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**Big Dogs - Bigger Job**

Most of the giant breeds shown here in Australia are from Group 6, the Utility Group, so I get to see most of them at some stage up close and personal. This is particularly so when I show at Erskine Park down in Sydney where you can't bring your vehicle right up to the ring and instead set up with brollies, tents etc. As a dog person I am always consumed by curiosity about other breeds. I cannot help but be awed by a good example of any breed. It would be nice to play Noah and have two of every kind as they all have beauty and attributes that are appealing. Still one wonders just how you lift a Saint Bernard into a hydrobath or even haul it through the doorway of a hydrobath big enough to take it.

How do you lift an Anatolian up onto a grooming table? Then just how much shampoo does one need to bath a Neapolitan? Have you seen the size and thickness of those toe nails? Do they make clippers big enough to cut them? I tend to stick my nose into what other people do with their breeds from sheer nosiness and a desire to learn. It beats gossip and maybe I can not only learn but offer assistance. When speaking to some lovely people with a giant breed I was interested to see they were feeding the dogs in the crates by the ring. I found that interesting as I don't feed my guys the night before a show and if another show follows on the next day, then I try to feed as early as possible. I like those dogs on their toes and perky.

It's sometimes a bit tricky opening up conversations with strangers about their breed and asking what and why they do things. I suggested that as a giant breed it might be a little more spry on its toes around the ring if not ready for a snooze after dinner. No-one had ever suggested such a thing so they tried it the following week and bingo, hit the jackpot and won. It's hard getting animation from these big guys. They don't rocket around a ring all light and flowing as does my breed but they can move according to their standard requirement with purpose and desire. I wondered that no-one had sought to help them as fellow exhibitors.

So pondering over the thought of getting a giant creature into some sort of confined bathing area and then the task of getting it to show presentation is a good exercise. I wonder if most do this every week when there is a show? I have encountered some whiffy large dogs at shows but in all fairness it must be some kind of achievement at any time to get and keep them clean. I suggest a light swish through with something not too demanding on the groomer or the dog - either a bucket routine or a hydrobath system with just Plush Puppy Hydrobath Wash which can be sluiced through to lightly cleanse. This is very low foaming and only needs a small amount to get the action going. It doesn't need to be scrupulously rinsed out either. Feet, legs and the undercarriage and face can be attended to with a diluted solution of Plush Puppy All Purpose Shampoo - this smells divine. Scrub if necessary with a

nail brush and rinse. If the feet area etc is white then use PP Whitening Shampoo. Condition if required with PP Silk Protein Conditioner again diluted at least 5:1 or 10:1. What to do with the slobber stains? You often find inside ears and around the mouth reddish staining which is not required at all. I did mention a mild lightening mix a few articles ago which I have been asked to repeat - for WHITE COATS ONLY – corn flour and Milk of Magnesia mixed together with 40 Vol peroxide to a paste. Mix only in a plastic dish and use a plastic tint brush. Apply to coat only, not skin and do not get anywhere near the eyes. Leave to dry and then brush excess out and wash off. The other alternative that is reasonably mild is Smokers Toothpaste. Apply, dry and brush out and rinse off. At the first sign of discomfort to the dog with either of these recipes, take it off immediately. Obviously with a big dog you would have bathed him the day before - it's a big job! So they can get whiffy between then and there at the show. They also tend to slobber again and pig root when peeing and your wonderful presentation has gone west. Use the PP Wonder Wash. Just spray, lather and rub off with a dry towel. Sparkling clean once again.

On the day you must brush well all the way through from skin to end. I hate to see matted coat at the root. So many breeds are just brushed over the top and the undercoat left to fend for itself. I like the skin to breath and to get rid of any dead or loose coat. Brush or comb right through. Takes time but the coat will regenerate quicker. Before brushing, spray with Plush Puppy Odour Muncher. Some breeds just have an odour - some more so than others. This will eliminate the whiffiness and leave a really nice fragrance on your dog. It also smells clean and freshly done. Great when you have a 2 or 3 day event away from home. We've already covered how to cover-up stains on the day in a previous article so get the PP Coverup Cream going and finish off with a nice light gloss of PP Shine and Comb or if something more intense is required, a light spray of PP Seabreeze Oil onto your hands and wipe along the topline etc. This is particularly good for thicker, coarser coats and if you must use on a single or finer coat, do so sparingly. A little bit goes a long way.

The hot weather is now upon us and it makes showing the larger breeds a bit harder - most don't like the heat. A handy standby if you must show when it's warmer is PP Show Reviver. A few drops first thing in the morning and roughly 45 minutes before you go on, gets the dog at least focused and moving. Frankly I don't like the heat any better either and I have been known to allocate these with a one for them one me attitude. That and lots of ice cold water and ice cubes for the dogs in their crates.

That last little hint is the best. Don't slosh the dog full of water just before going in the ring. Give him his water steadily throughout the day and then drop off the water well before show time and issue him instead with a dish or small bucket full of ice cubes. Keeps him cool and rehydrated without consuming too much. Nothing worse on a hot day than a belly full of food

and a gut full of water all sloshing around whilst you try to get him to give you performance.

Good luck to all the big dogs out there and I deserve a big slobber and a kiss from all of you.

## **CHERYL LECOURT**

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Natural Hydrobath and Bath Wash  
Cover Up Cream  
Odour Muncher  
Reviva Coat  
Seabreeze Oil  
Shine and Comb  
Wonder Wash