

What's a Tibetan Mastiff Like?

Take it from an owner, the Tibetan Mastiff is a highly intelligent and independent dog.

By Allan Reznik

Q. I see in your photo what looks to be your Tibetan Mastiff. I have heard that they are hard to train, dominant, independent, constant barkers, and that because they are a relatively new breed, their behavior is unpredictable. I am attracted to this breed, but from what I have heard I'm hesitant. What can you say, as an owner, about the breed?

A. I'm impressed! Yes, the dog in the photo is, indeed, a Tibetan Mastiff – a four-month-old blue-and-tan male puppy.

The breed is certainly dominant and independent, primitive and aloof. "Hard to train" is a relative term, and it depends on your frame of reference. They are quite feral and cat-like, rather like sighthounds. Sighthounds as well as Tibetan Mastiffs are certainly more of a challenge to train than a Golden Retriever, a Border Collie, or a Sheltie. They are highly intelligent dogs and don't see the purpose of repetition.

The Tibetan Mastiff is historically a night barker, but this would be more of an issue if the dog slept outside at night. Provided the dog has sufficient exercise, most adults are quiet and well-mannered indoors.

As for "relatively new breed," well, perhaps it is to the American Kennel Club roster. The breed is actually an ancient one, and forebear of many of the mastiff breeds. Temperaments vary among bloodlines, and some are more "guardy" than others. Early and ongoing socialization is a must in this breed, as it is with other flock-guardian breeds. When considering breeders, ask how the puppies have been socialized, and try to visit in person, if possible, to meet the parents of the litter. Sometimes the grandparents will be there as well. So much the better.

For more information about Tibetan Mastiffs, [click here](#).