

Issue 4
July 31 - October 30, 2005

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All content, advertising rates & info also appear on our website www.urbananimal.net

Proudly produced on Apple Computers. Printed by Rural Press. Distributed through IMMEDIA! Pty Ltd.

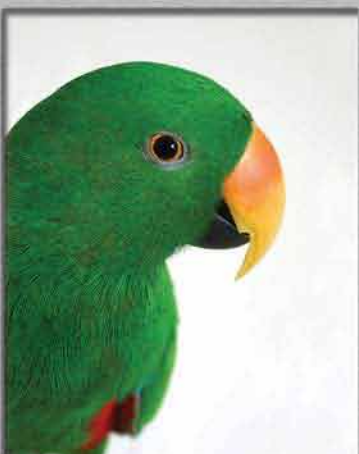
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Published Quarterly by ONYA! Pty Ltd
20 Hordern Street, Newtown NSW 2042
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Cover Photography: By Danielle Lyonne of Animax
Dharma the Cat: By David Lourie
ISSN 1832-1542 ABN 28 056 115 881



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

It's only two weeks before this issue hits over 250 outlets with 40,000 copies and I found myself at a pet supplies shop near where I live this morning, talking to three levels of the pet industry in one place—a vet nurse, a store manager and the rep for a major pet products company, all separately but all in the one store—as I was choosing two types of pet food and a toy for the puppy.

On one hand, I was asked why I picked the toy and what made me choose the two different types of dry pet food. On the other hand, the rep and I talked about how we perceive the pet industry and the immense changes that are happening at the moment, how consumers will be affected, but more importantly, how retailers and distributors will take a hit. I'm not here to talk about the industry, because we are a magazine that celebrates pet lifestyle. But we are affected by and supported by all levels of the industry from the major food manufacturers that advertise with us to the small shops and services that invest in our publication.

It's been a struggle over the past four issues to get the industry to 'get it'—a free pet magazine which doesn't do 'advertorial' (editorial in exchange for advertising which would cheapen us) like other magazines do so readily; has high quality editorial and imagery as opposed to lowbrow articles, contests and giveaways as content; and also not playing into the politics and issues of either the associations or organisations that wanted to turn our magazine into a forum for their often hysterical arguments on pet ownership, breed specific legislation or other, frankly boring, stuff.

What is happening in the industry is amazing growth, but at the expense of 'mum 'n' pop' old style stores in favour of pet supply superstores. Though we're getting a vastly varied and expanding array of new pet products from overseas, we're also being inundated with cheap crap and knock offs from China that are being sold at sometimes exorbitant prices. We have an endless choice of supermarket, premium and superpremium pet foods as well as a wealth of fresh foods rather than bagged or canned versions. And with all this change, a number of distributors are consolidating, stores are closing and a lot of Australian made products are falling by the wayside.

But we're happy to report—as is evident by the vastly increased number and variety of advertisers in this issue—that we have finally overcome the 'puppy' phase of our growth and proven that the public loves what they read and the industry is starting to respond by using us to get their products and services to discerning consumers. Of course some of the industry's key players and suppliers are still paying us with 'lip service' and promising to advertise in each issue only to fall out because of 'budget', 'merger', 'new marketing directions' or other comic excuses. But then, they still want us to feature their products, do reviews or otherwise give them something for nothing. It is funny!

But what's heartening is the incredible response we've had from readers who have subscribed to 'support Jackson's bid for the Parrolympics', who want to have this magazine home delivered as soon as it comes out instead of having to remember to pick it up, or who just want to encourage us. We've also had an incredible number of letters, emails and calls, but won't waste a page with self serving 'letters to the editor' that would appear to be howling at our own moon! Nor will we use testimonials from happy advertisers who have gotten business out of being a part of Urban Animal—we'd rather put potential advertisers onto them privately.

But we'll leave it to you to let our advertisers know how you found them, because that's the most important proof of our worth to those who support us with their investment. In the meantime, we'll support your faith and trust in us by providing the most honest and entertaining read you can enjoy curled up with the beloved pet or pets of your choice.

Phil Tripp - Urban Animal Publisher



Jackson, Phil Tripp & Roger

I'm convinced I was born with an extra gene—the pink gene. I readily admit I love girly-girl things, especially nice shoes and handbags. I don't spend a lot of money on clothes as I mostly wear jeans and t-shirts to work. However I'm a firm believer that quality shoes, elegant jewellery and a stunning handbag can really do wonders when slapping an outfit together. When I travel overseas I usually make the most of my limited spending power on a nice pair of shoes and extraordinary handbag.

I've discovered that our new puppy, Lilly, also has these tastes. I realised this when she was found frolicking with a pair of my fancy knickers hanging from her mouth. Then there was the lace bra that ended up in the middle of the office floor. Oh the horror of having your co-workers viewing the contents of your lingerie drawer!

About 13 years ago I was working on a meagre salary, temping at a publishing office in Paddington. Not far from the office was a boutique shoe shop and in their window was my equivalent of discovering the Holy Grail—a pair of fine Italian boots. They were beautiful, made of the softest, buttery leather, had a fine toe and the detail and craftsmanship was superb. They were elegant yet practical and were incredibly comfortable. They were also very expensive and I had to save for weeks and live off instant noodles to buy them.

I recall an incident with this pair of treasured footwear that to this day I'm still not proud of. It was a Saturday evening and we had just gone to bed. Drifting off to sleep my partner nudged me and said, "I think Mick's chewing on something". My boots! My glorious boots were being chomped on by my dog, Mick. I was so upset that anger got the better of me and I flew across the room, snatched the shoe from his mouth and whacked him with it. The cry from a hurt dog and the look of fear on his face jolted me back to my senses. I'd really hurt him and felt shocked that I could have lost my temper and smacked him out of anger.

Certainly Mick never held a grudge against me for this incident—dogs are wonderful creatures that don't have that kind of memory or emotion. Yet it's something I'll never forget and am not sure I can ever forgive myself for. There was a heartfelt apology a decade later to Mick as I held his head, speaking to him softly, on that lonely Tuesday morning in the Vet surgery just before he got his final injection. I vowed and declared to myself that I would never react this way again to any dog that came into our lives and I was truly sorry and ashamed for my actions.

This vow was tested a couple of weeks back as I came down the stairs from a relaxing Sunday afternoon massage and discovered Lilly with a precious shoe in her mouth. It was one from a pair that I had recently bought on my last trip to the US. A beautiful shoe with perfect detailing and a stunning heel, being crunched by her sharp teeth. I took a deep breath, descended that remainder of stairs and called her to me. Happily she ran to me and looked up with this new prize still firmly in her gob. I asked her to drop it, which she dutifully did and then I quietly took the shoe and its unharmed mate upstairs to the wardrobe. I sat on my bed for a while contemplating the shoe, my new puppy and my emotions. Perhaps the shoe could be fixed and maybe I could find a 'shoe whisperer' who could replace the mauled heel and fix the teeth marks on the toe. Perhaps I could claim this on insurance and find the exact same pair somewhere. And then I snapped out of it, took myself downstairs, gave my two precious dogs a cuddle and fed them.

Lilly's a special puppy and she's had a rough few months in her earlier life. She's a lovely dog who brings so much into our lives—not just home but at the office. My co-workers love to cuddle her, play with her and give her guidance. Lilly is a delight as she darts around the park playing with her mentor Jerri, special playmate Buddy, and other dogs. She is a reminder that so much progress can be made with patience, love and positive reinforcement training.

With Lilly and the carnage she's inflicted on various clothing items, I'm reminded of a series of advertising campaigns for a credit card provider:

Husband's socks, \$2.50 • Vintage velvet coat, \$350.00 • Stuart Weitzman shoes, \$450.00
The joy of a puppy... Priceless!

Lisa Treen - Urban Animal Editor



Jerri, Lisa Treen & Lilly

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Jackson
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dream!



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Our Editorial Policy

This free publication is made possible by the advertisers within. However, we do not accept advertising of an unsuitable nature nor do we promise, provide or otherwise use editorial as an inducement or reward for advertising. All of the editorial material within is either produced by the publishers and staff or syndicated from other sources, but not from advertisers. We do not accept advertising from breeders of animals for sale, 'junk' pet food or other inappropriate pet products, nor do we condone products or practices that may harm, cause pain or negatively affect animals.

- ✓ All natural anti-oxidants for a healthy immune system
- ✓ No artificial colours, flavours or preservatives
- ✓ Omega 3 and 6 for healthy skin and shiny coat
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