General Maintenance

Flat faced breeds or brachycelphalic breeds need close attention payed to the face area.

Yesterday was face and feet day. Today will be bath and clip day. Grooming, no matter what your dog looks like there is grooming to be done. Grooming encompasses every part of a dogs body; you can call it general maintenance, care or dogscaping but it needs to be done. Having poodles, there is some different type grooming to do in the form of clipping but aside from the actual cutting of hair there is much more to be done.

Grooming - to clean, brush and otherwise tend.

As I trimmed faces yesterday I checked in on Luke and Elsa's ears. Poodles, like many other breeds grow hair inside their ears that needs to be removed. I wasn't doing ears yesterday but I had a good look as to the condition and timing of their next ear plucking. I checked their mouth and teeth as well. This should be done whether or not you are doing the grooming. Very few people groom their own dogs; but, you should be doing general maintenance. Have a look at ears, mouth, teeth, eyes etc. I know many people strictly rely on the groomer for everything but many groomers just groom and do not do the once over. That's your job.
As gorgeous as this looks; it is a huge amount of work to keep it up properly. You cannot simply give this coat a quick outer brushing. You must get right down to the skin and work out any tangles. This puppy hair mats if you even look at it so Miss Elsa looked like a super model for a very short time. Once it got to an unmanageable stage it all came off.

I checked on Luke's moles, yep; gotta be done. At almost 13 he has a lot of them which is very normal for a dog of this age. But it is important to know if any need attending to or if there are any new ones that have popped up. Give your dog a good going over. It is much like a full body massage but useful as far as feeling anything new and perhaps concerning. It is surprising what you can feel; even in a full coated dog if you get right down
to the skin and feel around. Both Luke and Elsa have come to enjoy this massage/exploratory time.

Next it was onto the feet; poodles have very hairy feet as do many other breeds. I like to keep them fairly short for cleanliness and trim the hair under their pads to help with slippage. Having big hairy feet is like have big woolly slippers on; you tend to slip and wipe out a lot. First I do the underside of their feet and then the top. Keeping the hair short on their feet helps to cut down on things that they pick up in their feet as well. Once the fluff is removed then it was time to trim the nails. Nails should be kept nice and short. When standing still a dogs nails should not touch the ground. Some dogs wear their nails down nicely which is really great but most need attending to. I use a dremel tool and have 32 nails done in less than two minutes. The more often you do it the easier it is to do.

If you let your dog's nails grow too long it can be painful and interfere with walking. Have a look and see how long they are. If you are squeamish about cutting or grinding nails then visit your groomer or Veterinarian to have them done. Elsa wears her back nails down nicely. She has got such drive with those back legs of hers that they are kept nice and short. I typically only need to do her front feet. Luke's nails are everywhere these days. He is walking like an old dog which means dragging feet, tripping and wearing his nails down in odd places. This foot time gives me a good chance to see what's going on. I tidy them all up and he's good to go.

Coats can hide a great deal of information; it is important to know
what's underneath it. Have you looked at your dog recently? Or ever? I mean really looked? Spread their coat to see their skin, looked between their toes and in their ears? It was one of these exploratory times that I discovered that Tilley had an open wound on the top of tail that was completely hidden by her coat. I was very glad that I'd found it; otherwise it could have become extremely infected.

Even if you have a nice smooth coated dog; they need maintenance. I use to do Jessie's maintenance when I was doing the poodles. She would get brushed, have her ears, teeth and eyes checked and then have her nails done. Grooming goes far beyond making a dog look presentable; they need to be kept in peak condition. That means every part of them. If you have a dog then you have dogscapeing to do.