

Make a profit on pooches this wedding season, whether the dog is the ring-bearer or a “fairy tail” bride. *By Lauren Lykke*

Here Comes the Dog!

Blushing brides and their grooms say “I do” at higher rates in the summer than any other season—and a fair number even include their four-legged friends. According to the American Kennel Club (New York), 18 percent of dog owners would include their pet in their wedding. That’s a statistic worth considering when you stock your shelves for summer.

“With wedding season rapidly approaching, I have had a number of brides-to-be excitedly placing their orders for puppy collars to match their wedding colors,” said Robb Horen of Dog Savvy Doggie Boutique and Spa (Denver). “Given that the dogs of my clients are treated as an integral part of the family, it is very popular for the four-legged kids to be included in the matrimonial ceremony.”

Following tradition, June was the most popular month for weddings in 2010, according to The Knot’s Real Weddings Survey, which queried 19,000 U.S. brides who tied the knot last year. The average age for the bride was 29, says The Knot.

Barker and Meowsky, a Chicago boutique that has hosted a number of bridal trunk shows for dogs, reports that brides under 30 are 17 percent more likely to get married with their dog by their side than those over 60.

It’s a good indicator that bowties, dazzling collars and wedding dresses will be scooped off the shelves by couples looking to include their best friends on their special day.

But pets are not just accompanying their owners down the aisle. These days, pets are getting hitched, too. In fact, Fido’s Festival USA (Collingswood, N.J.) attempted to set a Guinness World

Record by hosting the world’s largest dog wedding ceremony. They didn’t break the record, but did marry 120 canine couples at the Salem County Fairgrounds in Woodstown, N.J. Even Elwood, “America’s Ugliest Dog,” gave up his bachelor status.

Even if you’re not trying to break records, you can cash in by hosting in-store pet nuptials. Do it Las Vegas-style and offer customers a package deal that includes apparel and jewelry for the wedding party,

wedding biscuit treats and even paw print balloons. Judging by the numbers that Fido’s Festival pulled in, customers will jump at the chance to marry off their pets.

Here’s a selection of wedding-ready products to set the mood.



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Up Country's **Daisy Chain** is handcrafted neckwear that combines special fabrics, flowers and trim for an exquisite look. Available in a gift box and perfect for the "doggie of the bride." **Up Country Inc. (East Providence, R.I.), 800-541-5909, www.upcountryinc.com**



For members of the bridal party or four-legged female guests, Lil Yorkie Fru Fru's **Watermelon Dress** is flouncy and fun. It features a halter-style top with a fluffy coordinating tutu. Fully lined and interfaced for long-lasting quality, it is handmade in the United States. **Lil Yorkie Fru Fru (Lehigh Acres, Fla.), 239-777-5144, www.lilyorkiefruf.ru.com**

The **Classic Pearl Necklace** from Oscar Newman features Swarovski pearls and a dazzling Swarovski crystal-encrusted heart toggle clasp. The antiqued clasp may be worn in the back for an elegant yet simple pearl necklace look, or in front as an eye-catching pendant, perfect for a bride on her wedding day. **Oscar Newman (Batavia, Ill.), 630-697-5566, www.oscarnewman.com**



In place of wedding rings for the doggie bride and groom, sparkly, personalized collars can symbolize wedded bliss. **Metallic Bling Dog Collars** from 26 Bars and a Band are made of faux leather with a metallic finish, and **Bling Charms** are available in bone, crown, heart and letter shapes for a personal touch. **26 Bars and a Band (Walnut, Calif.), 909-468-2263, www.26barsandaband.com**

The canine bride will shine in her **Venus Wedding Dress** from Pooch Outfitters. Featuring faux-pearl back straps, a bow with rhinestones, raised flower motifs and lace trimmings throughout, it is truly a "fairy tail" gown. Veil and detachable train extension are included. **Pooch Outfitters (Santa Monica, Calif.), 310-869-7667, www.poochoutfitters.com**



Keep the guests' tails wagging with **Wedding Biscuits** from Pet Celebrations Inc. These hand-decorated treats are free of corn, wheat and soy and are available in a variety of designs and sizes. **Pet Celebrations Inc. (Chicago), 877-860-8380, www.petcelebrations.com**



Silly Squeakers Wine Bottles are durable, soft rubber wine bottles perfect for playtime at the reception! They are available in three "flavors": Crispaw Champagne, GRRRobert Slobbery Pinot Noir or Kennel Relaxin Chardonnay. **VIP Products L.L.C. (Phoenix), 480-704-1700, www.vipproducts.com**



With its ruffles, polka dot accents and pink satin bowtie, the **Best Man Shirt** from East Side Collection is a snappy way to suit up a wedding party. The shirt is machine-washable and available in extra-extra-small to large. **PetEdge (Beverly, Mass.), 800-738-3343, www.petedge.com**



The hand-smocked **Angelica Dress** from Oscar Newman is perfect for any member of the canine wedding party, from the flower girl to the bride! The cotton dress features hand-sewn pearls, sequins and tiny white rosettes that cascade down the skirt. Available in extra-small to large. **Oscar Newman (Batavia, Ill.), 630-697-5566, www.oscarnewman.com**



Made with crystallized Swarovski elements, Around the Collar's **Bridal Collection Harnesses** make an elegant statement. The harnesses are made of genuine white leather and are adorned with Swarovski crystals available in a variety of colors. Leads and collars also are available. **Around the Collar (Holbrook, N.Y.), 631-676-7320, www.aroundthecollar.com**



Dress the groom to the nines in the **Cumberbund and Bowtie Set** from Roadwagz. It's so comfortable and easy to place around the dog's neck with a fabric fastener, Fido won't even realize he's all dressed up! Roadwagz (Beverly Hills, Calif.), 800-842-9901, www.wholesale.roadwagz.com

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A wedding day's not complete without ambience, so decorate with **Paw Prints-A-Round Balloons** from Pioneer Balloons. These 11" white latex balloons feature multisized black paw prints. Qualatex Balloons, a division of Pioneer Balloon Co. (Wichita, Kan.), 800-356-0901, www.qualatex.com

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