



W3 GODS BOERBOELS

No Short Cuts · Only Quality

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W3 GODS BOERBOELS
NO SHORT CUTS | ONLY QUALITY

THE COMPLETE

SOUTH AFRICAN BOERBOEL OWNER'S GUIDE

An honest, breed-first guide to the South African Boerboel — history, temperament, health, growth, and everything you should understand before this remarkable guardian becomes part of your family.

A FREE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE · COMPILED BY W3 GODS BOERBOELS · TRACY, CALIFORNIA

POWER · PRESENCE · PURPOSE



START HERE

MEET THE BOERBOEL

The South African Boerboel is one of the most capable guardian breeds on earth — a large, powerful mastiff bred for three centuries to protect the homestead and live devotedly alongside the family inside it. Calm and affectionate with their people, discerning and watchful with strangers, they are the rare giant that is both a serious protector and a gentle companion.

They are also a genuine commitment. A Boerboel is intelligent, territorial, and physically immense, and it needs an owner who leads with confidence and consistency. This guide exists to give you the honest picture — the good, the demanding, and the beautiful — so you can decide with your eyes open.

A well-bred Boerboel doesn't need to be taught to guard. It needs to be taught to be calm.



THE SOUTH AFRICAN BOERBOEL

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN IN THIS GUIDE

THE BREED

HISTORY & STANDARD

Where the Boerboel comes from and what a correct, functional one actually looks like.

THE MIND

TEMPERAMENT & SOCIALIZING

How the guardian temperament works and how to raise a stable, neutral adult.

THE BODY

HEALTH, GROWTH & FEEDING

Giant-breed development, the conditions to screen for, and how to protect those joints.

3

CENTURIES AS A FARM GUARDIAN

150-200_{lb}

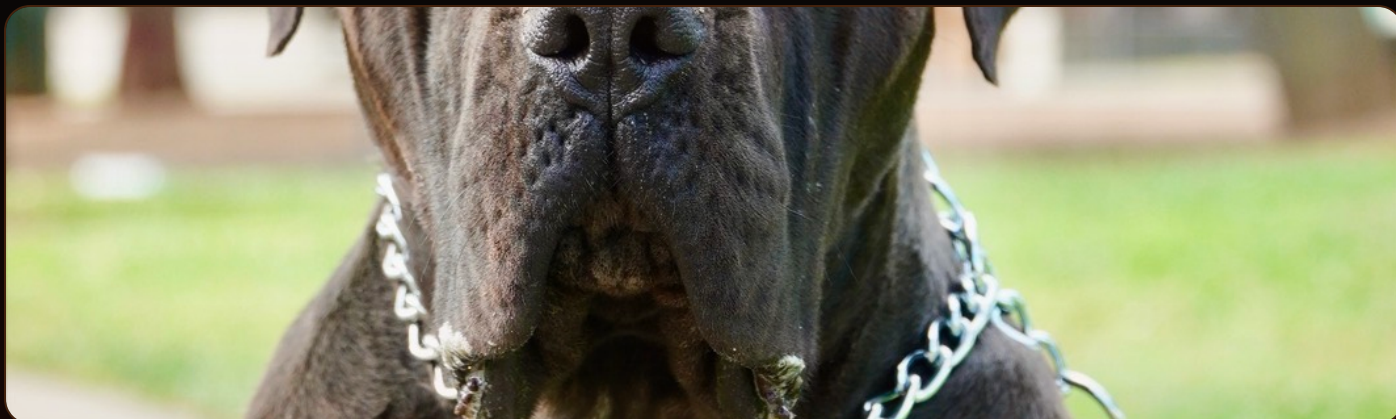
ADULT MALE WEIGHT

9-11

YEAR LIFESPAN

24

MONTHS TO FULL MATURITY





WHERE THIS BREED COMES FROM

ORIGINS & HISTORY

The name is Afrikaans: "boer" means farmer, and "boel" descends from *boelhond* — a mastiff or bulldog type. Together, the **farmer's dog**.



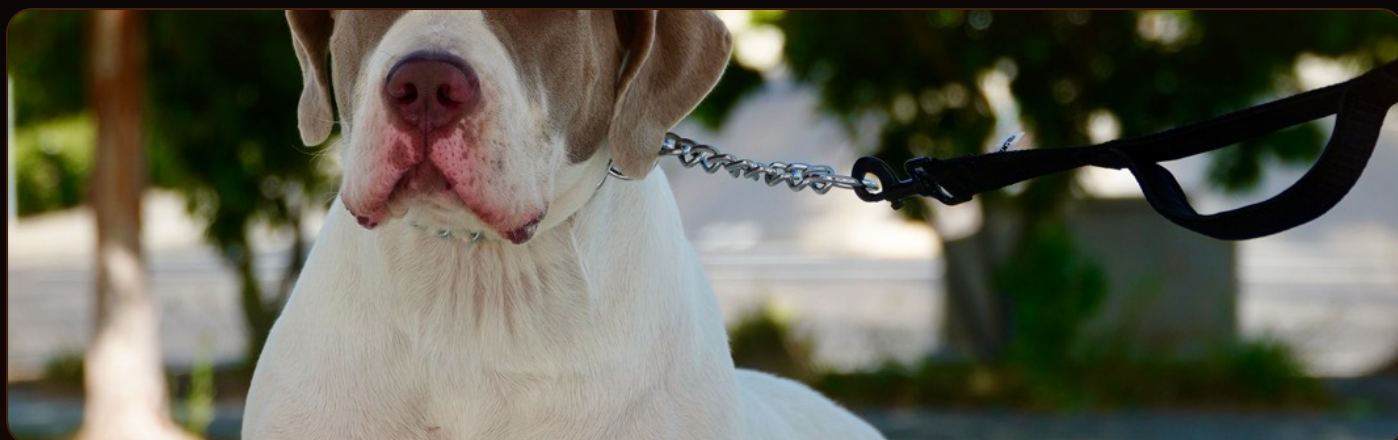
When Dutch settlers arrived in the Cape in the 1650s, they brought large European guardian and bull-type dogs and crossed them with the hardy indigenous dogs of southern Africa. Over generations of isolation on remote farmsteads, a distinct all-purpose guardian emerged — one dog that could face down leopards and baboons, deter intruders, and still be trusted around the farmer's children.

That selection pressure is why the modern Boerboel is confident rather than nervy: dogs that panicked or attacked without cause did not last on a working farm. They were bred to **assess first and act only when necessary**.

By the mid-20th century, urbanization nearly erased the breed. Dedicated South African breeders revived it from the 1980s onward, and in **1983 the South African Boerboel Breeders' Society (SABBS)** was formed to protect the type through a hands-on appraisal system that still physically evaluates breeding dogs against a working standard today — a tradition responsible programs worldwide continue to follow.

WHY THE HISTORY MATTERS TO YOU

A Boerboel's temperament is not an accident — it is the product of three centuries of selection for a stable working guardian. When you choose a dog from breeders who honor that standard, you are buying **predictability**. When you don't, you are gambling with a 180-pound animal.





WHAT CORRECT LOOKS LIKE

THE BREED STANDARD

The Boerboel is a large, substantial mastiff that must remain **athletic and functional** — never so heavy or exaggerated that it cannot move, breathe, or work. Structure serves purpose.

TRAIT	MALES	FEMALES
Height (at withers)	24–27 in (61–68 cm)	22–25 in (56–63 cm)
Weight	150–200+ lb	110–170 lb
Build	Rectangular, powerful and muscular; deep chest; strong level topline; balanced bone.	

THE HEAD — THE HALLMARK

Broad, blocky and impressive, in proportion to the body. Short, deep muzzle with a strong, complete bite. Never so extreme that it compromises breathing.

COAT & COLOR

Short, dense and sleek. Fawn, red, brown, cream or brindle — commonly with a black mask. Limited white on chest/feet is acceptable; heavy white is a fault.

MOVEMENT

Powerful and effortless, with real reach and drive and a topline that stays level on the move. A Boerboel should cover ground like a working dog.

TEMPERAMENT (YES, IT'S IN THE STANDARD)

Confident, calm and discerning. Self-assured without nervousness or unprovoked aggression. Temperament is judged as seriously as structure.

BIGGER IS NOT BETTER

Beware anyone selling a Boerboel on size alone. Extreme mass wrecks joints, shortens lives, and has nothing to do with the working standard. A correct Boerboel is **substantial and sound** — not the heaviest dog in the room.





THE GUARDIAN MIND

TEMPERAMENT & DAILY LIFE

Around their family, Boerboels are affectionate, playful and surprisingly gentle for their size — they want to be in the room with you, not left in a yard. Their loyalty is total, and they bond deeply with the whole household, children included.

With strangers they are naturally reserved. A stable Boerboel doesn't rush to greet or rush to threaten — it watches, assesses, and takes its cue from you. That discernment is the breed working exactly as designed. They guard by presence far more than by teeth, and most will simply position themselves between their family and anything unfamiliar.



A DAY IN THE LIFE

A 30–45 minute morning walk, short training sessions, and structured play keep the mind engaged; most adults then settle calmly indoors until an evening outing. They thrive on routine and family closeness. A bored, isolated Boerboel becomes an unhappy — and potentially problematic — one. An included Boerboel is the easiest giant breed you will ever live with.

BEST FOR

Experienced owners ready to lead, train, and include a powerful dog in daily family life.

NOT FOR

First-time owners, absentee homes, or anyone wanting a low-engagement "yard dog."

THE BIG MYTH

"Naturally aggressive." A well-bred Boerboel is stable and discerning. Poor breeding and poor raising create problems — the breed does not.





FROM PUPPY TO GUARDIAN

THE FIRST TWO YEARS

A Boerboel is not fully mature until roughly **24 months**. Understanding each stage — and what your dog needs from you in it — is the difference between a steady adult and an unmanageable one.

STAGE	WHAT'S HAPPENING & WHAT THEY NEED FROM YOU
8–16 wks	The critical socialization window. Your puppy is a sponge — calm, positive exposure now shapes the adult more than anything you do later.
4–8 mo	Explosive growth — 10+ lb a month is normal. Keep them lean (you should feel ribs easily) to protect developing joints. Everything gets chewed.
8–14 mo	Adolescence. Your sweet puppy tests every rule and acts like training never happened. Stay calm and consistent; it passes.
12–18 mo	The guarding instinct switches on. A dog that greeted everyone starts announcing visitors. This is normal — it needs guidance, never encouragement.
18–24 mo	Maturity arrives. The calm, discerning adult Boerboel emerges. The work of year one pays off for the next decade.

GROWTH RULE #1 — PROTECT THE JOINTS

Because Boerboels grow so large so fast, their joints are vulnerable during development. **Keep your puppy lean, feed a quality large-breed formula, and avoid forced running, repetitive jumping, and stairs before maturity.** Slow, steady growth is the single best investment in a long, sound life.

GROWTH RULE #2 — LEAD EARLY, LEAD KINDLY

A 15-pound puppy that jumps on guests is cute. A 150-pound adult doing the same is dangerous. Teach leash manners, impulse control, and a rock-solid recall **while your dog is still small enough to correct gently.**





GETTING THIS RIGHT MATTERS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE

SOCIALIZING A GUARDIAN BREED

Socializing a Boerboel is different from socializing a Labrador. The goal is **not** a dog who loves everyone. The goal is **neutrality** — a dog who has seen the world, decided most of it is boring, and reserves judgment for a genuine threat.

1 EXPOSE, DON'T FLOOD

Between 8 and 16 weeks, calmly introduce traffic, crowds, other animals, surfaces, sounds, and people of every description. Watching from a comfortable distance counts. Being mobbed by ten strangers does not — that creates fear, not confidence.

2 NEVER ENCOURAGE SUSPICION

Do not train "protection," tease, or reward barking at people. A Boerboel's guarding instinct arrives on its own at 12–18 months. A dog taught suspicion early becomes a liability, not a guardian.

3 LET THEM CHOOSE TO ENGAGE

Never drag a hesitant puppy toward what worries it. Confidence built by the dog's own choice lasts a lifetime; confidence forced by a leash collapses under pressure.

WHY NO REPUTABLE BREEDER SELLS "PROTECTION TRAINING"

A stable Boerboel protects its family by instinct and three centuries of selection. The protection comes standard — your job is socialization and obedience. If anyone is marketing sharpened aggression in a puppy, walk away. That is not a guardian. **That is a liability with paws.**





WHAT EVERY BUYER SHOULD UNDERSTAND

HEALTH & GENETICS

Boerboels are generally robust, but like all giant breeds they carry specific risks. Knowing them lets you ask the right questions — and verify the answers — before you commit.

CONDITIONS TO KNOW

- ▲ **Hip & elbow dysplasia** — screened before breeding
- ▲ **Cardiac conditions** — evaluate the heart
- ▲ **Eye issues** — entropion / ectropion in some lines
- ▲ **Vaginal hyperplasia** & some orthopedic issues
- ▲ **Bloat / GDV** — the giant-breed emergency (see below)

TESTING TO ASK FOR

SCREENING	VERIFY AT
OFA Hips & Elbows	OFA database
Cardiac exam	OFA / cardiologist
Eye exam (CAER)	OFA CAER
DNA panel	Embark
SABBS appraisal	SABBS records

KNOW THE SIGNS OF BLOAT (GDV) — IT IS AN EMERGENCY

Deep-chested giants can suffer gastric torsion, where the stomach fills with gas and twists. Watch for a **distended abdomen, unproductive retching, drooling, restlessness, and collapse**. This kills within hours — go to an emergency vet immediately. Reduce risk with measured meals and calm rest around feeding.

WHAT A SABBS APPRAISAL ACTUALLY MEANS

Unlike a pedigree that only records ancestry, a SABBS appraisal is a hands-on evaluation where a trained appraiser physically scores an adult against the standard — structure, movement, health traits, temperament. Dogs must earn a qualifying score to be bred. **If a breeder can't tell you their dogs' scores, ask why.**

Nothing in this guide is veterinary advice. Always direct medical questions about your dog to a licensed veterinarian.





FEEDING FOR A LONG, SOUND LIFE

NUTRITION & THE GIANT BREED

With a giant breed, **how** you feed matters as much as what you feed. The goal in puppyhood is not a big puppy fast — it is a correctly built adult, grown slowly enough to protect the joints.

CHOOSE A LARGE-BREED FORMULA

Use a food formulated for large or giant breeds, with controlled calcium and a correct calcium-to-phosphorus ratio. This deliberately slows bone growth — which is exactly what you want.

DON'T OVER-SUPPLEMENT

Adding extra calcium or "growth" supplements to a balanced food can cause more harm than good in a growing giant. When in doubt, feed a complete diet and ask your vet.

FEED TO BODY CONDITION

Keep your dog lean through growth — you should feel ribs easily under a light layer. Lean puppies have measurably fewer joint problems as adults.

GUARD AGAINST BLOAT

Feed measured meals 2–3× daily rather than one large one, and keep exercise calm for an hour around meals. Ask your vet about a preventive stomach tack (gastropexy).

A SIMPLE FEEDING RHYTHM

8–16 WKS

3 measured meals a day of large-breed puppy food. Fresh water always available.

4–12 MO

2–3 meals a day. Adjust portions to keep the dog lean as growth accelerates.

12+ MO

Transition toward 2 adult meals a day. Recheck body condition monthly.

THE ONE-SENTENCE VERSION

Feed a quality large-breed diet in measured meals, keep your dog lean, and grow it slowly. Do that and you will prevent more problems than any supplement ever could.





PLAN BEFORE YOU COMMIT

TRUE COST OF OWNERSHIP

A Boerboel is a 10-year commitment, and the purchase price is a fraction of the real investment. Giant breeds cost more to feed, medicate, and insure than most dogs. Typical U.S. ranges:

LINE ITEM	TYPICAL RANGE
First-year veterinary care (exams, vaccines, spay/neuter)	\$800 – \$2,000
Quality large-breed food	\$100 – \$200 / month
Supplies & setup (XL crate, beds, bowls, gear)	\$500 – \$1,000
Training (strongly recommended for this breed)	\$300 – \$2,000
Pet insurance	\$40 – \$100 / month
Grooming & routine care	\$150 – \$300 / year
First-year total (excluding the puppy)	\$4,500 – \$8,500+
Annual cost after year one	\$2,000 – \$4,000

BUYER'S MATH

If a Boerboel's price seems too good to be true, ask what was skipped to get there – health testing, appraisals, socialization. **You will pay that difference later at the veterinarian, with interest.** A well-bred, health-tested puppy is the cheapest one you will ever own.





HOLD EVERY BREEDER TO THIS STANDARD

CHOOSING A RESPONSIBLE BREEDER

Green Flags

- ✓ Health testing you can verify yourself (OFA, SABBS)
- ✓ Puppies raised in the home, not in isolation
- ✓ Both parents stable and viewable in person
- ✓ Structured early socialization before go-home
- ✓ Written contract, health guarantee, lifetime support
- ✓ They screen *you* — a good breeder asks questions

Red Flags

- ✗ No health testing, or "vet checked" offered as a substitute
- ✗ Multiple litters available year-round, always in stock
- ✗ You are not allowed to meet the mother
- ✗ Puppies sold to anyone, no questions asked
- ✗ Markets "protection trained" or sharpened aggression
- ✗ No written contract or health guarantee

FIVE QUESTIONS TO ASK ANY BOERBOEL BREEDER

- ▲ What health testing have the parents completed, and where can I verify it?
- ▲ Can I meet the dam, and ideally the sire, in person?
- ▲ How are your puppies socialized during the first eight weeks?
- ▲ What support do you provide after the puppy goes home?
- ▲ Why did you select this specific breeding pair?

THE STANDARD PROTECTS YOU

Whether you buy from us or anyone else, hold your breeder to this bar. **The breed deserves it — and so does your family.**





THE HOMECOMING

BRINGING YOUR BOERBOEL HOME

GIANT-BREED SHOPPING LIST

CRATE	XL / 54" with a divider that grows with the puppy
BED	Orthopedic — critical for heavy joints
BOWLS	Stainless steel + a slow-feeder to reduce bloat risk
FOOD	Large-breed puppy formula (same as breeder's)
LEASH	Six-foot flat lead + a long training line
COLLAR	Sturdy flat buckle; size up as they grow
CHEWS	Durable, giant-safe chew toys for teething
CARE	Grooming brush, nail grinder, enzyme cleaner



THE FIRST 72 HOURS

- ▲ Keep the routine calm and predictable — decompression, not a party
- ▲ Begin crate training immediately with positive reinforcement
- ▲ Feed the same food on the same schedule the puppy is used to
- ▲ Schedule a veterinary wellness visit within the first few days
- ▲ Limit visitors — there will be plenty of time to show off your Boerboel

SET THE TONE EARLY

The habits you allow in week one become the habits of a 180-pound adult. **Decide your rules before the puppy arrives** — where it sleeps, what furniture is allowed, how it greets people — and keep everyone in the household consistent.





BEFORE YOU GO

QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK EVERY WEEK

Are Boerboels good first dogs?

Honestly, no. Wonderful dogs, but demanding as a first breed. If you've never trained a dog through adolescence, work with a trainer from day one — or gain experience with an easier breed first.

Do they need protection training to guard my family?

No — and please don't. Guarding is bred into them across three centuries. Your job is socialization and obedience; the protection comes standard.

How much space do they really need?

Less than you think, more than an apartment. A fenced yard helps, but an exercised, included Boerboel rests near its people most of the day. Exercise and inclusion matter more than square footage.

Can they live with children and other pets?

Yes — with proper socialization and supervision, they're famously gentle with their family's children, and usually fine with pets raised alongside them. Adult introductions take more management.

Male or female — which is better?

Both make superb guardians; choose on household fit, not myth. If you already own a dog, pick the opposite sex — same-sex pairings (especially two females) are the most common source of conflict.

THANK YOU FOR READING

KEEP LEARNING. BUY RESPONSIBLY.

This guide was compiled by **W3 Gods Boerboels**, a health-tested, SABBS-registered program in Tracy, California.

If you'd like to talk Boerboels, ask a question, or explore upcoming litters, we're always happy to help — no pressure, ever.

[W3GODSBOERBOELS.COM](https://w3godsboerboels.com)

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