



Expert Grooming Article



Saint Bernard

The mystical romance of the Saint as a rescue dog to helpless victims in snow disasters is well founded in his history as the "Hospice Dog" to the monks who founded their hospice for travellers and pilgrims in Switzerland's St. Bernard Pass. With origins dating back to the second century to Molossus dogs brought by the Roman armies, the breed has evolved through the careful custodianship of the monks and the valley farming communities as a watchdog, guardian and companion. His strength and size are of importance to his duties as well as a correct coat to be able to work in icy conditions. The words, powerful, strong, muscular, etc and an overall request for an impressive appearance are the watchwords for the silhouette this dog is required to make. (read more over page...)



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Your "Alpen Dog" or "Sacred Dog" as the Saint has been referred to in past lives, requires his coat to have a substantial undercoat and like most Alpine or Arctic breeds, a coat texture that withstands the ice and elements. Tough without feeling rough is the call for this coat. His coat is also either white with red or red with white in all forms of red shades and needs constant care in most warm climates to prevent coat fade and damage. Red hair just seems to burn or dehydrate faster than other colours. Coupled with a request for the coat not to be too wavy and definitely not curly, you don't need the sun and elements to accelerate the dehydration thus causing flipping ends and the wave to appear more pronounced.

So, a good solid looking dog with strong legs and body and a good somewhat smooth lying coat with good dense undercoat all gleaming with health and vitality! Frankly, this dog needs quite a lot of things to have happen to his coat when working and living in climates outside his native Alpine region. Protection and moisturising of the hair will ensure the coat routine prior to show day is an easier one.

Oil this coat as prevention is better than cure. Use **Plush Puppy Seabreeze Oil** instead of a conditioner. Conditioner will flatten and soften and your standard calls for a tough coat. Seabreeze Oil is a truly beneficial blend using extracts of Calendula oil, Wheat germ oil, and Evening Primrose.

Add 1 tablespoon to 4 Litres of water, then either sponge on or sluice well through the coat and LEAVE IN. DO NOT RINSE. This is quite a unique product in that it is not greasy and totally water-soluble. It will maintain the texture and moisture in the coat and help protect from the harsh outdoors especially in some of the tougher climates where this dog is required to work. Use the oil at this dilution rate after shampooing for a show instead of conditioner. Again leave in and do not rinse. You will get a nice healthy sheen on the coat with this routine.

When brushing during the week and for a Show day grooming spray, use **Plush Puppy Reviva Coat**. This is a fabulous, non-greasy moisturiser in an aerosol mousse form. Turn it into the perfect grooming spray by adding one to two golfball amounts to 2 cups of water into a spray bottle. This works best for even distribution and speed on a large dog! Use this as often as you need without fear of overdoing it. This will keep the coat hydrated and tangle-free with maximum elasticity to the hair.

The head is a hallmark and care with eyes is so important so use **Plush Puppy Let's Face It**. This is a hypoallergenic sulfate free low foaming shampoo designed just for faces. It's no tear formula features the highest quality Blue Cypress Extracts, Panthenol with Pro Vitamin B and SugaNate. These special ingredients clean, soothe, add moisture, aid healing and have anti-inflammatory benefits. A small golf ball sized amounts directly to the face and eye area allows you to thoroughly clean without causing irritation. It can also be used in and around the ears with the same benefits.



At some stage, you will have pretty much worked your way through all of the shampoos as the Saint coat changes seasonally going through the various phases of just right, old coat, no coat, new coat and often yellowing on the whites. There is no blanket overall approach with any show dog and with double coated breeds you are constantly chasing a coat as it sheds.

So when in correct full coat, use **Plush Puppy All Purpose Shampoo** for the body areas. Dilute to 1:5 (1 part shampoo to 5 parts water) on the main body of the coat for maximum shine. We call this the 'Shine' shampoo as it features natural Henna stalk extracts that impart a beautiful gloss and shine to your dog's coat. When the coat is old and dehydrated, use **Plush Puppy Natural Conditioning Shampoo with Evening Primrose** on the dehydrated areas. Then All Purpose on the rest of the body. Natural Conditioning shampoo is a nourishing shampoo, helping to increase hydration while slightly softening your dog's coat. It features Evening Primrose extracts to boost skin and hair regeneration.

When out of coat, switch to the **Plush Puppy Body Building Shampoo** packed with Wheatgerm proteins to enhance what coat there is. Use this shampoo wherever and whenever there is not enough bulk or coat to make the desired silhouette. This shampoo has a bodifying effect without an artificial feel plus it is wonderful for the coat as it is infused with beneficial plant extracts.

Follow all shampooing with the Seabreeze Oil routine as outlined above. Again leave the Seabreeze Oil mix in the coat, don't rinse.

For all-white areas such as legs, bib, and face, use **Plush Puppy Herbal Whitening Shampoo** diluted 1:3. Leave for a few minutes while bathing the rest of the body and then rinse. This is a toning shampoo and will help to reduce unwanted warm tones. It can be used on those faded red areas too to add the cool tones back into the warm coloured areas that have lost their cool tones due to sun bleaching.

For stained white areas use the clever **Plush Puppy Wonder Blok**. It helps to maintain a white stain free coat. It is not a bleach and contains no harmful chemicals but high amounts of naturally sourced vegetable surfactants and glycerin. This product is designed to remove gently unwanted warm or red tones to the coat. Best used on a damp or wet coat. Gently rub into the areas required allowing 5-10 minutes and rinse. For maximum effects repeat or allow a longer time for this amazing product to work. As with all products take care around eyes.

For those really dirty areas, use **Plush Puppy Deep Cleansing Shampoo** diluted 1:3. You can leave this on for 5 minutes or so for maximum cleaning. Its rich formulation using organic sources with added Green Tea and Seaweed extracts to provide the deepest coat clean available. Not only will it spruce up dull whites, this product can be used on any colour coat for a thorough cleansing and clarifying when required.

Now for the drying process. I use a turbo dryer that shoots cool air out in gale force! The Saint Bernard is a big dog to dry and the drying can help reduce those wavier areas and give more lift to the areas that need more bulk. Apply a liberal mix of 1 tablespoon **Plush Puppy Volumising Cream** to 1 cup water to the areas requiring more lift, or the ready to use version **Plush Puppy Volumising Spray** to the areas requiring more lift and blowdry.

For the legs add **Plush Puppy Puffy Dog*** a good strong hold mousse that is totally water-soluble and not sticky. You can add 1 tablespoon of **Plush Puppy Swishy Coat** with 1 dessertspoon **Plush Puppy Blow Dry Cream** to one cup of water and apply liberally over the topline. This will reduce and practically eliminate any wave or too curly situations when blow-dried with the **Plush Puppy Ultimate Pin Brush** till 3/4 dry. Then finish with the **Plush Puppy Ultimate Anti Static Porcupine Brush** against the growth of the coat.

Finish with a **Plush Puppy Professional Grooming Comb**, built for absolute ergonomic comfort in various sizes. The lightweight oval shaped spine combining fine and coarse pins made of hardened stainless steel with anodic oxide finish that reduces drag and static to the coat. Perfect for use for this breed of dog.

For drying the Saint Bernard, save time using **Plush Puppy Fast Blow Dry Spray**. It dramatically reduce drying time, adds moisture and conditions while protecting the coat. It contains Australian Native Flame Tree extracts that protect the coat from sun and heat damage. FAST also contains a special active ingredient that eliminates static electricity and stops the flyaways.

Show day will see your Saint Bernard ready for final titivation and tweaking. His coat texture should look perfect and his silhouette fitting into that ideal shape you have in your mind and from the standard. Use **Plush Puppy Cover Up Cream** applied sparingly with a barely damp sponge to his white areas that need a more pristine look. Keep reapplying with light dabs in layers till the required coverage is achieved. Finish with loose chalk to dry and brush prior to ring time.

Keep on hand **Plush Puppy Wonder Wash** which is a no rinse wet instant shampoo for "those show day" last-minute emergencies as this will clean up anything, pronto. Just spray foam with the fingers and towel off. Wonder Wash is a brilliant quick self-rinsing bathing alternative solution for quick and easy cleaning without the need for a complete bath.



You can also use **Plush Puppy Powder Puff Regular** an innovative powder that cleans and deodorises. Simply dust on and work in with the brush or hands, then brush out or blow out. Voila! Instant clean. Very handy for those wet mouth situations.

Now a dash of **Plush Puppy Shine and Comb** for that last-minute glamour shine and a spritz of **Plush Puppy Odour Muncher** so he smells divine, and your Saint Bernard is ready to work in the show ring.

Long-haired or short-haired, this massive dog has a majestic appearance with his strong-boned and powerful stride. His intelligence, his mystical ability to sense disaster, his legendary role as a saviour and companion, deserve all the hard work you will have put into his show form. All the wonderful stories of this dog are entirely true and it is your role to make sure you get to work for him in appreciation.