and muscular.*

Loin : *Broad. Rather short and solid.*

Croup : *Moderately sloping down to the root of the tail.*

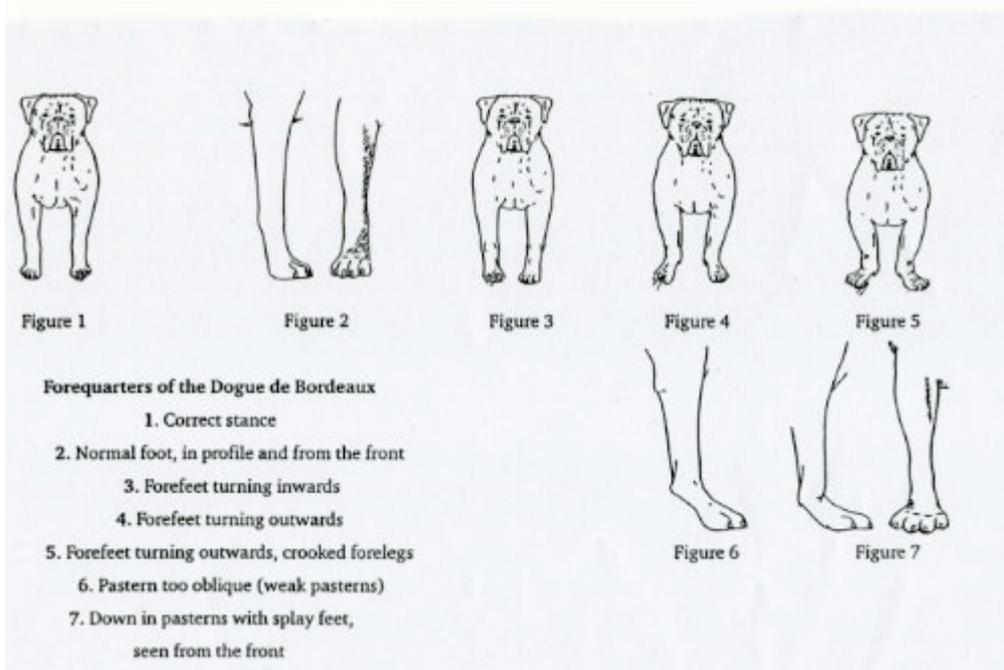
Chest : *Powerful, long, deep, broad, let down lower than the elbows. Broad and powerful forechest whose lower line (inter-axillae) [between the armpits] is convex towards the bottom. Ribs well let down and well sprung but not barrel shaped. The circumference of the chest must be between 25 cm to 35 cm greater than the height at the withers.*

Underline and belly: *Curved from the deep brisket to the rather tucked up, firm abdomen, being neither pendulous nor too tucked up.*

TAIL : *Very thick at the base. Its tip preferably reaching the hock and not below. Carried low, it is neither broken nor kinked but supple. Hanging when the dog is at rest, generally rising by 90° to 120° from that position when the dog is in action, without curving over the back or being curled.*

In action, only a tail carried vertically, as straight as an arrow, or worse, carried over the back should be penalised. It will be especially untypical when it curls. In general we're not preoccupied with the tail. There are more important things demanding attention. [1].

LIMBS



[1]

FOREQUARTERS : *Strong bone structure, legs very muscular.*

These are very strong, that's their primary characteristic. [1]

Shoulders : *Powerful, prominent muscles. Slant of shoulder-blade medium (about 45° to the horizontal), angle of the scapular-humeral articulation [point of shoulder] a little more than 90°.*

A wrestler's shoulders. The muscles are prominent. The shoulder blade (the 'scapula') is set at the normal angle of 45 degrees to the horizontal. This oblique lay and the mobility of the shoulder allow the Dogue de Bordeaux to take those long strides mentioned in the paragraph on gait. With such muscles, the shoulder blades cannot be other than well attached to the wall of the chest. [1]

Upper Arms : *Very muscular. Strikingly muscular.* [1]

Elbows : *In the axis of the body, neither too close to the ribcage nor turned out.* They are in line with the body, not turned out nor in, and they are supple [1]

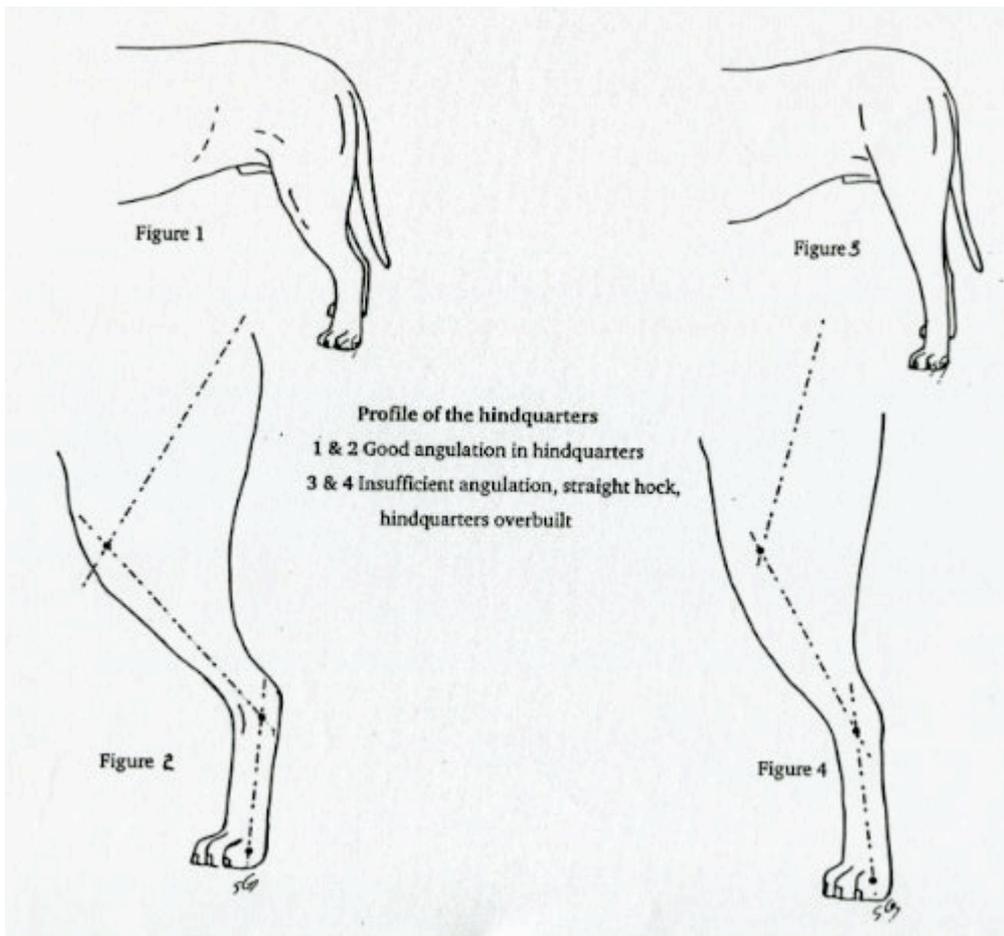
Forearms: *Viewed from the front, straight or inclining slightly inwards thus getting closer to the median plane [centre line], especially in dogs with a very broad chest. Viewed in profile, vertical.*

An important part in the judgement of the dog. In profile they are vertical, as we have seen. Viewed from the front they are not easily assessed. Lets say, they must be as near vertical as possible. In the Bullmastiff, they are vertical, in the best specimens they are perfectly upright. Never so in the Dogue de Bordeaux, which has a very broad chest. They are slightly inclined inwards in such a way that they come nearer the median vertical plane (but not too close). [1]

Metacarpus (Pastern) : *Powerful. Viewed in profile, slightly sloping. Viewed from the front sometimes slightly outwards compensating for the slight inclination of the forearm inwards.*

Forefeet : *Strong. Toes tight, nails curved and strong, pads well developed and supple: the Dogue is well up on his toes despite his weight.*

Front on, the feet necessarily follow the direction of the metacarpus: at their best they are nearly in line with the body, turning out slightly. That's normal in a concave lined dog [1]. The toes are relatively tight, but one can't expect the impossible. With his weight, the Dogue de Bordeaux can't have cat feet. Flat feet with wide open toes are to be avoided. The standard states clearly that the Dogue is a digitigrades, that means that he, like all dogs, walks well up on his toes and not on the 'soles' of his feet. [1]



[1]

HINDQUARTERS: *Robust legs with strong bone structure; well angulated. When viewed from behind the hindquarters are parallel and vertical thus giving an impression of power even though the hindquarters are not quite as broad as the forequarters.*

Upper Thigh: *Very developed and thick with visible muscles.*

Stifle: *In a parallel plane to the median plane or very slightly out.*

Second thigh: *Relatively short, muscled, descending low.*

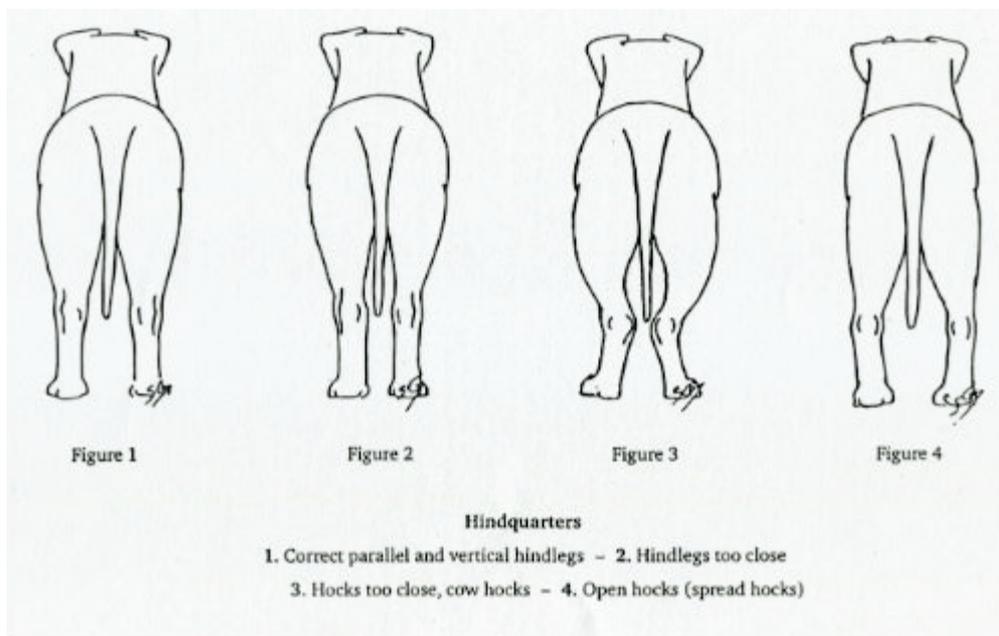
Hock: *Short, sinewy, angle of the hock joint moderately open.*

Metatarsus (Rear pastern): *Robust, no dewclaws.*

Hind feet : *Slightly longer than the front feet, toes tight.*

Seen from above, the Dogue de Bordeaux presents a forehand [forequarters] broader than the rear. This difference in breadth between front (brisket and shoulders) and back (croup and thighs) should not be exaggerated. It is not a question of looking for the pear-shape, seen from above, which is typical of the Bulldog. The hindquarters must be sufficiently wide, and the pelvis, especially in bitches. The thighs, strikingly muscled, give an impression not of weakness or narrowness but of power. Seen from behind, the hindlegs are, according to the standard, parallel and vertical, that is to say upright. Seen from the side the hindlegs are well angulated.

[Where] the angles are too open; this raises the croup and results in a stilted gait. In such cases the dog's hindquarters are described as overbuilt, or, more colloquially, his bum is higher than his back, as he has a truly plunging topline. When the angle of the hock is too acute, the dog is described as overangulated, and that's worse, as he moves very badly when he brings the rear-hand under the body. He is 'tucked under'. The hindquarters are constantly too flexed, which is very tiring. Such are not good dogs. This overangulation is often accompanied by cow hocks and stifles too turned out, and, even worse, a steep croup. [1]



[1]

GAIT / MOVEMENT : *Quite supple for a molossoid [mastiff type]. When walking the movement is free and supple, close to the ground. Good drive from the hindquarters, good extension of the forelegs, especially when trotting, which is the preferred gait. When the trot quickens, the head tends to drop, the topline inclines towards the front, and the front feet get closer to the median plane [move closer together] while striding out with a long reaching movement of the front legs. Canter with rather important vertical movement. Capable of great speed over short distances by bolting along close to the ground.*

The best movement one could possibly wish for in a Dogue de Bordeaux: active, supple, free, far-reaching movement, well co-ordinated in line with the body, mobile shoulder, drive from the hindquarters, a roomy swing of the forelegs, in brief everything one looks for. The Dogue de Bordeaux doesn't raise his forelegs high, but when his speed accelerates, he reaches out far in front. The forefeet incline towards the median plane (this is called 'single tracking') [1]



Free gait with long reaching movement; Roumba de l'Aube Rouge (owner: Vandermynsbruggen)

29 [1]

SKIN: *Thick and sufficiently loose fitting, without excessive wrinkles.*

The skin is 'sufficiently ample'. The skin of the molossoids isn't tight, doesn't stick to the body, at least not in some areas (neck, brisket, back and loin). Nor is the skin of the Dogue de Bordeaux too loose. It doesn't fall in folds on the body. The dogue doesn't look as though it has been packed in a bag, a cover too big for him. There is dewlap (loose skin, from the throat down to the breast) to be seen, certainly, but it should never hang too low, in a double fold. However the skin of the molossoid is always somewhat loose and thick. This thickness and looseness of the skin guarantee the best possible protection against knocks and more particularly bites. A dog which attacks a Dogue de Bordeaux at the throat only gets a grip on loose skin. But it would be wrong to think that this loose skin is the result of selection for fighting. Rather it is integral to our concave lined dog to have a thick and loose skin, in the same way that he has feet that turn outwards and thick extremities (feet and muzzle) [1]

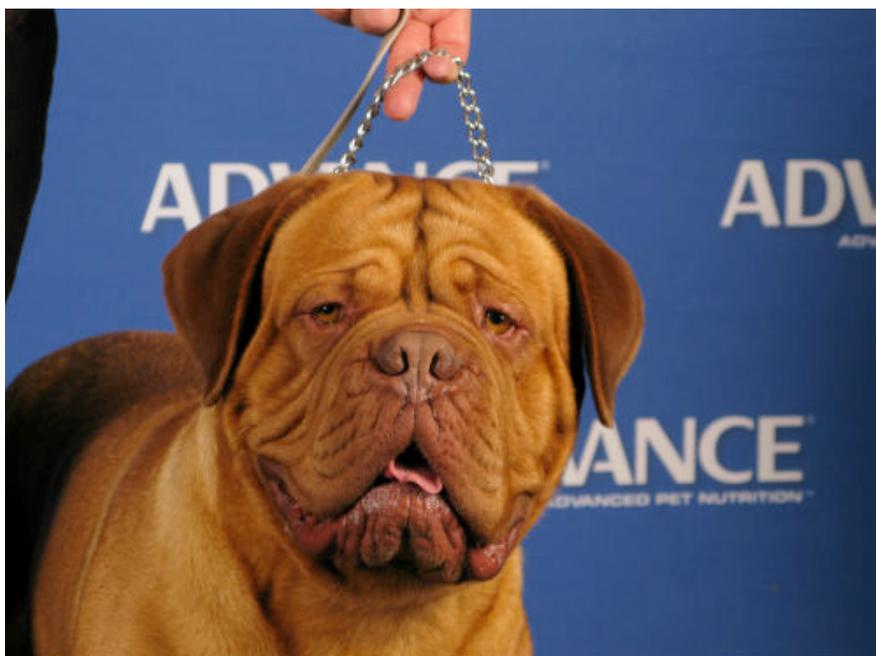
COAT

HAIR: *Fine, short and soft to the touch.* This softness is a surprise in such a sturdy dog. The more the coat is brushed, the softer it will be, without ever becoming what is called silky. The coat is fine, not coarse or rough. The coat on the Dogue de Bordeaux is very short on the legs and head, slightly longer on the flanks, the back, the coupling, and sometimes clearly longer on the upper part of the neck and at the withers.

COLOUR : *Self-coloured, in all shades of fawn, from mahogany [deep red] to Isabella [lightish fawn]. A good pigmentation is desirable. Limited white patches are permissible on the fore chest and the extremities of the limbs.* The coat is self coloured, which means that it contains no spot of any other colour. The Dogue de Bordeaux can be marked with white. This marking is not extensive and has remained limited, due to selection. White on the chest is permitted but not desirable if it is too extensive. On the lower legs, white should be unobtrusive. Where white is to be seen, on the front of the leg, it shouldn't reach above the carpus and tarsus (wrist and hock). On the back of the front leg, it is acceptable that the white may reach slightly higher, for it is scarcely visible. It occurs frequently that white on the front of the foreleg reaches to the wrist, on the back it reaches halfway, sometimes with a small line to the elbow. It is not what is aimed for but if the dog has quality, it should not be excluded because of this.[1]

Mask:

- ***Black mask:*** *The mask is often only slightly spread out and must not invade the cranial [skull] region. There may be slight black shading on the skull, ears, neck and top of body. The nose is black.*
- ***Brown mask:*** *(used to be called red or bistre [darkened]). The nose is brown; the eye rims and edges of the lips are also brown. There may be non-invasive brown shading; each hair having a fawn or sandy zone and a brown zone. In this case the inclined parts of the body are a paler colour.*
- ***No mask:*** *The coat is fawn: the skin appears red (also formerly called "red mask"). The nose can then be reddish.*



SIZE AND WEIGHT : *Height should more or less correspond to the perimeter of the skull.*

Height at the withers: For males: 60-68 cm.

For females: 58-66 cm.

1 cm under and 2 cm over will be tolerated.

Weight:

Dogs: at least 50 kg.

Bitches: at least 45 kg.

Females: Identical characteristics but less pronounced.

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 exact proportion to its degree and its effect on the health and welfare of the dog.*

SEVERE FAULTS:

- *Disproportioned head (too small or exaggeratedly voluminous).*
- *Bulldoggy hypertype [excessively]: Flat skull, muzzle measuring less than a quarter of the total length of the head. Swollen fold (roll) behind the nose. Important fold around the head.*
- *Important lateral deviation of the lower jaw [wry mouth].*
- *Incisors constantly visible when the mouth is closed. Very small incisors, unevenly set.*
- *Arched back (convex).*
- *Fused but not deviated vertebrae of the tail.*
- *Forefeet turning inwards (even slightly).*
- *Forefeet turning outwards too much.*
- *Flat thighs.*
- *Angle of hock too open (straight angulation).*
- *Angle of the hock too closed, dog standing under himself behind.*
- *Cow hocks or barrel hocks.*
- *Stilted movement or serious rolling of rear.*
- *Excessive shortness of breath, rasping.*
- *White on tip of tail or on the front part of the forelegs, above the carpus (wrist) and the tarsus (hock) or white, without interruption, on the front of the body from the forechest to the throat.*

DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:

- *Aggressive or overly shy.*
- *Long, narrow head with insufficiently pronounced stop, with a muzzle measuring more than a third of the total length of the head (lack of type in head).*
- *Muzzle parallel to the top line of the skull [parallel planes] or downfaced, Roman nose.*
- *Twisted jaw.*
- *Mouth not undershot.*
- *Canines constantly visible when the mouth is closed.*
- *Tongue constantly hanging out when the mouth is closed.*
- *Blue eyes; bulging eyes.*
- *Tail knotted and laterally deviated or twisted (screw tail, kink tail).*
- *Atrophied tail.*
- *Fiddle front and down on pasterns.*
- *Angle of the hock open towards the rear (inverted hock).*
- *White on the head or body, any other colour of the coat than fawn (shaded or not) and in particular brindle or solid brown called “chocolate” (each hair being entirely brown).*
- *Identifiable disabling defect.*

Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities shall be disqualified.

N.B.: *Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

[1] The Saga Of The Dogue De Bordeaux Raymond Triquet Bas Bosch Press