

# Dogs à la Mode

■ By Nikki Moustaki

Paris is supposed to be a pet lover's paradise—pampered little dogs nesting in fur-lined purses, sitting in cafés with their fancy ladies for lunch on the Champs Elysees, right?

Well, maybe in the movies, but in real-life Paris dogs are. The French would sooner renounce smoking, coffee and Jerry Lewis before being seen walking a dressed-up dog down even the seediest of side streets. But the American way of life, with all its excesses, is sneaking up on the Parisians, and though they're resistant to change, our ways are also growing on them. As a culture, the French don't adapt the way we do when we encounter a new concept. They roll it around and look at all sides, and after 15 or 20 years decide that it's acceptable, or not. These are the people who hated the Eiffel Tower when it first appeared in 1889, and now embrace it as the most important symbol of their largest city. The evolution of "pet as family member" in the United States took less than 10 years. Parisians have had the same amount of time to chew on the same notion, and their verdict: undecided, but amused.

There are fewer than 10 luxury pet boutiques in all of Paris, and most sell primarily American products. Each establishment works hard to be unique.

There's newcomer Stephane Moisset, owner of the recently opened dog boutique, Dog and Design, on the Rue du Cherche-Midi, whose friends thought he was insane for wanting to open a store selling luxury items for dogs. But he wasn't daunted, and states that he opened the store so that he could work with his best friend, a huge yellow Lab named Archibald. Dog and Design's

look is clean and spare—Moisset's philosophy is to choose the finest products rather than cram the store with too many items. He expects that most of his customers will be American and Japanese, not French.

There's Mon Bon Chien, a dog bakery owned by American Harriet Sternstein, who waited eight months for the permits to be able to bake brownies and truffles for dogs. She has been open since 1995, and still has no competitors. Like Moisset, she opened the store inspired by her two lovelier dog and baking. She said that once she started handing out free samples to dogs passing by, her store became a destination.

There's CaniCreche, a doggie daycare owned by veterinarian Sophie Kauffmann, also open since 1995 and also with no competitors. She sells a variety of high-end collars and leashes, dog toys from America, and even some dog costumes, which are new to the store. When she first opened she was very careful about the items she

stocked, because Kauffmann knew that Parisians would think that certain things would be seen as a joke.

B.H.V., a large Parisian department store, has also gotten into the circus act, and opened "La Niche," a large medium-end genera-pet boutique with a lot of colorful and perfectly arranged pyramids of dog totes, toys, and other gear.

For those lucky travelers with lots of disposable income, there's a brand new place to plunder some cash on pet supplies—Goyard's satellite store on Rue St.-Honoré. The luxury luggage maker offers a pet travel bowl set for \$2,000. Though Paris still has a way to hike before it catches up to Los Angeles' or New York's luxury pet market, the Parisians are starting to respect their pets a little more and hold on to their old ways a little less. Pretty soon we might see the French actually using their Diorand Chanel dog collars on their poodles rather than just importing their designs to us. ❧



Stephane Moisset at his boutique, Dog and Design