



Louise Harris' other dogs — Lulu, dog bridesmaid, wearing a dress customised by Latimer couture and a Swarovski crystal necklace; Larry wearing a Michele Ochs tuxedo — at the UK's most expensive dog wedding



REIGNING *Dogs*

*From 16th century-inspired gold bowls and dog chateaux to crystal studded pet baths and flowing gold silk dresses, there is a world of choice out there for pampered pets. **Andy Round** reports*

The bride looked radiant in a US\$1,500 dress by Michele Ochs. Customised with 1,800 Swarovski crystals by Latimer Couture, it was stylishly finished with a US\$600 pearl necklace.

Of course, there had been challenges. Like any other wedding the expenses had spiralled out of control. The flowers, wedding planner, a Bentley, venue, security, stylists and food for 80 guests didn't come cheap. But unlike any other wedding, this was a nuptial celebration between two dogs. And as far as the bride's owner was concerned, it was worth every cent.

Louise Harris spent US\$30,000 on the ceremony for her Yorkshire terrier bride Lola and Chinese crested groom Mugly. "I wanted Lola to have an absolutely perfect day," she says. "We only meant to have 30 guests but the list just got bigger. I enjoy spoiling Lola because it makes me happy. Lola loves clothes and jewellery and she is a bit of a diva."

Pet owners are not just looking to provide a home for their pets but they are also investing in their quality of life

Pets today, eh? In my day a can of Pedigree Chum and a quick trot around the block was all Lassie needed to keep her content. Just try that with young pups today and you'll get a baleful stare that translates as, "You're joking right? Where are my filet mignon steaks, Burberry coat, Theo Fennel bowl and Four Seasons' spa treatment?"

Quite frankly, we've created a new generation of pampered pets. Just look at the statistics. The 2011 annual survey by the American Pet Products Association (APPA) says that spending on pets in the US will exceed US\$50b in 2011. Last year the figure grew by 6.2 percent to US\$48b. There are 73 million households that have pets in America. The spend is staggering.

In February this year, the National Retail Federation said US\$367m was spent on Valentine's Day gifts for pets in the US with nine percent of dog owners holding birthday parties for their pets every year. "Many owners accept their pets are like children and are indulging them more than ever," says APPA president Bob Vetere. "The pet industry continues to demonstrate similarities to the baby industry. More and more products are being introduced in response to more and more consumer demand."

Vetere believes that pet owners are not just looking to provide a home for their pets, but they are also investing in their quality of life. For some owners, of course, a decent quality of life involves private jets, five-star hotels, custom-made jewellery and a mansion home. And, well, if it's good enough for them, then it's certainly good enough for Fido. ▣

Louise Harris
and doggie
bride Lola





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LOUIS VUITTON
If you needed to transport something in the 19th century you bought a LV trunk. Monsieur Vuitton had a reputation for producing custom-made excellence that would last a lifetime whether it was a trunk for your carriage or a camp bed for your African safari. So when it comes to your little preciousness who else to trust with their transportation than the makers of the most famous monogram in the world. The Louis Vuitton dog carrier features a breathable mesh window, zip-around enclosure.
www.louisvuitton.com

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LATIMER

Remember those dogs that got married? Well, the wedding jewellery was custom-made by Joan and Helen Latimer. Although specialists in human wedding makeup and jewellery, the Latimers are forging a successful career in bespoke pieces for pet princesses. At the wedding of Lola and Mugly, for example, they produced US\$4,000 worth of pearl necklaces, Swarovski leg cuffs, crystal leads, necklaces and headdresses. Among their latest collection is The Blue Duchess, inspired by a necklace Cartier made in 1930 for Wallis Simpson, and Tutti Frutti Paws, a piece that features rubies and Swarovski crystals, and the Maharaja a creation crafted from gold beads, emeralds and gold. www.look2latimer.com

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HARTMAN & ROSE

The tag line of luxury pet company Hartman & Rose is the hugely appropriate “take the lead and walk in style”. These are the sorts of collars that your dog can wear with pride. Made from Italian “full grain vegetable tanned leather” they are hand-stitched and hand-painted and then set with semi-precious gemstones and Austrian crystals. Classy. The range features a simple black and gold collar and rise and for a eye-catching style, check out the haute couture Art Deco creations finished in 22K gold plate and Swarovski crystals. www.hartmandrose.com





PETSMOOD BY MISK DESIGN

In the bad old days of pet accessories, a little wooden bed with a cushion was the best a dog or cat could expect when it came to bedtime. Now thanks to Petsmood featuring designs by Misk, your cool urban pet can enjoy a cool urban interior. There are sleek contemporary beds for dogs and refined pillars for cats. There are boxes that suspend on walls and free-standing abstract shapes. It's all very metropolitan and all very *Wallpaper** magazine. But how long this furniture will look so sleek after some continuous chewing obviously remains to be seen. www.petsmood.com

PUPPY DE PARIS

Looking for something for the pet that has everything? Look no further. We'd like to recommend this 16th century-inspired bowl, made by Parisian craftsmen, gilded in 24K gold, featuring three fleur-de-lis and presented in a custom-made silk-lined case which, as Puppy De Paris explains, is "ideal of his or her majesty's travels... and will turn your dog's meals into a feast for the eyes". Indeed. Puppy De Paris also does a nice line in dog apartments that are lovingly designed as a tribute to Sun King Louis XIV. The handles are gold-plated. www.puppydeparis.fr





PET AIRWAYS

The problem with jetting from place to place is that airlines tend to treat pets as cargo or as something to be squeezed under the seat (if they are small enough). Now you can turn to Pet Airways which specialises in just transporting pets and fantastic dog puns. "Your pets aren't packages, they are paw-sengers," glows the company's website. "We'll take care of them as if they were our own. Bone voyage!" Sadly the service is just available in the US where prices start from a very reasonable US\$99 — New York to Baltimore. Services include pet potty breaks, constant monitoring, fresh air, pet tracking, a pet-friendly lounge and a dedicated pet attendant. www.petairways.com



Oprah Winfrey
and Sophie



CHIEN LUXE

Whether your pets are reclining on their favourite yacht or taking it easy at the country chateau, there is nothing that keeps their derriere in better shape than a luxury pillow. Chien Luxe, a Swiss company, produces handmade, high quality pillows packed with goose feathers and featuring über sophisticated designs. Royal Baroque, for example, has a bottom side made from golden crocodile or ostrich leather. www.chienluxe.com ▣



WHAT A DOG'S LIFE

In 2008, when real estate billionaire Leona Helmsley, also known as Queen of Mean in New York, bequeathed US\$12m to her Maltese pup named Trouble, it made headlines and sparked a debate. Passing her wealth to her dog and not to her grandchildren had astonished many people. Relatives of the real estate millionaire challenged the will and the court ruled a sum of US\$2m was sufficient to take good care of Trouble. Helmsley had willed the bulk of her estate to a trust that uses money to benefit dogs. Reports had highlighted that to care for Trouble for 10 years, an annual bill for full time security was listed at US\$100,000 and grooming cost US\$8,000 while the care taker was paid US\$60,000 annually. When the dog died in December 2010, the remainder of the money was returned to the Leona M and Harry B Helmsley Charitable Trust.

Millionaire Patricia O'Neill, daughter of the Countess of Kenmore and the ex-wife of Olympic medal winning Australian swimmer Frank O'Neill, made news when she changed her will to enable the best care for her pet, a chimpanzee named Kalu. The chimp which she rescued would inherit \$80m of her fortune. Unfortunately, about two years later, O'Neill reported the loss of £40m in 2010. The British millionaire keeps 30 dogs and 11 cats in her estate near Cape Town.

Other famous personalities who have decided to give their pets a good life include multimillionaire Oprah Winfrey who has set aside US\$30m for her dogs to be well taken care of. Winfrey was reported to have five dogs plus various pets; while Hollywood star Drew Barrymore has decided to put her US\$6m mansion in a trust for her Labrador Retriever, Flossie. This was to reward the dog which alerted her to a fire in her home.