

TRENDS by Mark Andrews

## haute dogs

the very latest in four-legged fashion

How much is that doggie in the window? In this Year of the Dog, it seems that a canine in a pot is not the only buying option available. For many Shanghai residents, it's the post hot dog purchase that requires careful consideration. Currently, pet owners spend a monthly average of RMB 300 on canine care. Which is no small sum even for puppy love.

In short, dog grooming is becoming big business. At Wanpi (meaning 'naughty'), owners can drop off their dogs for a pampering pedicure, trim and wash. While at upscale doggie spa BonBon – which looks more like a salon than an animal center – staff handle up to 80 pets a day, and claim they can groom ten dogs at a time.

A well-coifed canine is, of course, essential, considering the pets are in many cases

surrogate children. Spoiling junior, then, is a must; a fact that shop owners exploit, selling everything from toys to clothing. Tang dynasty-style jackets, which must be color coordinated with matching leash and collar, were all the rage in fashionable dog circles last winter. And no self-respecting dog would go without a Vietnam tea-tree oil shampoo or breath freshener – for those occasions when the licking gets heavy.

In addition, every good pet deserves a vacation, and kennel and cattery facilities, known as 'pet hotels' (*chongwu binguan*), are also enjoying a booming trade. These establishments typically offer services such as animal walking and general grooming. Jia Liang K-9 Kennel in Pudong also offers lessons in doggy etiquette.



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These services don't come cheap. With the Chinese pet care industry still in its puppyhood, most of the food and health products are imported – from America, Japan, Germany and France – and therefore carry inflated price tags. Shampoo, deodorant and cologne, for example, generally sell for between RMB 100-200 each. The average doggy bath runs from RMB 50-200, while trimming varies between RMB 80-240, depending on the size of the dog.

Despite the expense, the Western-inspired pet pampering craze, in conjunction with the current Chinese zodiac year, seems to have had one unforeseen consequence – meat-on-a-stick street vendors have been reduced to chasing pigeons. ■

**BonBon:**  
526 Fahuazhen Lu, by Dingxi Lu  
(6294 8542);  
Chong Wu Xiao Wu:  
1496-1 Kaixuan Lu,  
by Hongqiao Lu (6281 7577);  
Wanpi Da Ben Ying:  
1367 Kaixuan Lu,  
by Anshun Lu (5230 1968);  
Jia Liang K-9 Kennel:  
1858 Sanlu Lu,  
by Chenhang Lu, Pudong (6411 0049)

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