



# What's in store for your pet store?

Lisa Treen gets some much needed pet retail therapy

Each year I make several trips to the US and have attended the huge pet product trade shows that showcase some of the new and often weird products vying for the attention of savvy buyers in the pet trade. It's an eye opener seeing the sheer volume of products from pet strollers to automated watering and feeding systems. Fancy collars and over hyped 'dog bling' to items that I, as an Australian consumer, know would take a giant belly flop on this side of the pond no matter how well marketed.

I also make sure that I look into every pet store that I come across, even going out of my way to track down the more off-beat or boutique stores. There are some interesting trends coming out of the US and many would argue that California is a crystal ball on how your local pet store may be evolving and morphing in the future.

What's refreshing about this new breed of store, is the only puppies, dogs, kittens or cats you're likely to encounter are those of visiting customers. There's no live-stock for sale and this is a growing direction in marketing savvy operators.

However, little boutique stores can't cater to the 'Supersize-Me' mentality of the average American consumer, so there are large chains all throughout the US stocking the big stuff and lots of it. *PetSmart* is a huge chain—both in store size and amount of locations—catering to the cross-species pet home. If you're keen on a particular brand of pet food, you'll probably find it within their vast interior. Like a giant supermarket, there are aisles dedicated to toys, training aids, apparel, feeding systems, bedding and housing.

PetSmart can hook you up and help you find your new best friend, however their 'sale' of puppies, kittens, dogs and cats is more progressive than the pet shop of past. As they state on their site, "Since its inception in 1987, PetSmart has chosen not to sell cats or dogs in stores, but rather to encourage pet adoptions. What's more, to help address pet overpopulation, PetSmart teams up with more than 3,400 local animal welfare organisations throughout North America and donates space in store for the PetSmart Charities' Adoption Centers, helping to place homeless pets in loving homes."

They believe through their efforts, they've managed to re-home nearly three million pets. PetSmart's approach to pet ownership/adoption includes a variety of days—often weekends—where families and prospective pet owners have more time to seek out a furred family member. The welfare organisations they help, bring in

## Shopping in San Francisco



East Bay Vivarium

San Francisco's cool campus town of Berkeley is home to a store that caters for lovers of the slippery and exotic, the *East Bay Vivarium*. Their inventory consists of snakes, lizards, turtles, frogs and tarantulas. From tiny albino Rosy boas to massive iguanas, they boast the largest selection of reptiles in the US. Open seven days a week and with over 40 staff on hand, this shop occupies a huge space dedicated to the care, breeding and sale of these amazing creatures. Their site also has care sheets that cover the species they sell—what size and type of housing, lighting, temperature, feeding, vitamins and routine care needed to keep your herp healthy. These comprehensive care sheets also suggest books on further reading and most importantly, signs that your species may be experiencing health problems.



George

*George* is a bright little concept with two stores in the ultra cool locations of Berkeley and Pacific Heights in San Francisco and another in the urban beachside site of Santa Monica. With its bright interiors and intriguing displays, *George* invites you in with visual eye-candy. This store is a pet lovers dream as it's bulging with quirky toys, tasty snacks, bathing products, nap-worthy beds and a dizzy array of pet fashion. The care in presentation of the merchandise is pitched to shoppers wanting an upscale experience, yet many products do not come burdened with a budget-breaking price tag. There's something for every cat, dog and pet owner.

**FOUR LEGGED FRIENDS**  
A FRIEND FOR LIFE

- All the pet accessories you will ever need
- Pet grooming
- Cute puppies & kittens
- birds & Fish
- Your one stop pet shop

9953 1695 73 Military Rd Neutral Bay 2089

a variety of puppies, kittens, adult dogs and cats looking for a permanent home. It's an environment, away from the often stressful and cramped confines of the local shelter. Cute puppies and kittens have a higher price tag than adult dogs and cats.

All animals come micro-chipped and de-sexed. Petsmart also donate \$30.00 in redeemable coupons for adopted cats and \$50.00 for adopted dogs, for various products from their store. Local welfare representatives are on hand to get all prospective owners to complete in-depth questionnaires and are available to answer questions in relation to the history of the pet and details on temperament and any special factors to successfully finding the right match.

A trip to Los Angeles means that I normally visit a few bird specialist shops which cater to avian aficionados. I like checking out the toys, range of carriers and cages and more importantly, I get to ruffle a few feathers—literally—as I can get to handle breeds I don't get to meet here in Australia—Amazons, African Greys and Toucans.

The Beverly Centre is a shopping mecca for those who like their designer brands Hollywood style. And 'designer' is de rigor for the pet shop that resides on the second floor. They proudly display what-ever breed is currently in fashion in the celebrity pages of glossy mags and on the streets of Bel-Air. 'Multi-poops', 'Puggles' and oodles of doodles—in fact anything that rhymes with strudel—are lined up in Perspex display crates in the front of the store.

With the 'designer' name there's bound to be a designer price tag and just to keep you guessing there are no prices for these pups with their limited windows to the world. We saw some larger breed (and getting larger by the day) Labrador pups that had their prices slashed and were on sale—discount, bargain basement dogs. There are larger signs however, that state that 'financing is available to approved customers'. The concept of financing for a pet brings a very big ethical question to this style of retail. It's pretty easy to repossess a plasma flat screen TV whose buyer has defaulted but how does anyone repossess an eighth-month old pup?

Seriously, you would be better spending your two grand, one floor above at the Louis Vuitton or Dior store. At least investing in a handbag at LV or Dior and you'll be guaranteed its origin, authenticity and a two year warranty should the stitching start to unravel. Heck, if you don't like it in 12 months, you can always flog it on eBay!

**Babies** is another boutique store catering to the needs of your four-legged friend centrally located in Gough Street in the heart of San Francisco. Run by a dynamic pair of siblings, and a delightful Dachshund, Babies makes the most of their little space, stacking all manner of objects to the roof. They actively contribute time and space for fund raising activities in the urban pet community through a various membership and partnership programs for local shelters.



Babies



A howling call to all smaller pet retailers and groomers wanting to enjoy all the advantages of larger chains and franchises without losing their independence. **Howling Success Marketing** is a division of Dr Neil's Pet & Equine Supplies that is giving smaller operators the opportunity to participate in their tailor made marketing programs.

As well as participating in advertising campaigns in electronic and print media there are other inclusions in newsletters, PR campaigns and reward programs linked to purchases. Retailers and groomers should contact (02) 9421 1500 or go to [www.howlingsuccess.com.au](http://www.howlingsuccess.com.au)

# Fashionable cross breeds

What do you get when you cross a...

**Collie and a Lhasa Apso.**

The new breed is a Collapso, a dog that folds up for easy transport.

**Spitz and a Chow-Chow.**

The new breed is a Spitz-Chow, lucky you, it's a dog that vomits a lot.

**Pointer and a Setter.**

The new breed is a Poinsetter, a traditional Christmas pet.

**Great Pyrenees and a Dachshund.**

The new breed is a Pyradachs, a puzzling breed.

**Pekingese and a Lhasa Apso.**

The new breed is Peekasso, an abstract dog.

**Irish Water Spaniel and an English Springer Spaniel.**

The new breed is an Irish Springer, a dog that smells fresh and clean.

**Labrador Retriever and a Curly Coated Retriever.**

The new breed is a Lab Coat Retriever, the choice of laboratory personnel.

**Newfoundland and a Basset Hound.**

The new breed is a Newfoundland Asset Hound, a dog suited to financial advisors.

**Bloodhound and a Labrador.**

The new breed is a Blabador, a dog that tells the world your most intimate secrets.

**Malamute and a Pointer.**

The new breed is a Moot Point, owned by... never mind, it doesn't really matter.

**Collie and a Malamute.**

The new breed is a Commute, a dog that travels to work.

**Deerhound and a Terrier.**

The new breed is a Derriere, a dog that's true to the end.

**Pekingese and a Dachshund.**

The new breed is Peking Dach, favoured by Chinese restaurateurs.

**Kerry Blue Terrier and a Bloodhound.**

The new breed is Blueblood, a favourite with society's upper crust.

**Kerry Blue Terrier and a Skye Terrier.**

The new breed is Blue Skye, a dog for optimists.

**Smooth Fox Terrier and a Chow Chow.**

The new breed is Smooch, a pooch that loves to kiss.

**Airedale and a Spaniel.**

The new breed is Airel, a dog with large pointy ears, who brings in good TV reception.

**Terrier and a Bulldog.**

The new breed is Terribull, he's a dog that's naughty, naughty, naughty.

**Keeshond and a Setter.**

The new breed is Keester, you can't get this dog off his big behind.

**Chihuahua and a Whippet.**

The new breed is Chiapet, order it from TV! 3 for \$19.95!

**Boxer and a German Shorthair.**

The new breed is Boxer Shorts, a dog that should be seen uncovered in public.

**Basenji and a Schipperke.**

The new breed is Baserke, a dog who's nuts about her owner.

**Retriever and an Irish Setter.**

The new breed is Resetter, a dog that can set your VCR, microwave and other pesky household appliances.

**Doberman and a Poodle.**

The new breed is Doodle, a dog that is easy to draw.

**Pekinese and a Bulldog.**

The new breed is Peekabull. a dog that likes to play hide and seek.

**Bloodhound and a Borzoi.**

The new breed is a Bloody Bore, a dog that makes you yawn.

**Poodle and a Great Pyrenees.**

The new breed is Poopyree, a dog that smells all rosy.

**Samoyed and a Norwich Terrier.**

The new breed is Samwich, a delicious breed.

**Pitbull and a Poodle.**

The new breed is a Pitoodle, beware, they're vicious gossips.

**Bull Terrier and a ShihTzu.**

The new breed is a... well we can't print it!

**GORGEOUS PETS**  
Eastern Suburbs  
Pet Care Professionals

**Dog Walking / Eastern Suburbs only  
1 hour group walk or individual walk  
Pet Taxi Eastern Suburbs based**

**Does your Bird,  
Cat, Rabbit  
or Dog need  
safe reliable  
transport**

**Leeanne**  
**0410 64 81 85**

**FREE DELIVERY AUSTRALIA WIDE**

**Waggle**  
OUTDOOR GEAR  
for dogs & cats on the go

**SHOP ONLINE**  
[waggle.com.au](http://waggle.com.au)

leashes . collars . harnesses . coats . carriers . life jackets . boots  
backpacks . toys . the pet loo . dog tents . travel accessories & more