

Westminster: America's Dog Show

Crowded hotels, charity events, and plenty of buzz mark the start of Westminster.

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As a kickoff to the 133rd Annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in New York, N.Y., Saks Fifth Avenue welcomes special guest Uno, Westminster's 2008 Best in Show winner, for a charity event on Friday, Feb. 6.

The afternoon benefits the Westminster Kennel Club charity Angel on a Leash, which champions working with therapy dogs in healthcare, education, rehabilitation, hospice, extended care, correctional facilities, and crisis intervention. Uno the Beagle will be on hand to paw-print copies of the 2009 Westminster Poster created by artist Trish Biddle, who will also autograph her work.

Also on tap at the event is a chance to pose for a photograph with Uno for a suggested donation to benefit Angel on a Leash. As an added bonus, the department store plans to host its own dog show that afternoon, in which canine contestants will be reviewed by David Frei, co-host of the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show.

Best in Show prizes will be awarded by Saks in three categories: Best Style, Best Personality, and Best Hair.

The action from the two-day main event starts Monday, Feb. 9, at Madison Square Garden, carrying on a tradition recognized as the second longest continuously held sporting event in the country, one year behind the Kentucky Derby. Millions of viewers tune in to watch the dog show on television, and millions more watch online.

The Hound, Terrier, Non-Sporting, and Herding Group competitions will be televised live from 8 to 9 p.m. EST on Monday on USA Network and continuing on CNBC from 9 to 11 p.m. EST. The Sporting, Working, Toy, and Best In Show competitions will be televised live from 8 to 11 p.m. EST on Tuesday on USA Network.

All canine hopefuls participating in the annual event were extended an invitation to stay at New York's Hotel Pennsylvania, across from the dog show. The hotel known for hosting Westminster champions, including Uno, has been receiving requests for "Uno's Room" as well as room 210A, for the date that this year's champion will be named.