

Meet the Breed: Handsome Hulk

The striking Dogue de Bordeaux turns heads and wins hearts wherever it goes.

By Kim Campbell Thornton

When Kristin Unger was watching the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show on TV in 2006, the Dogue de Bordeaux had just been accepted into the American Kennel Club's Miscellaneous Class, the waiting room for breeds not yet approved. "I told my dogs that this was the first step, and one day we would see the Dogue de Bordeaux on TV at Westminster," she says.

Unger then went to get something from the kitchen. When she returned, Ryder – Gothic Guardiëns October Ryder, that is – was watching the coverage intently. "It was as if he knew this was the big show, and he just kept getting closer and closer to the screen," she says.

Most people first encountered the Dogue de Bordeaux in the 1986 movie *Turner and Hooch*, starring Tom Hanks. That was the case with Unger, who is now a board member for the Dogue de Bordeaux Society of America, the breed's AKC parent club. But it wasn't until 10 years after the movie's release that Unger started looking for a Hooch of her own.

"I did massive amounts of research and contacted as many people as I could to discuss the breed," Unger says. "I went to many shows to meet people and visit with their dogs, getting hands-on experience with the breed, because until 1999, I had never seen a Dogue de Bordeaux in person, only in the movie."

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