

# Date me, love my pet

Lisa Treen goes on line, into the world of pet dating

I am

Divorced 31 yr woman seeking a man 28 to 36 for...casual dates, friendship, marriage, relationship, romance

My ideal date

I'm looking for a guy that is honest, funny, likes to chat, likes adventure. And well accepts the fact that I come with "baggage". If you're up to that challenge, than drop me a note...

I am

Single 31 yr old woman seeking a man age 31 to 38 for...activity partner, friendship, casual dates, marriage, relationship, romance, travel partner

My ideal date

My pet would describe me as being whipped. I spoil them with everything--love, food, warmth, toys, trees, etc. My pets are my children, and they know how to work it. They're my alarm clock in the morning, and my greeter at the door when I come home-- due to food schedules.

I am

Divorced Man 53 yr old man seeking woman age 35 to 52 for...activity partner, friendship & casual dates

What my pets would describe me as

Wow. What can I say. My dad is Grrrrreat. My world revolves around him. He thinks of everything.

I am

Attached 19 yr old man seeking woman any age to any age

My ideal date

Ideally I'm looking for pals to go on walks to the park, roll in the hay and plenty of ball games

I am

Attached 34 yr woman seeking man or woman age 21 to 45 for ...pet dates, friendship, networking. I only want to meet friends

My ideal date

I don't want to go on dates other than maybe lunch at a local restaurant. Just looking for pals/friends

I've never encountered an online dating service and as an attached 30 something the thought of getting online and lurking around one of these sites creeps me out-especially if someone caught me.\* So even under the guise of research, actually checking into an online dating service is kind of weird and almost feels naughty-except I'm lurking on one that is quite different from most.

DateMyPet.com is an Internet dating site for people who are pet lovers and it's not exclusive to singles. DateMyPet started out as an Internet dating service for singles but quickly evolved into a friendship site for people looking to find 'pet buddies'. Based in the US the site is the brain-child of Robert Yau who came up with the idea while walking his dog Hershey.

Hershey was a magnet for people to engage Yau in conversation. Pets are a catalyst in for social connection and interaction.

The site has some cute graphics and articles on Internet dating. For instance there's advice on 'how to land the catch of your life... without becoming shark bait' and other hints and tips on staying safe and happy in the world of online dating. As a member (single or attached) you can meet and make 'pet buddies' which is your personal network of pet friends. It's created by members making a request to the network owner and only with the owner's permission is another member allowed to join. 'Pet Dates' are not necessarily dates with a view to romance, they involve activities with pets like a walk in the park, coffee and casual conversation and as a member you can include the type of 'Pet Dates' you're looking for.

Members can view other members' 'Profiles' which includes photos, descriptions and other information on themselves and of course their pets. If a member feels that another has 'inappropriate content', this can be reported and removed. It's all meant to be a safe and clean way of making contact. I expect Mrs Slocombe-esque, 'Are You Being Served', double entendre references to kitty cliches, would probably be banned.

So enough of this lurking, time to really get into the world of cyber friendship, compose a profile, upload a recent photo of me with my collection of pets. I'm ready to meet some pet-loving people and explore this new online friendship/dating frontier.

DateMyPet.com's advice on choosing an appropriate photo gives me an insight to the mistakes that people can make. Your photo should be recent and not scanned from your high school yearbook circa 1989. Try to get a good shot and one that clearly shows your face without a goofy expression. No group shots (which one is you?) and as a woman showing too much skin

you're likely to attract the 'wrong' kind of attention. As a guy showing too much skin you're probably going to get no attention. Roving through the site I can really see that some folk

haven't taken heed of this simple advice. There are plenty of party girl shots where the subject has several photos of her-all with a beer bottle in her hand. One of the scariest was 'Mum-momma'\*\*\* who had several photos of herself with her arm around a guy but chillingly, his face has been scratched out of the photos-yikes!

After uploading all the information and checking that I haven't given too much away about me I wonder how long it will be before someone makes contact. I don't have to wait too long as within 24 hours I receive an email request for someone to become my pet buddy. When I log on I can see that my profile has been viewed around 25 times-this could be from members or non-members looking through the site.

'Moondoggy' wants to become a pet buddy so I check out his profile. He's 40, single and looking for pet buddies that are into outdoor pursuits from casual walks in the park to romance and marriage. From my profile he can see that I'm attached and only looking for friendship so I figure Moondoggy can join my pet posse.

I email Moondoggy and ask him about how he's used the site and disclose that I'm doing an article on DateMyPet.com and would he answer some quick questions. His reply indicates some apprehension, especially if this involves any long-winded replies. I email back to let him know that it doesn't-just some quick questions.

The next day I get an email alerting me to another pet buddy request. The request comes from 'ferretboy'. Checking his profile and photo I can see that boyhood probably fled ferretboy back somewhere during the Summer of Love. I'm not sure I want to add ferretboy to my posse so hold off on an answer. Still no word back from Moondoggy to my questions. Perhaps I rushed things, came across as needy and made the mistakes that some folk do in the initial stages of pet dating.

I check into the site after the weekend and note that my 'pet cuteness factor' is 4 stars. This is a rating system where people can make an opinion about how cute your pet is-at least I think that's what it's there for-perhaps they're really rating you on your kit and not your cat. Ratings range from only a parent could love this through to adorable and the highest, I'm taking this baby home!

I can also see the members who recently viewed my profile. There's 'Aussielover' who probably found me because doing a search he would've found that I'm from Australia and not an Australian Shepherd enthusiast. Also 'Bighunka\_lovingfun' has dropped by my virtual door and checked me out so I think I may have to do the same. His online name suggests that his build is probably on the husky side, so I'm surprised to see this divorced 43 year-old, self-employed, Aquarian looks like more a Latino David Shwimmer than John Goodman. Bighunka\_lovingfun is both a cat and dog man. He volunteers for several charities, loves Disneyland and dancing in Las Vegas and mentions in his profile that romance is important to him. No wonder he's also racked up over 60 pet buddies-all women and all gorgeous. Bighunka\_lovingfun certainly has something going on out there in pet dating world. Continued on page 14.



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