



Pawprints: The Joys of Living with a Havanese Puppy

A BOOK REVIEW

BY CLAIRE PAULSON

In this day and age, most people use the internet for research, there is something about having an actual book in your hands that no computer, laptop or tablet can replace. I use the internet for information gathering as much as anyone, but sometimes I actually find myself researching a certain book to buy. You see, I am one of those people who, despite owning many techno-gadgets, still like to have an actual book. No, not an e-reader with an e-book, I still have magazine subscriptions, opt for newsletters to be



mailed to me in hardcopy and choose to go to a bookstore and purchase a book (that I've probably used the internet for to determine if it's the one I really want).

Many, if not the majority, of Havanese owners have probably found themselves strolling through the Pets section of a bookstore, stopping to look at the Dog section, only to see a variety of titles on a handful of breeds, none of which are the Havanese. There is always the usual

lineup of dogs, Golden Retrievers, German Shepherds, Rottweilers, Cocker Spaniels, Poodles and of course the Labrador Retriever, but you would almost never see book about Havanese. If you got lucky, you might find a somewhat generic "small dog" guide or a generically written book about Havanese, where it is so general, it would seem you could take out "Havanese" throughout the book and replace it with another breed and it would read the same way.

This past fall, I was delighted to hear that there was a book about Havanese coming out. I knew immediately that I would not need to research it ahead of time. I knew it would be a great addition to my book shelf and not just because the author had asked to use a couple pictures of my own Havanese in it, although I would be lying if I said the "proud mom" part of me didn't take over, just a little bit.

It was the end of September when I placed a pre-order for a copy of "Pawprints: The joys of Living with a Havanese Puppy" with author, Suzanne McKay, of Winnipeg, Manitoba. McKay replied back, advising that the book was currently at the printer and would not be available to be shipped until October. A few weeks went by and I received a small envelope in the mail. I wasn't sure what it was as, at the time I had forgot that I bought the book. I was excited to see I had real mail addressed to me, not just bills. I wasn't even in the front door before I had torn the envelope open and was surprised what I found inside.

My copy of “Pawprints: The Joys of Living with a Havanese Puppy” had arrived and it was signed by the author, too. I sat down in my favorite chair right in front of the fireplace and flipped to the table of contents. I began to read, expecting to see the typical chapter titles I had grown accustomed to in pet care books and was surprised see eight chapters with anywhere from three to thirteen topics in each chapter.

Every possible question and conundrum that you may encounter at some point of your Havanese’s life is detailed in this book.

Chapters one, two and three are ones that people need to read before getting their puppy. These three chapters cover things you need to know before you get a Havanese. They feature topics such as “Is the Havanese Right for You?”, “Early Weeks of Life”, “Choosing a Puppy”, “Male vs. Female” and “Shopping for Supplies”. I especially enjoyed the section on early weeks of



life. Not many people get to see a litter of puppies from birth until the day they bring them home let alone get to know exactly what happens during each week of development.

Chapter four has three more topics related to your puppy’s development up until their first birthday.

Chapter five has thirteen topics in it. It is the first thing you need to read once your puppy has come home. It covers things such as, “Puppy Proofing”, “Summer Safety”, “Housebreaking Tips”, “Teething and Chewing”. At first glance, it looks like generic pet care/common sense topics; however, each topic is written totally in relation to owning a Havanese. It deals with the breed’s unique quirks and habits.

The sixth chapter has six topics all of which are related to grooming and your dog’s coat. One of the most common comments Havanese owners encounter is, “Do they shed?”, and that is covered in this chapter. Most other books I have read lump the Havanese into a non-shedding breed, which as many know, is not totally true. There is a topic about coat development that no general pet care book has ever covered. Many think that, when it comes to coat, what you’ve got is what you will have forever. Many people don’t know about a coat change but McKay has detailed how the coat changes from a young pup to a mature adult. She has also included a sec-





Suzanne McKay

tion on colour change, another topic that many people don't know about. One of my favorite parts of the book is on page 108. It features eight colour photographs of Havanese, four puppies and the other four photos are of the same dogs as adults. It shows how much, or how little, colour can change. This topic was one that I especially wished I had when my, now 13 year old, Havanese was a puppy.

Chapter seven covers many topics that arrive after the "Honeymoon Period". I think this chapter was placed perfectly in sequence with the other chapters as it features many topics that rear their head after you have had your Havanese puppy for a few weeks. The first few topics covered are, "Manners", "Spoiled Rotten", "Learning", "Basic Training". These four topics are important to this book as they help to reinforce that just because Havanese are small and cute, doesn't mean they don't need training.

The eighth and final chapter features a few miscellaneous topics including recipes for treats that no doubt received a paw stamp of approval from McKay's trio of Havanese.

I can't complete this little review without mentioning the colour photographs. There were so many photos of Havanese with a variety of colours, hair lengths and ages. Many of the photos used in this book were courtesy of Karen Moe

Photography. They really capture the spirit of this little breed. Many photos are of Havanese in everyday life, submitted by the many Havanese owners McKay is acquainted with. It truly is special to see so many Havanese pictures in one book. It was neat to see Havanese in this book displaying the same traits and quirks as my Havanese at home.

This is not McKay's first book. In 2010 she wrote, "Woofs, Wiggles and Wags: Raising a Toy Breed Puppy", which won an award from the Dog Writers' Association of America for "Best Pet Guide". It is also another "must have". McKay has also written many dog related articles on a variety of topics. Anybody who has read her past publications knows that McKay's topics are very well researched, resulting in a very concise, detailed end product. I was pleased to see that this writing style is evident for her latest publication, "Pawprints".

Whether you're on a waiting list for your first Havanese puppy or you've got a few of them in your life already, this book deserves to be part of your collection. Breeders should be giving this book to people who are getting a puppy for them, it is a must have book to prepare you for the new arrival.

"Pawprints" is a soft cover, coil bound book. It measures 8.5 X 5.5 inches and is 168 pages. It is a perfect size to bring along with you; In fact, I had my copy in my purse to read on my lunch breaks at work. It costs \$16.95, plus shipping and there are discounts for multiple book orders. It can be ordered from Suzanne McKay directly from www.woofwags.com/hav-about.html