

Lifestyles of The RICH and FURRY

BY PATRICIA J. MURPHY

Outrageous ways to pamper your pet

From canine country clubs to tabby tiaras, pets today are living in the lap of luxury. Last year pet owners spent about 31 billion dollars—almost *twice* what they spent in 1994—on supplies and services to pamper their pets.

"Pets improve our lives," says Bob Vetere of the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association. "So we want to improve theirs." NG KIDS tracks just how far some owners go to give their pets the royal treatment.



WHAT TO WEAR

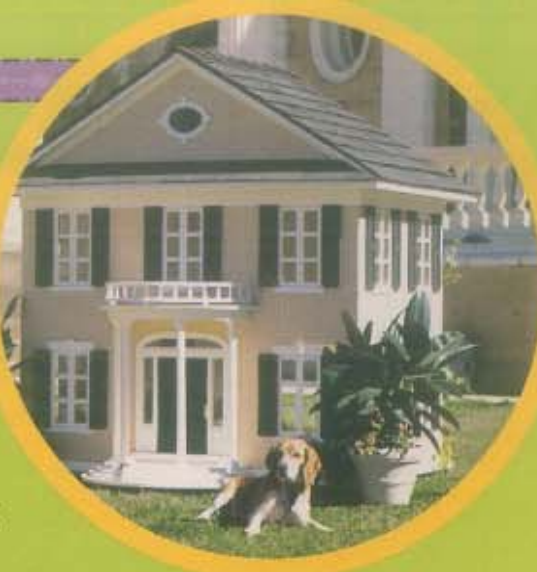
When Mandy Moore and Britney Spears need fashion for their dogs, they don't have to look far. That's because many stores now cater exclusively to the pampered pet. At Fifi & Romeo (left) in Los Angeles, California, dogs in handmade cashmere sweaters and colorful raincoats are considered fashionable, not funny-looking. Then there's Dogmopolitan, which designs pet furniture. "Co-owner" Dogmo the bulldog inspects gold-trimmed bowls and sofas made with goose-down cushions and paw-shaped legs.

Will your pet be less happy if you don't shower it with expensive stuff?

Absolutely not! "As long as your pet has food, comfort, and friendship, that's what's most important," says pet psychologist John C. Wright.

IN THE HOUSE

Skeeter the cairn terrier hangs out in a two-story doghouse with floor-to-ceiling windows, air-conditioning, and heated floors. It's just one of many custom-made cribs owners are building specially for their pets. "One owner asked for a cat house with a separate dining room, litter box room, and bedroom," says Michelle Pollak of La Petite Maison, which builds luxury pet homes (right). "Some pet owners spare nothing to make sure their pets are comfortable and happy."



KENNEL—OR VACATION?

Sampson the Yorkshire terrier loves a good massage. His sister, Dellah, likes to get her toenails painted. They can do it all at the Olde Towne Pet Resort in Virginia (below, both), one of many "pet spas" around the country. More like luxury hotels than kennels, these places offer pets private limos, movies such as *Cats and Dogs*, and whirlpool-like tubs. Cats also are "feline" good as they watch birds from picture windows. Pet spas are popular with celebs, too. Christina Aguilera takes her pooches to a "ranch" with a bone-shaped swimming pool!



CHOW TIME

Plain old dog chow just won't do for canines like Clementine the beagle. Gourmet pet food has become all the rage. Places like Three Dog Bakery offer biscuits made of carob chip, apple oatmeal, and peanut butter, and cats munch on Alaskan salmon bites. Thirsty? Jake the Maltese slurps fluoride-enriched Dog Water. The lid from the container even doubles as a Frisbee!



PET TECH

Think you're tech-savvy? With all the gadgets owners are buying for their pets, some animals may have you beat. Danny Boy the Yorkshire terrier can listen to his owner saying, "Mommy loves you!" on PeTalk, a prerecorded tape for pets intended to keep them from getting lonely during the day. Munchkin the Persian cat drinks from a never-ending water flow from her Drinkwell Pet Fountain. Some owners even set up Webcams so their pets can watch them at work.



Pampering your pet could cost you an arm and a paw!

LUXURY SUITE AT PET SPA	\$75 A NIGHT*
PROFESSIONAL MASSAGE	\$30
CUSTOM-BUILT DOGHOUSE	\$6,000
CUSTOM-MADE PET SOFA	\$400
HAND-KNITTED SWEATER	\$250
GOURMET DOG TREATS	\$5 FOR 13 OUNCES

*Prices are approximate.