

## THE BORZOI

**HISTORY:** The Borzoi is an ancient breed, originating in Russia. It is a big and powerful, yet elegant and beautiful dog bred in Imperial Russia to hunt hare, foxes and sometimes wolves. They spread to Europe and America at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. People were in awe when they first saw these beautiful creatures.

**GENERAL:** To own a Borzoi is one of the most fulfilling experiences a person can have, providing that you understand the breed and its unique personality and needs. The Borzoi is a big dog and the male can grow up to 34 inches in height. They need ample exercise and a fair amount of grooming to look their best. They are not big eaters and may be finicky as far as food is concerned. Individual Borzois may have their own favourite titbits which can vary from watermelon to chocolate to butter, etc. They are generally very dignified eaters, unlike other breeds. They always prefer their food and water bowl lifted off the ground so that they can comfortably stand and eat without having to bend down.

**COAT:** Their coats vary from straight to curly and the colours from white to self-black with all the variations in-between. The coats need regular brushing.

**PERSONALITY:** The personalities of Borzoi differ considerably and each dog is a unique individual. A lot depend on the puppy's initial socialization. It is imperative that potential owners buy puppies from recognized breeders. A puppy's character and social skills are normally imprinted during the first few months. Responsible breeders will only hand puppies over to new owners after 12 – 15 weeks.

**PUPPIES:** The feeding of a Borzoi puppy is very important because inadequate food at an early age can cause various growth problems. New owners are advised to speak to the breeder from which they bought their puppies to attain the proper diet. Normally Borzoi puppies are only fully grown at the age of 2. They may go through various odd stages and owners should be patient - their duckling will eventually change into a swan!

**GUARD:** New owners often ask if the Borzoi is a good guard dog. The answer is yes and no. They are very large and will therefore be a deterrent. Some will defend their homes and owners but that may differ from dog to dog. If you really want a professional guard dog, rather buy a dog from a specialized guard dog breed.

***OTHER ANIMALS:*** Borzoi are instinctive hunters and always enjoy a chase. It is therefore necessary to keep your Borzoi in a properly fenced area. They are notoriously single-minded and may easily get lost or run over by a motorcar. They need to socialize with other animals and new animals should be introduced with caution and supervision. A Borzoi will always be a hunter and although they can happily live with other animals, anything may trigger their hunting instincts. Borzoi don't socialize well with aggressive and hyper-active breeds.

***CHILDREN:*** The Borzoi gets on well with small children but children must be taught to respect the Borzoi's aloof personality and its notorious over-sensitiveness. Borzois don't like to be crowded and overbearing children can cause a problem.

You should give your Borzoi ample personal space which includes a special place to relax. Normally this will be your favourite sofa or a cool corner in the shower or kitchen. They will often approach you just to make sure they are not alone. If a Borzoi needs something it sometimes charms you with the very typical Borzoi smile which we all love so much.

Borzois need soft bedding to prevent them from developing abrasions.

They generally do not bark as often as most other breeds but may sometimes howl in a very wolf-like manner. They can be considered a quiet breed.

***BEFORE YOU BUY:*** To buy a Borzoi, you must remember that it is a commitment for the duration of the dog's life which is normally about 8 years, but may be longer. Borzois don't like changes in their environment and although they will adapt to a new owner, it is always a traumatic experience. Before you buy a Borzoi make sure that you will be able to give the dog the love, attention, understanding and commitment that he or she deserves – you will gain a friend, companion and soul mate that will enrich your life immensely.