

# Decadent Dogs caters to 4-legged variety

By Tammy Hayes

"Would you like mustard on that?" is one question Tonya Wright, owner of Decadent Dogs, will never ask a customer.

Occasionally, most often on Fridays around dinner time, people call Decadent Dogs to order hot dogs and french fries to take out. Wright sends the hungry callers away, because the only dogs served at her business have four feet and a tail.

Wright is a professional dog groomer. Her business, Decadent Dogs, offers grooming, baths, and flea dips to all breeds, and is located in the Cornerstone Village shopping center.

Wright opened Decadent Dogs

last October, after working as a dental assistant for five and a half years with Dr. David Willens.

How does an English major become a dog groomer?

"I really wanted to do something with dogs," Wright said, adding that her lifetime dream was to own her own business.

Wright chose not to become a veterinarian because she did not want to deal with sick and injured animals. Instead, she wanted a job that involved more enjoyment, on behalf of both the dogs and herself.

Wright attended the New York School of Dog Grooming in Manhattan and obtained a certificate of completion after 65 hours of in-

tense training.

At the school, there was one instructor for every four students, and when they were grooming dogs, they received one-on-one attention.

Wright's Shih Tzu, Chassey, serves as "watchdog" at Decadent Dogs. When Chassey isn't getting a bath or being brushed herself, she's usually guarding the store from her post on the love seat in the reception area.

"She's ninety-five percent of the reason I took up dog grooming," Wright said, patting her nine-year-old pet.

Customers at Decadent Dogs usually drop their dogs off in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon. The dogs are not allowed to interact, and all dogs must be up-to-date on their vaccinations to be accepted at the store.

Wright can hold up to 20 dogs at

a time.

Decadent Dogs has one other full-time groomer, Tina Baker. Wright's mother, JoeAnne Pate, works part-time, bathing and drying the dogs.

Wright and Baker groom an average of seven dogs each per day.

"I like the way they feel and look when they're done," Wright said. "They're beautiful and clean, and I think even they like the way they look."

Wright said the best part of her job is grooming the dogs and getting to know the customers. She also enjoys having Chassey with her during the day.

"I'm doing something I love," she said.

Wright has two stepchildren, Jamie, age 16, and Jonathan, age 11. Her husband Jim works with SCM Metal Products in Research Triangle Park.



GOING TO THE DOGS—Decadent Dogs owner Tonya Wright combs her Shih Tzu, Chassey. Wright says people have actually called her business to place orders for hot dogs and french fries.

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