

Spa pampers pooches

Business caters to all breeds

In the backyard of a plain North York home sits a luxurious five-paw spa for pooches.

The spa is celebrating their very successful first year of business.

Two years ago, Elsie Tang took a grooming course for fun and "loved it."

A year later, she teamed up with childhood friend Christina Tsui, an engineering director, to launch PAWfect Spa Ltd., a luxurious doggy spa.

"The feedback is fabulous," Tsui said. PAWfect now has a regular clientele of 150 dogs and have already grown too big for their backyard facility. They are relocating to 124 Willowdale Ave. at the end of this month.

The spa offers standard grooming in addition to deluxe bath packages and a menu of à la carte options including pawdicures, pet hair colouring, teeth brushing, and milk baths that smell like marzipan.

The team also offers holistic supplements, bath products, and biscuit recipes for all skin and fur types.

While most groomers use one kind of shampoo and conditioner, Tang and Tsui have about 20 to choose from, including oatmeal shampoo for dry skin, super white shampoo, long-haired shampoo, shed-less shampoo, and their most recent find, Pearls Au Lait milk baths that smell like almonds and strawberries.

"Each dog deserves special shampoo catered to their needs," Tsui said.

They also believe that each dog deserves a personalized cut and respectful treatment. Tang said most groomers use clippers the whole



PAWFACT SPA LTD.

Elsie Tang grooms Chloe, a Bishon Frize, at PAWfect Spa. The spa for dogs prides itself on the personal attention it gives each client.

time because they're faster, but she and Tsui use scissors. Clippers produce a one-cut-fits-all buzz job, but scissors provide a finer finish.

During the grooming, Tang and Tsui examine the dog thoroughly for any imperfections and deviations from breed standards. As they cut, they correct the imperfections.

"We try to correct their faults," Tang said, pointing to Chloe, a Bishon Frize, on her stainless steel hydraulic grooming table.

Chloe has a little dip in her back

where it should be flat so Tang leaves the hair a little longer.

Tang has laid out 12 different brushes for Chloe's transformation and each one does something slightly different.

"Even though she's a pet dog, at the end of the day she looks like a show dog," Tang said. "The look is very important to our customers."

Some clients drive from as far as Orangeville for their dog's royal treatment and others send their dogs via pet taxi to the spa.

Appointments are all one-on-one and take about two hours.

First visits can be double the time because Tsui and Tang take time to consult with the owners and relax the dogs.

Tang said dogs are usually quite anxious when they first arrive often because of bad past experiences with groomers who have limited time and end up muscling and sometimes bruising difficult dogs.

"Here the customers pay for our time so we're able to provide that

kind of service," Tsui said.

Prices start at \$60 for a full grooming and go up from there depending on the breed and condition of the dog's coat.

They've been surprised by the response to their brainchild.

"We're getting more and more business and this is not enough," said Tsui of their current facility.

For more information visit www.pawfectspa.com or call 416-222-7721.

AMY BROWN-BOWERS FOR METRO TORONTO