

Mount Templeton Maremma's 0466 077 532

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## Some pointers on having and rearing a Maremma Dog

(Derived from my personal experience of the breed)

Your puppy is not fully covered by its vaccinations until ***One Week after its 12 week shots***. For this reason you are best not to take it out in public until after this time. Parvo Virus in particular can be transferred through the paws on the ground so not worth taking the risk.

Your pup will grow into a large dog – anywhere from 35 kgs to 60 kgs. This is a lot of weight to carry around so you need to take care of its joints. ***No jumping fences or jumping down from the back of utes*** – avoid any activities that will put stress on its hips and knees in particular.

Your pup is not for breeding. Being a large breed, it is ***recommended not to de-sex until it is at least 18 months old***. The reason for this is that de-sexing removes the organs that produce growth hormones. Not having these hormones will very likely lead to arthritis and other joint problems in later life, and in large breeds this can be totally debilitating. Maremmas can live to 15 years of age so their joints need to serve them well for many years.

If pregnancy is an issue, the breeder will help you source a vet who does ***sterilisation*** (Tubal Ligation and Vasectomy). You can then choose to have him or her de-sexed once they reach maturity – 18 months to 2 years of age.

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The Maremma loves to *drink lots of water*, and in hot weather, likes to be able to lie in a tub or pool of water to stay cool. *Always ensure that they have access to lots of water* as they do drink heaps. This Green Pup is cooling off in her water container.



*Your Maremma will need to be trained* – not always easy with a free thinking and independent dog like these. Make sure it knows its boundaries with regular and consistent walking on a lead. Do not walk your dog off property as you are telling it that this is an OK area to be in so can promote roaming. Taking your dog out in the car to another locality altogether is fine.

Do not let your Maremma run with other working dogs – eg kelpies, border collies, healers. The Maremma learns quickly, and the difference between a Livestock Guardian Dog vs dogs that round up and control livestock will cause confusion and very likely bad behaviour. If your Maremma is caught chasing livestock, farmers will not hesitate to shoot them regardless of their protection instincts and guardian traits.

This brings me to containment of your Maremma, a lesson learnt the hard way. If you don't keep your Maremma contained, it will go looking for animals outside your property – eg hears a lamb in distress so will go looking for it (and sometimes bring it home). The Maremma can travel for miles and miles in relatively short periods of time. Whilst your dog will usually come back eventually, you do run the risk that it will be shot or take a fox bait and die. The Maremma doesn't usually jump, so you don't need a 6 foot fence. Our back yard/home paddock has a home built colour bond, post, rail and wire fence – overall height is 1300 mm. They can see out but not get out. They quickly learn that the security door handle is easy to move down ..... then freedom ..... never underestimate their abilities.



*Rene at the back fence*

Barley Grass is an enemy to both you and your Maremma. These prickles will make their way down to the skin, burrowing into it and causing pain and infection including abscesses that need draining by the vet. Make sure you check your pup/dog every couple of days for these evil things, paying particular attention to between the “fingers and toes”. The use of a high powered pet dryer will help you get to the skin and loosen the undercoat, making removal much easier.



It is not recommended to shave your Maremma. They have a double coat that insulates them from both the hot and cold. The coat will never return to the way it was so don't be tempted. I recommend using a Rake type comb for grooming. I have also purchased a Pet Dryer – the best \$75 I have ever spent as it helps shedding of the undercoat. Just make sure you get a powerful one – mine is 2800 watt sourced on line from Crazy Sales. See attached pic of air circulation through the maremma coat.



There are a number of Facebook pages in Australia dedicated to Maremmas. These are worth following as there are a lot of Maremma owners out there who will freely give you advice on most issues. Always remember to double check the info before acting on it as people have the best intentions and think that our dog is the best looked after. Always let common sense prevail, and if in doubt ASK AN EXPERT .....

Lastly, my male maremma Bob was bitten by a brown snake last year. He reacted well to antivenin and lived to tell the tale. Always take note when your Maremma is barking as they are usually telling you something – it is not often that they bark for no reason. Bob told me the snake was there and I did not listen. Luckily he got through – another lesson hard learnt. His symptoms included becoming wobbly on his feet and falling over, salivation and passiveness – he allowed the Vet to touch him – to shave his arm and put a needle in – get the drugs into his system. During the night Bob removed his Drip and by morning, the nurses were intimidated to the point where he went hungry as they were afraid to open the door to his cage. All in all, an experience I would rather not repeat.