

Misbehaved Dogs Try Out for New TV Show

“It’s Me Or the Dog” producers interview owners in dire need of training tips.

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A casting team went looking for the worst of the worst dogs in the Los Angeles area to star in a new reality TV series on Animal Planet that spotlights dog owners and their unruly canines.

The search Saturday at Bark N’ Bitches dog boutique in West Hollywood focused on owners of one or more out-of-control dogs who are ready for the ultimate doggie boot camp: “It’s Me or the Dog.” The show gets dog trainer Victoria Stilwell to intervene in cases where misbehaved dogs have led to relationship problems in the household, and even the possibility of giving up on the dog altogether.

Scott Kirkland, a casting associate for the U.K. production company Ricochet Television who was at the event, said he was pleased with the turnout, which included a widower who lost his wife and as a result, the dog “freaked out.” The dog’s behavior has changed for the worse, and Kirkland said he might be a top contender for the show.

“Everybody can relate to the show, no matter what age, if you’re a dog lover,” he said. “People are thrilled that it’s coming to the U.S.”

Already a hit series in Britain, the show starts filming for the American version in October. British episodes are airing on Animal Planet now in the United States.

Shannon von Roemer, owner of Bark N’ Bitches at 505 N. Fairfax Ave., said she believes dog behavior problems start with the owner, not the dog. “Anything that’s going to help keep the animals home so they don’t end up in the shelter or abandoned in the street, I will back up,” she said.

The casting call also featured an adoption event with animals from the nonprofit organization Dogs Without Borders, which helps find homes for shelter dogs throughout Los Angeles.

Animal Radio was broadcasting live from the event outside the boutique. Vladae Roytapel, best known as the Russian Dog Wizard, offered training tips to dog owners. “When you treat [dogs] as human, they will treat you as dog,” he said.

To apply for “It’s Me or the Dog” visit the show’s website or call 877-443-6449. Applications will be accepted all summer.