

Congratulations on Your New Berger Picard

The Berger Picard Club of America welcomes you to the wonderful world of Berger Picards. Information is readily available to help your Berger Picard become a good citizen and family companion.



Berger Picards have unique personalities: they are very devoted and sincere, and at the same time, quite comical. Those of us who are privileged to share our lives with them know there is absolutely nothing like a Picard!

History

The Berger Picard (bare ZHAY pee CARR) or Picardy Shepherd is one of the oldest French herding breeds. Believed to have been brought to northern France around 400BC, with WWI and WWII being fought in the Picard's



home territory of northern France, the Berger Picard nearly became extinct and is still rare today.

Berger Picards were bred to herd sheep and other livestock as well as to

guard and protect their families. The required temperament to perform these tasks and physical characteristics have not changed much. With proper care and management hopefully these rare and beautiful dogs will continue as they have for many generations to come.

In depth history of the Berger Picard is available on the BPCA website internet and in books on the subject. We encourage you to learn about the history of the Berger Picard in order to understand the uniqueness of the breed.

General Appearance

The Berger Picard is a medium-sized, well-muscled dog, slightly longer than tall with a tousled yet elegant appearance. Their ears are naturally erect, high-set and quite wide at the base. Their eyebrows are thick, but do not shield their dark eyes. Yes, they really do smile! Their natural tail normally reaches to the hock and is carried with a slight J-curve at the tip. Their weather proof coat is harsh and crisp to the touch, not excessively long with a minimal undercoat. Coat colors fall into two basic colors: fawn and brindle.

Breed Characteristics

The Berger Picard's attributes include a lively, intelligent personality and a sensitive and assertive disposition that

responds quickly to obedience training. By and large Picards are laid back and mellow but they are known for having a stubborn streak and being reserved towards strangers.

Picards are energetic and hard working, alert, loyal and sweet-tempered with children. They are happiest and do best when they have a job to do. They also have a protective nature, making them a good guard dog. However, they are not excessive barkers.



The breed also has a well developed sense of humor making them an endearing companion, and they continue to be used very effectively as both sheep and cattle herders in their native land and elsewhere. At times, Picards may have an opinion and will freely share it with you. Either you have been gone from the house too long, or the neighbor is making a lot of dreadful noise, or they don't like the looks of the new dog that just came into the dog park, a Picard will let you know what he is thinking. This trait can be wonderfully refreshing or quite tedious.

Socialize! Socialize! Socialize!

Properly, well socialized Picards are a joy to be around. Although their temperament will never be the same as a typical Golden Retriever, some can and do, for example, make wonderful therapy dogs. They are also very loving towards their family. Consistent, regular socializing into adulthood in various environments such as outings with the family, regular visits in and around places where people frequent, and doggie classes of any kind just to name a few examples, will ensure the Picard a happy and healthy view of the world and the people in it.

Berger Picards are an ancient breed and it is important not to overlook the fact that they are inherently one owner dogs, which does have drawbacks that should be considered.

As they get older and if not properly exposed and socialized, Picards can become skittish and unfriendly around strangers. So a wise Picard owner must be intentional about making socialization happen.

Training

Training should begin as early as possible.

The French say that the training of the Berger Picard should be likened to an iron fist covered with a velvet glove. This would be consistently very firm but also soft on the outside. The sensitivity the Picard is inherently bred with in order to read and care for the flock also needs to be understood in his training so as not to ruin his temperament and sow mistrust.



The Picard respects knowledge and consistency as traits that make a good leader. But, he will try to take control of the situation if he feels that is needed – even if he would really rather not. It is his instinct that someone competent should be the one in charge. If facing challenges and traditional positive reinforcement methods are not doing the trick, the ability to think creatively/out of the box for solutions can be very helpful. Or, making sure you are able to find an experienced trainer who can understand that harsh corrections have a very great potential to cause a lot of harm with the Picard's ability to trust. Being too lenient is also a sign to your Picard you are not a good leader and will force him to put himself in that position. Although the choices he makes may seem reasonable to him, it may not be the best choice for people in our human environment. It is a tricky balance that must be prioritized of utilizing positive reinforcement and the use of correction that will not harm the sensitive nature of the Picard. Again, consistency will be very important in the process. Consistency should continue throughout the growing years from the earliest puppyhood until the three to four year period when your highly intelligent Picard's mind and body reaches mature adulthood.

Training should always be done in short intervals as the Picard is very smart and can become bored with repetition that other breeds may move or at least not mind!

Puppy Exercise

As with all breeds of dogs, caution should be taken not to over exercise developing puppies. Picards tend to be energetic, happy dogs, but at the same time stoic and may not give any indication that they are stressed. This can allow them to go far beyond reasonable limits which could lead to injury of the growth plates and growing joints. The rule of thumb for exercising your growing puppy is 5 minutes of exercise for each month of life and then provide a rest period 2 times a day.

Adult Exercise

Bred to work the fields, Picards are very athletic and revel in exercise. They enjoy swimming, running beside a bike, and a nice long walk. Some Picards will actually fetch balls. The Berger Picard also makes an excellent jogging companion. Exercise is therefore a must for this breed! Every day! Otherwise boredom will give way to destructive doggie behavior and rowdy play. In addition to herding, the breed's intelligence and sensitivity are also making them increasingly popular in dog sports like Agility, Tracking, Flyball, dock diving and FAST CAT.

Grooming

Picards are a very natural breed, and require limited grooming.



The rough, double coat does not mat or require special care to yield its rustic, tousled appearance. Brushing should be done about once a week. No trimming is necessary. Long fringe on the ears should be removed by hand plucking or hand stripping only. Shampoos formulated for crisp coats are

recommended. General dog maintenance includes trimming the nails, cleaning inside of ears and teeth.

Health

Overall, Picards are a very healthy breed. The average life expectancy of a Picard is 12-13 years. Picard health issues include hip dysplasia, cancer, eye disorders (PRA, retinal folds).

The Berger Picard Club of America recommends that all dogs being bred should meet the CHIC (Canine Health Information Center) requirements:

- screened for hip dysplasia (OFA, PennHIP), inheritable eye defects, advanced ECHO cardiac exam
- participation in the CHIC DNA repository and in at least one of the following health electives, OFA elbow dysplasia evaluation or OFA thyroid evaluation.

All puppy buyers are encouraged to obtain puppies from breeders who publicly publish their breeding stock's recommended health results in the OFA database, located at <https://www.ofa.org/>

For More Information

Please consider joining the Berger Picard Club of America. The BPCA offers many activities, regular newsletters with updates concerning the breed and is a great way to meet other owners who are available to help with any questions you may have. In addition, you will be helping to support, protect and preserve Berger Picards as the beautiful, rustic unique breed they are! <https://bpclubofamerica.org/>