

BELGIAN SHEPHERDS

Intro: The purpose of this article is to help you decide if you should consider a Belgian Shepherd as a canine companion. Although they make *very* cute puppies (see left) it is important to consider the requirements of you as an owner of this breed.



Breed History, Purpose and Characteristics: The breed originated in Belgium during the 1800's and four different coat varieties are now recognised as the one Belgian Shepherd Breed as per the Australian National Kennel Council ([ANKC](#)). All coats require regular grooming and maintenance, although owners often report Belgian Shepherds do not have a "doggy" smell! Females generally weigh between 20-25Kg and males between 25-30Kg. The Belgian Shepherd should give the impression of elegant strength and although its origins are as a herding breed they are renowned for their general sporting capabilities.

There are four variations of the Belgian Shepherd:



Tervuren (pronounced Ter-view-ren)

Laekenois (pronounced Lack-in-wah)

Groenendael (pronounced Gron-en-dahl)

Malinois (pronounced Mal-in-wah)

The Belgian Shepherd should be watchful and active with a strong sense to protect property and its owner. Anecdotally, owners describe the Belgian shepherd as loyal, affectionate, fiercely intelligent and have a great sense of humour. They are always happiest when they have a job to do and need plenty of exercise. These characteristics have resulted in the breed being well suited to many tasks including military service, border patrol, therapy dogs and, of course, herding. Their physical and mental capabilities make them extremely adaptable, including recurrent use in for TV or movie casting! A recent example being the movie "[Max](#)".



Recreational Sporting Opportunities: For those who can't wait to have a running buddy or take on dog sports this could be the perfect dog for you! There are a large range of dog sports and Belgian Shepherds take to these opportunities readily. Sporting activities can include Agility/RallyO, Herding, Flyball, Lure Coursing and Tracking. Social media is a great place to start seeing examples of people working with their Belgian Shepherds. For example Instagrammer "[2tervs](#)" ([image credit to Melissa Anne Photography](#)), who has some great Australian video and photo content.

Conclusion: If you decide you are up to the task, owning a Belgian Shepherd will be extremely rewarding and you will find yourself with a fantastic canine companion and devoted friend. For further information please don't hesitate to reach out and contact your nearest Belgian Shepherd Club or reputable breeder.