

Greater Swiss Mountain Dog

Origin & Purpose

The ancestors of the Greater Swiss Mountain dog are the powerful tri-colour dogs referred to as “Butcher Mastiffs” whose ancestors had in the past been widely spread across Europe, bred as guard, draught or droving cattle dogs. In 1908, Dr Albert Heim was present at a show and saw two short-haired Bernese Mountain Dogs and immediately recognized them as survivors of the larger Butcher Mastiff that were in the verge of extinction. In 1912, the Swiss Greater Mountain Dog club was formed to implement a breeding program to restore the breed. Today these dogs are also bred in other European countries, they are especially appreciated as family dogs due to their calm reliable temperament.

General Appearance

The Greater Swiss Mountain Dog is a draft and drover breed and structurally should appear as such. It is a tricolour, sturdy, heavy boned and well muscled dog. In spite of his size and weight, it is agile. The difference between the sexes is distinctly obvious.

Temperament

Self-confident, alert, watchful and fearless in everyday situations. Good natured and devoted towards people familiar to him. Self-assured with strangers. Medium temperament.

Size

Height at the withers:

Males: 25 inches to 28 inches (65 cm to 72 cm).

Females: 24 inches to 27 inches (60 cm to 68 cm)

Important Proportions

- Body length (measured from the point of the shoulder to the point of the buttock) to height at withers = 10:9
- Depth of chest to height at withers = 1:2
- Length of skull to length of muzzle = 1:1
- Width of skull to width of muzzle = 2:1

Coat & Colour

Coat: Double coat consisting of thick, outer coat of medium length and dense undercoat. The latter as dark grey or black as possible. Short outer coat permissible if there is undercoat.

Colour: Typically tricolour. Main colour black with symmetrical, reddish-brown (tan) markings and clean white markings. The reddish-brown colour is situated between the black and the white markings on the cheeks, above the eyes, on the inside of the ears, on both sides of the forechest, on all four legs and underneath the tail. The white markings are on the head (blaze and muzzle), running down unbroken from the throat to the chest, also on the feet and the tip of the tail. Between the blaze and the reddish-brown markings above the eyes, a band of black should remain. A white patch on the neck or a white collar around the neck is tolerated.

Head

Strong corresponding to the body, but not heavy. Dogs stronger in head than bitches. **Skull:** flat and broad. The frontal furrow beginning at the stop gradually runs out towards the top. **Stop:** hardly pronounced. **Nose:** black. **Muzzle:** strong, longer than its depth. Must not be pointed, seen either from above or in profile. Nasal bridge straight, without furrow. **Lips:** barely developed, well fitting. Black pigmentation. Not pendulous. **Jaw/Teeth:** strong jaws; complete, strong and regular scissor bite. The absence of two teeth (premolar 1 and/or premolar 2) is tolerated. Absence of the molars 3 (M3) is not taken into account. **Eyes:** almond-shaped, of medium size, neither deep set nor protruding. Hazel to chestnut brown, with alert, friendly expression. Lids close fitting. Eye rims dark. **Ears:** of medium size, triangular and set on fairly high. In repose hanging flat and close to the cheeks, but raised forward when attentive. Well covered with hair, both inside and outside.

Neck

Strong, muscular, rather thick-set, without dewlap.

Forequarters

Straight and parallel when seen from the front, set rather broad. Shoulders: shoulder blade long, strong, well laid back, close-fitting to the body and well muscled, forming a not too obtuse angle with the upper

arm. Forearm: heavy boned and straight. Pasterns: firm, seen from the front in straight line with the forearm; seen from the side almost vertical.

Body

Slightly longer than its height at the withers. **Back:** moderately long, strong and straight. **Loins:** broad and well muscled. **Croup:** Long and broad. Gently sloping. Never higher than the withers or abruptly slanting. **Chest:** strong, broad, reaching to the elbows. Seen in cross section, the ribcage is roundish oval shaped, neither flat nor barrel-shaped. Forechest well developed. **Belly and underline:** belly and flanks barely tucked up.

Hindquarters

Straight and not too close when seen from the back. Metatarsus and feet turning neither in nor out. Dewclaws may be removed. **Upper thigh:** fairly long, broad, strong and well muscled. Stifle: forming a distinctly obtuse angle. **Lower thigh:** fairly long. **Hock:** strong and well angulated. **Feet:** strong, pointing straight ahead, with well-knit, well arched toes and strong nails.

Tail

Set-on harmoniously following the croup, fairly heavy and reaching to the hocks. Pendulous in repose; when alert and in movement carried higher and slightly curved upwards, but never curled or tilted over the back.

Gait

In all gaits, balanced movement with good reach. Free stride reaching well out in front with good drive from the hindquarters. At the trot, coming and going, legs moving forward in a straight line.

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.

- Unreliable behaviour
- Absence of any teeth other than 2 PM1 and/or PM2 (Premolar 1 or 2). The M3 are not taken into account. Level bite.
- Light eyes. Lids not close fitting

- Coat & Colour: visible yellow-brownish or light grey undercoat. Colour and markings not clear
- Mismatching
- Absence of white markings on the head; blaze too wide
- White markings on muzzle reaching distinctly beyond the corners of the mouth
- White pasterns or hocks (“boots”) reaching beyond the pastern joints or hock joints
- Noticeably asymmetrical markings

Disqualification

- Serious faults in temperament (fear, aggressiveness)
- Overshot or undershot mouth, wry mouth
- Entropion, Ectropion
- One or two blue eyes (wall eye)
- Short coat without undercoat
- Long coat
- Other than tricolour coat
- Main colour other than black
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities shall be disqualified

Note:

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