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...connecting you with your inner (city) animal...

Sydney's new pet publication

A lifestyle magazine for animal lovers



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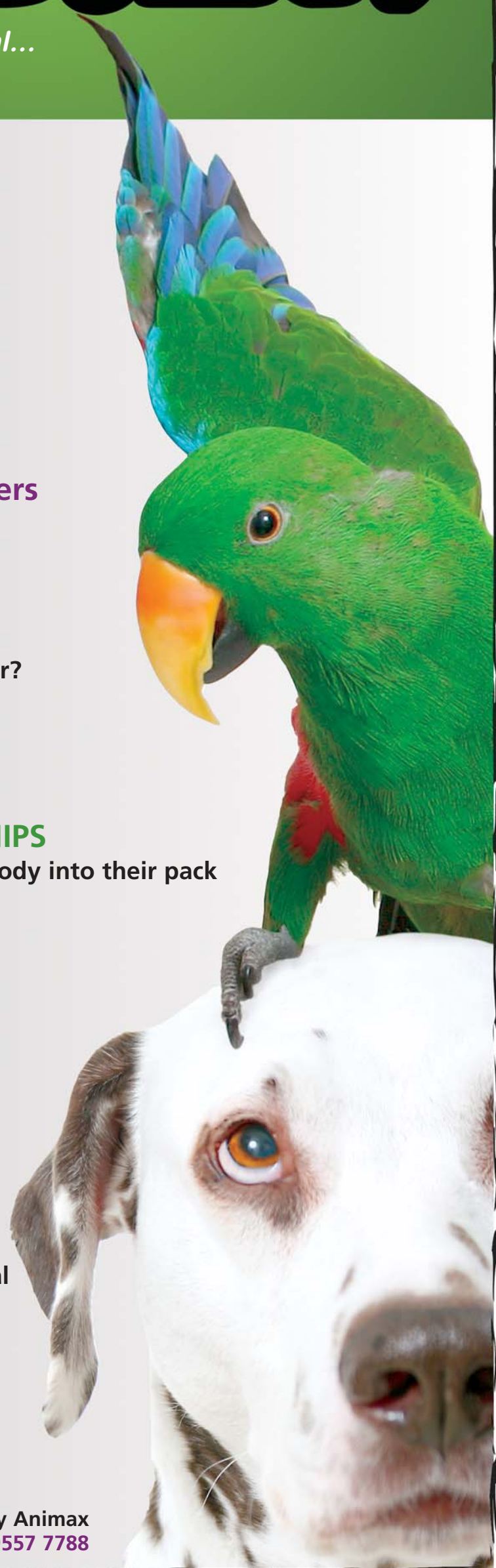
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Welcome to our first issue of a groundbreaking publication, produced by a small family company in Newtown in a home office with a female Dalmatian (Jerri), a male Eclectus (Jackson), a male lutino Indian Ringneck (Roger)... oh, and six staff who share space with the pets. Though we normally produce a directory of the music industry twice a year among other businesses in entertainment that we run, our love of animals and a gaping hole in the market for a pet magazine covering virtually all species started as an idea, became a project and has now evolved into this quarterly free print and online publication.



Jackson, Phil Tripp & Roger

This opening editorial was written August 1 as we opened the Urban Animal website at www.urbananimal.net to begin the building of the magazine in the online environment at the same time we craft the equivalent paper edition. With our 40,000 tabloid sized Urban Animal magazines hitting the streets, pet friendly cafes, pet stores, veterinarian foyers, shelters, kennels, groomers, trainers, pet accommodations, pet events like the Newtown Festival and Pet Expo as well as selected other outlets October 15 in the Sydney area only, we're showing that this idea certainly 'has legs'.

We're making sure in our initial issue to make our publication available to the broadest range of readers with a 'pet lifestyle' and love of our furred, feathered and finned companions and even the scaly or shelled ones! With an editorial mix that is 50% dog, 15% cat, 15% bird, 10% fish, 5% reptile and 5% 'other pet species', we'll provide entertaining, informative editorial for a witty and stylish look at life shared with our urban animal family members. We base this magazine on an urban lifestyle for an ageless readership-singles, families, straight, gay, young and young at heart-who share a love and respect for animals.

Though I'm 53, I've shared my life with a vast array of creatures. In my early years, I was fascinated with birds though I didn't make a home with them until seven years ago. I've always had dogs ranging from mutts and rescue hounds to my beloved Dalmatians of the past 13 years. I also had a few harmless snakes in semi-captivity around the house as a kid, a well cared for iguana in my 20s and oddly, a female desert Tarantula for a number of years named Petula or Pet for short.

Petula was a great pet for when I was a rock 'n' roll tour manager out on the road for months at a time-she could survive on a six monthly feeding of crickets or grubs, was happy being in a terrarium with timed lighting and could go without water for a couple of months. She was harmless and almost the size of a dinner plate with her legs spread out, used to walking on my arm and being hand fed clean-bred cockroaches. But alas, I had to leave her behind in America 20 years ago when I moved to Australia-though she did live a total of 12 years in the care of a friend.

What were once odd pets are now normal. Two decades ago, birds were mainly fed seed and avian veterinarians were as rare as, well, hen's teeth. Dog food mainly came in cans as did cat food and dry food was called kibbles-hardly the super premium foods we now happily shell out for in health conscious pet parenting. A dog toy was a stick or a ball, a bird toy a bell or mirror and a cat was content with a scratching post and a catnip stuffed mouse. But over the years, our relationship with pets has evolved as has our knowledge of their needs and access to rewards, treats and a better lifestyle shared with them.

Australians spend more money on pets (\$2.2 billion) than on foreign aid (only \$2 billion). Last year we spent \$1.2 billion on pet food, \$169 million on pet products and more than \$700 million taking pets to the vet! Over 64% of today's 7.5 million Australian households own one or more pets. 53% of those who do not at present own a pet would, in the future, like one. And of our pet population, there are 3.6 million dogs, 2.3 million cats, 7.5 million birds and over 13 million fish!

Whether through love, guilt, trendiness, peer-pet pressure, acquisitiveness or the sheer fun of it, we are adding everything from furniture and jewellery to gourmet foods and pet-minding DVDs to our gift lists for pets. Though I shake my head and laugh at the excesses of some pet owners (Poo-scooping services? Paul Mitchell pet shampoos? Designer poo bags? Crystal water bowls?) I'm guilty when it comes to pampering my fur 'n' feather kids.

I confess to mail ordering exotic bird toys from overseas via the Internet. It's true that I often go to craft shops for beads, balsa wood, untreated leather and other bird safe materials to make chewable or destructible toys for Jacko and Rog. Yes I do shop for organic nuts, fruits and vegetables and admit that my birds have a heavy macadamia and pine nut habit. And I'll cop to having endlessly hauled over luggage with weird and wonderful dog toys you just couldn't get back in Australia, and faced the smirks of Quarantine inspectors when they confronted the cargo. But I never got busted for anything illegal!

With a greater demand for the little luxuries to treat our pets, we've seen an amazing growth in the diversity of foods, services, products and extravagances that importers and local makers are providing. Pet stores have come out of the dark ages and animal care is a science. With this publication, we'll be treating the readers to new, innovative, fun, entertaining and bizarre things in the pet world so they can treat their urban animals to whatever is appropriate, healthy and safe as well as fun for the future.

We hope you enjoy our first issue, recommend it to your pet peers both in print and our Internet version if your local outlet runs out. We also offer a \$20 annual subscription for our four issues a year if you want Urban Animal home delivered. Please let us know what you like and need from our publication.

Phil Tripp
Urban Animal Publisher

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My relationship with pets and animals in general began at an early age. Pretty soon after I came into the world my parents procured a Corgi cross and named him Footy as he had white feet but had the same colouring as me - he was a red-head. I remember him to be a faithful dog, yet he was constantly in trouble in the neighbourhood as he was un-neutered and my family unfortunately let him roam. He was recovered several times, miles away from home and often impounded by the local ranger who knew him by name. His wandering and lust for smells ultimately led to his demise. A slow but loving Beagle followed me into my teenage years and we had several cats, a baby possum, duckling and my tween equine loving years were satiated with my sisters horses.



Lisa Treen & Jerri

But my first real companion pet as an adult was my Dalmatian Mick and I will also say he was my best boyfriend. He was a dud, that is to say he couldn't be a show dog and out of a litter of eight was the last one to leave the breeders home at six months of age. I didn't care that he wasn't show-worthy, I didn't really care what breed of dog he was, I just wanted a dog to share my life with and would have been just as happy with a rescue mutt. Jerri, my current dog, continues to bring me the same joy that Mick did, albeit with a different personality. I couldn't imagine how consumed with sorrow I became when Mick suddenly died last year but somehow having Jerri around made it just much more bearable. I could hear the light clatter of claws on the wood floor, the welcome bark at the sound of the doorbell and light doggie breathing as she slept. The sudden departure of those sounds in my house would have made the grief unbearable.

Are we pet owners or animal guardians? - I like the term guardian as it implies we are carers and responsible for the welfare and wellbeing of an animal companion and this reflects that they are not merely a chattel or purchase. With this publication we hope to enhance and enrich the lives of humans and their companion animals with interesting stories, fun activities, issues facing sharing space with pets and cool and new products and services. In short we strive to connect you with your inner (city) animal.

Lisa Treen
Urban Animal Editor



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