

## Dog Weddings on the Rise

**Canine weddings provide dog owners with fun options for their pets' special day.**

*Sandy Robins*

Despite a high divorce rate among humans in America, pets are throwing caution to the wind and having weddings of their own. Some pets are even included in their humans' weddings.

"It seems to be growing by the day," says Carol Blanchette of Emma Rose, a company that has long been a part of the pet wedding industry. "Florida leads, with California and Texas close behind."

Blanchette, who crossed over from the haute couture bridal industry to concentrate on "puptials," says that pet owners are quite happy to splurge for a special occasion.

### Popular colors

Commenting on the latest trends, Blanchette says that traditional white is being rivaled by pink. "Pale yellow is also huge right now. It's such a happy color," she adds. She points out that chocolate is a popular color for pet bridesmaids, and charcoal gray tuxedos are huge for both puppy grooms and groomspups.

Gary Remick of Doggie Design adds that pink and lavender are also hot colors for canine bridal parties.

Whether you're dressing dogs who are taking part in a formal wedding for human friends or who are in their own doggie ceremony, people want the wedding party to match. A white tuxedo works well when teamed with a silk bow tie in the same color to match the doggie bridesmaids' outfits.

Since many dog owners are willing to splurge on their pet's wedding attire, many expect to get some general wear out of the outfit after the special event. For the most versatility, look for trains that can be removed from gowns and separate petticoats, which can be more practical than extra layers sewn into a dress.

As destination weddings continue to grow in popularity for humans, the trend is rubbing off on pet weddings, giving rise to more casual cotton wedding dresses, accessorized with collars and leashes adorned with flowers, and more casual T-shirt tuxedos for dog grooms.

### Dogs dress horizontally

When it comes to fittings for customized outfits, it's important to remember that even if you enter a store with a photograph and a fixed idea for a gown, the dress design can often look different when created horizontally to fit a dog.

"It's also important to consider the shape of the dog. Pugs don't look good in layers of tulle; it just makes them look short and fat," Blanchette says. "Petite dogs such as Chihuahuas and Poodles can wear lots of layers and look wonderful, especially from behind."

### Accessories for the big day

"It's not just about outfits, but matching accessories too," says Meredith Brooks, of Lil' Angel Pet Boutique and Gallery. She sells a lot of pet wedding attire accessorized with tiaras, veils, and garters to complete the traditional look.

"Leashes and collars with matching hair accessories that are festooned with handmade satin flowers with pearls are popular choices for any style of wedding," says Jane Knittle of A Pet's World. "Pearl necklaces in all pastel shades are also very fashionable. Male dogs look great with accessories covered in little bow ties."

But these accessories aren't limited to weddings.

"There's a growing trend that has pets simply wearing accessories instead of full wedding regalia," says Jeannie Cohen of RoadWagz.

"Tuxedo bibs or collar bow ties offer pets the bridal look, but are easier to wear than a complete outfit," Cohen says.

"Black-and-white pinstripe vests are also very trendy worn with red or silver bow ties. They work well for dogs of all sizes."

#### Pets and people weddings

According to a recent survey conducted by the American Kennel Club, about 18 percent of dog owners surveyed said that they either included or would include their dogs in their nuptials.

Knittle adds that many of her customers are older couples or people getting married for the second time who have pets whom they treat as their children and who insist upon including them in their wedding parties.

According to Lisa Toscano of Pup Hollywood, often customers have no plans for their pets to attend the actual wedding ceremony or reception, but they still want them included in photographs and insist on a special outfit made from the same fabric as their wedding gown.

“A pet bridal service akin to what you would find in a bridal store has great customer appeal,” Toscano says. “Owners love the idea of having to come to a special bridal appointment and subsequent fittings. It’s all about presentation that mimics the real bridal experience. They love selecting accessories the same way brides get to choose their bridal jewelry, garters, and other trimmings. Very often they put their pet’s bridal wear in a shadow box as a keepsake from their wedding.”

There’s no question that dog weddings are here to stay. In fact, it’s probably only a matter of time before lawyers get in on the act to draw up “preuptial agreements,” too.

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To read more about the latest in dog fashion, check out the September 2008 issue of DOG FANCY.