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Anthony J. Viganò (Paterson) & Associates.
Veterinary Surgeons

Spring 2004

The St. Bernard Road Test



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Saturday: 8.00am to 5.00pm
Sunday: 9.00am to 3.00pm
Public Holidays: 8.00am to 1.00pm





THE SAINT BERNARD Road Test

As featured on the Gary Carvolth and Friends Talking Perth Show Monday 4th September 2004



Also known as the St Barnhardshund, the Alpine Mastiff and the Bernhardiner, this gentle giant was developed by the Monks of the Hospice du grand St Bernard where they were used to assist the monks and travellers through the treacherous Alpine paths. They were also used as search and rescue dogs when avalanches occurred.

HISTORY:

This breed has ancient derivations with probable roots in the Roman Molossian dogs and are thought to be descended from the Tibetan mastiff and therefore originated from the mastiff brought to the Alps by the Romans around 1000 AD. The monks of the St Bernard Hospice are thought to have crossed this ancient mastiff with the Great Dane and the Great Pyrenees to develop this magnificent dog that from 1660-1670 were responsible for saving so many lives in this region of Switzerland and Italy. It was used as an avalanche and rescue dog in the snowy passes near the hospice and with its keen sense of smell and acute hearing (the dog is attributed with a 6th sense of foretelling impending storms and avalanches) was used to rescue thousands of lost travellers over three centuries.

APPEARANCE:

The St Bernard is a large, muscular dog with a powerful head and endowed with great strength.

There are two coat types, rough (which is slightly longer with feathering on thighs and legs) and smooth, and colours are white with tan, red, mahogany, brindle, and black, and in various combinations.

They are highly intelligent with a gentle expression and their large feet with strong, well arched toes essential for traversing snow plus their sense of smell and reputed 6th sense about impending storms and avalanches would have made them a comforting sight to lost travellers in the Alps.

They grow 61-70cm in height and weigh 50-91kg, living to between 8-10 years.



CHARACTERISTICS:

An extremely gentle and friendly dog they are very tolerant with children and other pets though need early socialization and obedience training whilst they are still of a manageable size.

Can you imagine an unruly untrained dog weighing 90kg?

Slow moving, patient and obedient they are very keen to please and together with their loyalty makes them a good family pet.

They are a good watch dog with their size being a deterrent in itself. One down side is that they are prone to drooling when they eat and drink.



WHO SHOULD HAVE ONE:

St Bernards make ideal family pets in view of their ambient, friendly nature, their tolerance of children and smaller pets and their devotion to the family.

They are fine in apartments though need regular exercise as they are quite inactive indoors and whilst they can live outside they prefer indoors with the family.

They have a low tolerance to hot weather, warm rooms and cars and so Perth is not an ideal climate or life style for them.

As puppies they should have restricted exercise until they are fully grown as growth anomalies can occur if they stress their long bones during the growth phase.

The coat requires regular grooming though it is not hard to keep it under control and they shed twice a year.

VETERINARY PROBLEMS:

Growth deformities are an issue as with all giant breeds so regulation of exercise and adherence to feeding the best of growth diets is essential in the young dog.

They suffer from Wobbler syndrome (instability of the cervical vertebrae), heart problems, skin problems, and hip and elbow dysplasia (early onset arthritis in the hips and elbows of hereditary origin).

Ectropions (turning out of the lower eyelids) are common, and bloat (distension of the stomach that can lead to gastric torsion and hence a surgical emergency) is seen as in all deep chested dogs, so careful feeding is essential to prevent this.

In summary this is a beautiful family dog though their sheer size is a deterrent for most people, and in Perth in our hot climate the dogs do not do well unless owners are prepared to keep them inside with regular coat maintenance.

Made famous by pictures depicting them with a brandy flask around their neck, this is a fallacy as they did not trek through the snow with this accessory but early artists depicting them in this way set the trend.





Cat Corner

A new feature of our quarterly newsletter will be to deal with or feline friends in their own space.

This I think they would rather approve of as this is generally how they like to live in the household, just off the mainstream of activity but ever watchful, and ready to join in at their own pace and when they feel inclined.

I will start this segment off with the 12 golden rules of cat ownership.



THE 12 GOLDEN RULES OF CAT OWNERSHIP:

1. Confine your cat at night. Cats which are indoors after dark live longer lives, are less likely to suffer road trauma or to be involved in fights.
2. Make sure your cat is vaccinated and receives yearly booster vaccinations. We have augmented this process here at Swanbourne by offering a wellness check for both dogs and cats which is a free "nurse" check 6 months after the annual vaccination. You will receive notification of this by mail and it will be 6 months after the vaccination. The annual check for booster vaccinations is much more than just a quick jab and involves a thorough health check, which is then backed up in 6 months by your complimentary wellness check.
3. Worm your cat every 3 months. This is important and forms part of the basis of good preventive health management and is also augmented by good flea control (one of the new monthly squeeze-ons...please, not a collar or flea rinse!)
4. Provide your cat with a warm sleeping basket. Cats love boxes and small areas where they feel secure all curled up.
5. Indoor cats need a nice warm area such as a window sill or similar where they can bask in the sun's rays. Beware with white cats and their ears in Perth as they can still get sunburnt in these situations
6. Make sure your cat is wearing a collar with all the identification and a microchip is an excellent adjunct to this as this provides permanent identification and most vets and havens in Perth have scanners these days in the event your moggie gets lost.
7. Feed your cat a nutritionally complete diet every day. The premium dry and canned foods are by far the best option.
8. Long coated breeds need regular grooming every day as mats and tangled fur provide a great haven for fleas which will drive your moggie mad
9. Indoor cats need a scratching post if you value your furniture. After all sharpening their claws comes naturally and it is not directed at you when they pick on your prized piece. Scratching posts these days can be quite decorative and some incorporate a feeding and sleeping box as well.
10. Litter trays need to be cleaned daily as cats are very fastidious creatures and I would recommend the new clumping litter products as the mess is much easier to clean up.
11. Sterilisation is essential if you are not intending to further populate the world with kittens. They make far better pets and this lessens the territorial issues that exist when unwelcomed visitors arrive (entire male cats, if your cat is a female).
12. When going on holidays make appropriate arrangements for the care of your moggie. This may mean having a friend live in or sending puss off to one of the many excellent boarding establishments. We board cats for short stays of a week or so but longer than this may be better furnished by one of the catteries such as West Coast Petcare Centre (who incidentally pick up and deliver to our practice at no extra charge).

So you see, owning a cat need not be a great commitment in time as cats are very independent but they do enjoy the creature comforts and your company even though they are not as demonstrative as their canine counterparts.





PUPi Management Classes: the mid school

Puppy Socialisation Classes at Swanbourne have been a popular Sunday morning event for some years.

There is no doubt that socializing your new puppy with other puppies, large and small is a very important part of the development of your new puppy to the dog you want him/her to be. The grounding at puppy school is, just like pre school for children, the beginning of a life long learning experience for your dog and one with which you as the new owner should be integrally involved.

Once you learn and understand the way your dog thinks then these basics can be applied to almost any situation you encounter along the highway of life.

Recently we as veterinarians have been concerned at the number of cases of separation anxiety that we have been seeing clinically in young adult dogs.

Garth Jennens from Amrex Behaviour Services is convinced that this problem is due to the closeness that exists between pets and their owners these days and exacerbated by the way some people approach puppy classes.

In the past there have been many golden rules of dog management that in recent times have largely gone by the board, just as the bringing up of children tends to less dogmatic these days.

Some of these are:

1. You should never feed the dog from your own table...how many of us feed the dog almost as one of the family these days
2. The dog should never be allowed on the furniture, and never never on the bed...how many of us now allow the dog to sleep on the bed with us

And so on.

As veterinarians we have no real problems with this in that a lot of the old rules, as with children, were far too rigid, and my favourite quote when people apologise for being anthropomorphic with their animals is "there are far worse things you could be doing than loving your dog"!

The reality is however that there are times when you need to leave your dog alone...like when you go to work to feed it (and yourself), when you go out with non canine company and so on.

Puppy Socialisation is all about rewarding your dog for good behaviour and to condition it into doing things on command.

In this way the dog becomes closer and closer to you and the family....great...BUT...what happens when you want to leave it. This is when the dog misses you and the family terribly. Becomes stressed, fretful and then destructive and willful.

The garden suffers, the washing on the line is fair game and in some cases furniture and household décor get trashed (not to mention the neighbours' annoyance at the incessant barking).

This is where we get involved in trying to sort this out.

Anyway, Garth Jennens has readdressed the way we approach puppy socialization and has also introduced a new mid school between the puppy classes which generally conclude at 12 weeks, and dog obedience classes that are best started at about 5 months.

So....we at Swanbourne are about to start the PUPi management class for graduates of puppy school and a prelude to Dog obedience with John Connell.

This will also act as a bridge between the two so that owners can see more clearly the pathway from the beginning to then end as it were. I have the distinct impression sometimes that owners drift out of puppy class thinking they (and the dog) know it all and they never make it to dog obedience.

How about taking a "whole-istic" view of these early months with your new friend:

STRATEGY:

1. puppy vaccinations
2. puppy socialization until 12 weeks
3. PUPi management classes until 16 weeks
4. Dog Obedience classes from 16 weeks

Makes sense to create a continuous forum right through then everyone knows where they are going and what to expect.

We have discounted the whole process including sterilization by 10% as an incentive (the Puppy Plus Package...coupon to be found in this newsletter) and I'll bet your dog and everyone who comes into contact with your new best friend both now and in the future, will love you for it!

Tony Vigano





The Puppy Plus Package:

The most important thing you can do for your new puppy is to properly socialise him/her particularly in view of the stringent new application of the Dog Act.

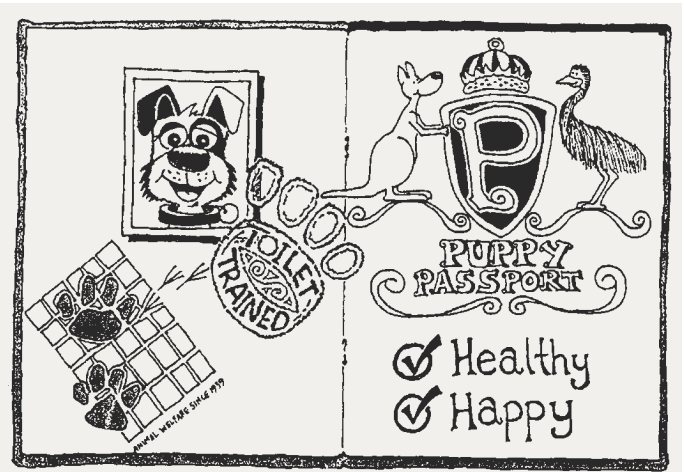
Legislation however is only a small part of the story and the benefits you will obtain from a well mannered dog in later life are far more important.

Instead of a stressful situation whenever your dog interacts with other people and animals on those wind down walks in the park at the end of the day, it will become the pleasurable experience it should be.

Your heart rate is said to go down when you pat a dog but is this always the case if your best friend is hell bent on tearing out the throat of everyone he/she sees on that walk?

The answer is simple. Puppy Class is the place to start when your new companion is malleable and receptive to new experiences of the pleasurable kind and a good start here sets he/she up for life. The next stage however is as important and so we have positioned John Connell's Dog Obedience classes to follow on and compliment puppy class.

After 6 weeks on the beach front at Swanbourne (what could be more enjoyable, even on these brisk Sunday mornings than an hour spent with like-minded dog lovers under the guidance of big John) you and your dog should be set up with a real understanding that will set the pattern for the rest of your relationship (maybe the next 15 years).




For our part we are keen to be part of this and so offer you the third part of the equation - an affordable package which includes a discount on the sterilisation of your new pet.

Therefore if you have just acquired a new puppy and are about to embark on the road to responsible pet ownership by attending the Swanbourne Puppy Class, ask about our package of puppy class/dog obedience class and discounted sterilisation. This plus the Petpro card which gives you 10% on all your over the counter products (wormers, flea products, and heart wormers) plus dog food make owning a dog much more affordable.

Ask Dot at reception next time you visit the Swanbourne Centre.

Tony Vigano



Petpro Veterinary Centre

Swanbourne

Puppy Plus Package



- This voucher entitles the bearer to:
- 10% discount on puppy class (4 class block), dog obedience & sterilisation package (within 6 months of issue).
- Petpro discount card which provides 10% discount on all over the counter products for the dog's lifetime.

**Not to be used in conjunction with other offers*

Authorised: _____

Expiry September 30th 2004





www.petpro.com.au - your vet online

What's new at Swanbourne Veterinary Centre

1. Our midweek evening Dog Obedience Classes.

To supplement our ever popular Sunday Classes at Swanbourne Oval, John Connell has agreed to hold a class under lights at College Park (the lower oval) on Wednesday evenings. The same format as the Sunday classes and just a bit more convenient for people who have heavy weekend commitments.

Please ring Dot or Nickee on 9384 2644 for more details

2. The UWASH dogwash.

This is a DIY dogwash which enables you to take control of your dog's bathing needs using our equipment 7 days a week. Quick and easy to use the Hydrobath takes the work out of the exercise and contains the dog while you get on with it. We also offer a free ampoule of ADVANTAGE flea control if you buy a standard pack of 4.

If you would rather have us do it for you we still offer this service 7 days a week but only until 1pm on weekends.

3. Our Pet Tags.

The revival of an old complimentary service of identification of dogs and cats we are offering a numbered tag to identify your best friend in the event he/she goes missing in the local area. The finder rings us 7 days a week and we can pass on your details. We of course still strongly recommend all dogs and cats be microchipped as this is the only sure and permanent method of identification.

4. Ambulance Service.

For those people unable to come to us we can arrange same day pick up and delivery home of your best friend should the occasion arise. This service is run in conjunction with our visiting vet service for vaccinations and the like.

5. Adopt-a-cat program.

We have beautiful kittens available most of the time for rehoming to the right person. They are all vaccinated, dewormed, sterilized and microchipped for around 50% of the normal cost of these important procedures. You will be giving a little stray a home but please, no surprise gifts. It is essential that the recipient of the gift of a kitten (or a puppy) be in on the selection process and the decision to take one on in the first place.

5. Petpro card.

Be sure to ask for your petpro card when next you come into Swanbourne. This covers all purchases other than professional fees and drugs, and after 10 registered purchases we will give you 10% of the total value back redeemable against your next purchase.

6. Puppy Plus Package.

The details are covered in this newsletter and offers you a 10% discount on the starter package when you buy a new puppy. Puppy school, PUPi management, Obedience Classes and sterilization are all included.

7. Premium Pet Food Offers.

There is always something on offer when you buy premium pet food from Swanbourne. Currently we are offering beach towels, water bottles and water wallets in preparation for your impending visits to the beach once the hot weather arrives. This plus cat igloos, ball throwers and so on are a regular feature. Just ask Dot or Nickee when next you come in.

8. Pet Accessories.

If we haven't got it we can get it in for you at short notice! Currently we have a 30% off offer on doggie coats and wind cheaters. We also stock every conceivable lead and collar... come in a have a look.

9. Our Web Site.

Don't forget to visit our bulletin board at www.petpro.com.au Currently Tony is road testing dogs each week on the Gary Carvolth Talking Perth Show at 2.15pm every Monday and these are all on the web site, as well as lots of other practice news and gossip.

10. Weight Loss Clinics with Kristy.

If you are having trouble keeping your best friend in trim, make an appointment to see Kristy who can tailor make a diet to suit your larger than life friend.

11. Grooming 5 days a week.

Rebecca is now at Swanbourne grooming 5 days a week so it is easier to get an appointment at short notice.

Visit our new **revised web site**
for up to date information about everything at Petpro

www.petpro.com.au

- › Information
- › offers
- › all about us
- › breed road tests
- › links to other sites
- › and much more.



UPDATED EVERY DAY





Petpro People

It is with much pleasure that we welcome back Dr Cameron Murray to the veterinary staff here at Swanbourne.

Cameron has been associated with Petpro since the beginning of 2000 when he took over as senior veterinarian at the Doubleview Centre.

When that practice was sold earlier this year Cameron stayed on but recently applied for a similar position here at Swanbourne and we welcome him back.

He commences on November 1st and he will augment the strong medical bias of this practice with his skill in these areas plus a strong interest in surgery.

Like Tony (the Cats) he is hoping that his team (the Dockers) will have a good year in the AFL in 2005 and there is no doubt that the staff football tipping competition will go through a renaissance next year.

I have no doubt that Cameron's friendly, quiet and thorough approach will be well suited to the Swanbourne practice.



OUR NEW AMBULANCE

After the sale of the Doubleview Centre we traded our two small combo vans in on a Toyota Hilux. This is more comfortable and our transported animals can now travel in the cab with their owners if they are accompanying their best friend to the hospital.



Distinctively marked with our name on the sides it also features our web address which is our bulletin board for all things of interest happening at Swanbourne.

Remember, if you are unable to visit us we can come to you as well as deliver dog and cat food, pick up for boarding and so on.



New Weekend and Public Holiday Hours:

As of immediately the Weekend and Public Holiday opening times will be as follows:

SATURDAY:

Office Hours: 8am until 5pm

Consulting Hours: 9am until 5pm

SUNDAY:

Office Hours: 8am until 3pm

Consulting Hours: 9am until 3pm

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

Office Hours: 8am until 1pm

Consulting Hours: 9am until 1pm





SWANBOURNE VETERINARY CENTRE

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★ Kids Corner ★

Children up to 12 years are invited to enter our drawing competition. Please post or return your entry to Swanbourne Veterinary Centre by 31st December 2004 for your chance to win.....

A years supply of Flea Control products for your pet!

Draw a picture of your pet in the space above...

Proudly sponsored by Bayer Australia



Name: _____

Age: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No: _____

Good Luck!

