Canine culture

Man's best friend is fast becoming a spoiled species

By STEPHEN HARRIS
Staff Writer

Brenda Jarman (above) plays with one of her regular clients at The Pampered Pooch in Durham. "Jack," a Yorkshire Terrier, is seen left with "Toto" a miniature Poodle, modeling the popular Carolina coats.

Have you noticed what well-dressed dogs are wearing to campus lately? High culture is making a comeback among canines, as evidenced by the new luxuries and services available to area pets.

A look at unconventional pet services in Chapel Hill and Durham shows that "the dog's life" no longer means a nap in the summer sun. It is an odd mixture of high fashion, meticulous grooming and health foods.

Pet stores have become pet boutiques. Pet kennels include luxuries people cannot find in the choicest hotels. From birth to death, pets can now have anything their masters have.

A tour of the area pet stores reveals the luxury available to our pets. Customers, preferably human ones, may buy: pet boots (rawhide or rubber), toys of all shapes and colors (from chew sticks to plastic newspapers), life preservers, dishes (plastic or aluminum), car seats (for front and back seats), beds and even miniature indoor houses.

This fall, the well-dressed pet will want an abundant supply of coats (there are UNC coats for Tar Heel canines?, toboggans, nose warmers, rainsuits, snowsuits, raincaps, sweaters, caps, sunglasses, baseball caps, football helmets and even a motorcycle helmet complete with goggles.

If your pet has a yearning to eat at the table, perhaps a pet high chair would be the thing for him. They're available in Durham-Chapel Hill.

And while your pet is dining in his high chair, don't neglect to see that he is eating right. There are several brands of puppy formula available. However, if your dog is a little older, you can have peace of mind about your dog's nutrition if you place before him some vitamin enriched dog candy. Oh, he can't have candy? Then some powdered cottage cheese may be just the thing to keep those extra pounds off.

After the meal, you may be glad that you bought some pet-diarrhea treatment.

The time will come when your dog will ask, "Why can't I have my fur done, like all my friends?" Available in the area are furcuts, clips, grooms, baths and even a "flea dip" (all by appointment only.) There is even a choice of shampoos. And, after his bath, every dog wants some deodorant and a favorite colored grooming powder.

Before your dog could possibly go out and meet his friends, some foot toughener, some cologne and a clean pair of "Doggie Britches" would be in order.

"My dog, every time she gets home after one of these (a groom and bath), she goes out at once and prances around the neighborhood, like she is showing off her new trim," said one male customer as he and his grey poodle left The Pampered Pooch in Durham recently.

"Most of our customers are poodles," Pooch co-owner Brenda Jarman said, "but not all of them. We get some other breeds."

The Pampered Pooch has a gumball machine a foot or so off the floor, inviting to dogs, but a long stretch downward for humans. Younger humans had better not try a cookie from the cookie jar on the counter. Those are not cookies in there, but beef hide slices. And sitting on a wall is the dream of every dog — a miniature fire hydrant.

"No, we don't sell that one," Jarman confessed. "A lady gave me that. Said she hid her liquor in it, but then quit drinking and gave the hydrant to me."

But Jarman knows of a lady that makes cement fire hydrants, if you really care for one.

Jarman even has for sale a small, red "topless" evening gown, complete with black lace.

Or perhaps a tattoo for your pet will be nice. The area grooming salons will tattoo your pet. The owner's Social Security number is tattooed to the inside of the front leg for identification purposes and registered with the National Dog Registry.

Pets who wish to spend a vacation away from their masters may go to Pet Manor in Chapel Hill, where they may rest in the kennel, or enjoy the fresh air and sunshine in a lot out back.

If your pet is artistic, perhpas he will admire a clay figurine of himself. Dino Read will make one for you. There's an example of her work at the Chinaberry Craft Cooperative in Chapel Hill.

Even in death, your pet can be comforted in the knowledge that his interment will be dignified.

Pet Rest, a pet cemetery between Durham and Raleigh, has about 400 filled plots, according to cemetery manager Roy Isenhour. But the two acres of the cemetery could hold as many as 14,000-15,000 graves.

Pet Rest can give a pet a human-like funeral, complete with funeral tent and flowers. Elaborate caskets and headstones are featured, though more modest burials are available.

"It takes a certain type of person to use our cemetery," Isenhour said. "On the whole we get elderly people, but we do get all classes and kinds of people."

One lady from Washington came to Pet Rest once to bury her dog. When it was discovered she couldn't plant two cherry trees from her backyard next to her pet, she left.

Another dog owner instructed that no cats be buried next to his deceased dog. The dog always hated cats.

Alone at the back of the cemetery is the dog whose owner insisted he be buried away from the others. His dog always was a loner, the owner said.

"I've seen more tears here in two years," Isenhour said, "than I've seen in 10 years at the funerals of friends."

Outside of Pet Rest, though, burials are becoming rare. In Durham, for instance, it is illegal to bury a pet.

The Traingle Cremation Service of Hillsborough, which began about four years ago, had inquiries about cremating pets almost since it opened. Two years ago, pet cremations were made available.

"People get more emotional over pets than they would over a human," Tim Mason of the Service said. The Service hopes to expand its service by soliciting veterinarians as well as the general public. About 10 pets have been cremated so far, according to Mason.

It seems that, from birth to death, pets have never had it so good. A "dog's life" is getting more and more popular. But it is not the pets that are changing; it is their masters. For as our pets become more humanized, so do we.

abc Carolina Twin
EAST FRANKLIN STREET
ROCKY
PG United Artists
2:30 4:15 6:00 7:45 9:30
An epic fantasy of peace and magic.
WIZARDS
A RALPH BAKSHI FILM
2:40 4:50 7:15 9:30
abc Carolina Twin
EAST FRANKLIN STREET
Our Next Film
Cría!
English Subtitles

Plaza 1
ELIOT RD. AT E. FRANKLIN
HELD OVER 5TH BIG WEEK
SORRY NO PASSES
It's the BIGGEST. It's BOND.
THE SPY WHO LOVED ME
SHOWS 2:20 4:45 7:10 9:35

Plaza 2
ELIOT RD. AT E. FRANKLIN
SHOWS 3:10 5:10 7:10 9:10
RON HOWARD IS FUNNIER AND FASTER HE'S A HIGH SPEED DISASTER!
GRAND THEFT auto
PG
A NEW WORLD PICTURE

Plaza 3
ELIOT RD. AT E. FRANKLIN
HELD OVER 4TH BIG WEEK
SORRY NO PASSES
SHOWS 3:00 6:00 9:00
The war was over and the world was falling in love again.
LIZA MINNELLI ROBERT DE NIRO
"NEW YORK, NEW YORK"
PG

Varsity
HELD OVER 10TH BIG WEEK
SORRY NO PASSES
SHOWS 2:30 4:45 7:00 9:15
A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...
PG STAR WARS

Held Over!
3:15 5:15 7:15 9:15
4th Great Week
All Star Cast
3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
For the Family
3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30
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