

Buying a Boerboel



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Buying a Boerboel brings with it lots of love, pleasure, and joy, as well as a sense of security. It also comes with certain responsibilities – the most important of which is to have the necessary information to take an informed decision.

First, consider your needs and whether you have the means to care for the dog for its entire life? Do you want a puppy or an adult dog? A male or a bitch? One or two dogs? Are you looking for breeding stock, a watchdog, or a companion and playmate for your children? Do you and your family have the necessary time to pay attention to the very specific raising and training requirements of a Boerboel? Do you have sufficient space and a secure environment for a large breed dog?

Second, obtain as much information as possible about the Boerboel and breed standards by talking to SABBA office bearers, breeders and members. Go to [appraisal days](#) in your area, and do not hesitate to ask questions.

Formalities checklist

Once you have decided that a Boerboel is just the dog that you want, it is time to start visiting a selected number of breeders, or communicating with them if distance is a problem. It is in your own interests to buy from a SABBA registered breeder, and to insist on proof of his/her membership.

During this communication process, make sure to exchange at least the following information:

- Make it clear to the breeder what type of dog you want, and for what purpose you will be buying it, e.g. top of the litter for breeding purposes, or as a pet. A responsible breeder will ask similar questions in any event, to ensure that the dog he/she is selling will fit in with its new owner and be cared for under the best possible conditions.
- As a buyer, you should narrow down your choice of dog by evaluating the following features (in order of priority): temperament and characteristics; conformation/build; general health; pedigree, bloodlines and kinship; and colour. Ask to see and interact with the parents and/or other siblings. If both parents are not on the premises, ask for photographs or contact details of their owner/breeder.
- Insist on seeing (and receiving when you buy) the following documentation:
 - The SABBA registration certificates of both the sire and dam of the dog that you are interested in. These certificates contain the pedigrees of three generations, as well as the appraisal points of the parents.
 - The SABBA birth certificate, if the dog is a puppy. This certificate contains the puppy's pedigree information over five generations.
 - The parents' test results for genetically hereditary diseases (e.g. hip dysplasia, vaginal hyperplasia, and entropion/ectropion - eye conditions).
 - Veterinary certification that the dog's inoculations are up to date.
- The date on which you will be taking delivery of your dog. Never agree to accept a puppy younger than six weeks. The best age for a puppy to be separated from its mother and siblings is between six and nine weeks. During this period, they must learn the basics of canine socialisation, and also be exposed to as many people of all ages as possible, as well as to different environments.
- Check the import and export regulations of relevant countries, if you will not be buying locally. Most breeders will have such information at hand.
- Ask what guarantees the breeder provides, and get a written guarantee if you are buying a dog for breeding purposes. No breeder will continue to breed with a dog that has produced pups with defects that may be of genetic origin on more than one occasion. A guarantee will not apply if you buy the dog 'as is', but bear in mind that buying a 'bargain' may cost you dearly!

Physical attributes checklist

Remember the importance of studying the SABBA Breed Standard. For first-time Boerboel owners selecting the 'right dog' is extremely difficult, but the guidelines below are helpful in looking at puppies of about six weeks (as well as adult dogs, for that matter).

- Male puppies must have two testicles descended into the scrota. Females must have no less than eight teats.
- The recognised colours are any shade of yellow, brown or brindle – with or without a mask.
- There must be sufficient pigmentation: a completely black nose, black toenails, black lips, and no pink on the footpads. The skin and hair around the eyes and the genitals must be black, and the palate should be as black/dark as possible.
- The teeth must be strong and healthy – preferably with a scissor bite. If the bottom lip protrudes forward of the top lip (under the nose) the dog will have an incorrect bite.
- Check the tread. Neither the fore- nor the hind legs may swing in or out. If you are unsure, place the puppy on a table, stand behind it. Make it stand on the hind legs by picking it up by its cheeks. Look at which way the forepaws turn when viewed from behind – this is how the dog will tread in adulthood.
- Check for balance and strong musculature, and the attachment of the head to the shoulder blades.
- Angulation of the forequarter. The upper arm of the foreleg must slant forward at a 30° angle and the shoulder-blade at 30° backwards.
- The earflaps should attach at, and hang neatly alongside, the side of the head. There should also be reasonable space between the ears.
- The tail is an extension of the spine, and should be set high. It may be long or docked (prohibited by law in certain countries, but not in South Africa). A skew or curly tail may be indicative of another breed in the bloodline, or of a problem with the spine.
- The coat must be soft and dense with short and smooth hair, with a high hair count per surface area.
- Angulation of the hindquarter. Seen from the side, the hind legs should not be straight, and seen from behind, should not be overly cow-hocked. (Note that all Boerboel pups appear to be slightly cow-hocked.)

Last, but most important: accept that the perfect Boerboel has yet to be bred. If you have done your 'homework' by following the above advice, and you are confident that you will be able to have a life-long relationship with the dog of your choice, then you have found THE PERFECT BOERBOEL!

Further reading and contact persons:

1. [The Boerboel - South Africa's own](#) by Anemari Pretorius
2. [SABBA Website - Standards](#)
3. [SABBA Website - Breed Standard](#)
4. [SABBA Website - Board Members](#)