

# THE SECRET LIFE OF THE 1 PERCENT PET

People in Hollywood will treat their dogs and cats like pampered billionaires (even if the owner isn't one — yet) as animal plastic surgeons and pot-prescribing vets inhabit a new norm

By Merle Ginsberg

**I**N A TOWN WHERE pampering is synonymous with well-being, posh pooches and pussycats are being supported like they're **William** and **Kate's** new arrival. We're not just talking about nannies: These days, Hollywood pets are privy to services ranging from doga (dog yoga) and PuPilates (self-explanatory) to shrinks. Everyone needs a new leash on life sometimes.

"There are some really serious pet owners out there," says **Meagan Lee Medick**, host of *K9 Corner*, a TV and web show based in Tarzana. "If there's one thing I've noticed from my show, there are two things people spend endless amounts of money on: kids and dogs. And I've seen people treating dogs better than kids."

**Lisa Vanderpump**, of Bravo's *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* and *Vanderpump Rules*, certainly lavishes time and money on Gigolo, or Giggy, her famous fluffy Pomeranian, who recently visited pet masseuse **Pam Holt**. "Even though Giggy is a very relaxed dog, he loves getting a massage and especially having his ears rubbed," says Vanderpump, adding jokingly, "But in true Gigolo style, if anyone wants to put their hands on him, they have to pay him." *THR* presents the ri-dog-ulous and cat-tastic services that are all the rage.

► **DOG PILATES**  
**Earlene Verona Winn** is a Redondo Beach-based canine masseuse and hydrotherapist, but since she came up with PuPilates classes to build dogs' core muscles and restore strength and flexibility after surgery — or to relieve arthritis — they have

become a big part of business at her four Camp Run-a-Mutt locations. Classes, which include four to six dogs, are \$40 a session or \$200 for six. Dogs do push-ups and squats and use bocce balls and balance discs, putting all four paws on one piece of equipment or just hind legs on another. "It strengthens in a playful way," says Winn. "The dogs love it; they think it's a game." She sells the equipment (\$22 to \$100) so dogs can do PuPilates at home. "Most people do it to keep their dog young or help them recover," says Winn. "Some do it to make sure their dog is always having fun."

► **DOG YOGA**  
Talk about your downward-facing dog. While doga is a growing trend, reducing stress for dogs and owners alike, classes remain hard to find in L.A. It's easier to practice at home with **Amy Stevens' Yoga4Dogs** videos.

In them, owners assist their dogs in poses like "upward paw" and use pets as weight for their own stretches. In the *chaturanga* pose, a pooch lies on its stomach while the owner strokes its back; *savasana* involves the dog lying on its back while someone rubs its belly. The moves not only unwind pets but also aid in digestion.

► **PET PSYCHICS AND SHRINKS**  
Pet psychics, or communicators, can specialize in "pet whispering" (i.e., changing behavior) or can bridge the divide between an owner and a dead pet.

**Joan Ranquet**, a former Laguna Hills resident who lives in Seattle but travels to L.A. frequently, primarily does behavioral work.



Vanderpump's Pomeranian, Giggy, awaits a rubdown at his Beverly Hills house.

"Today I had a really terrified dog," she says. "Next it was a shy cat." Ranquet also works with spoiled and aggressive pets and cats with litter-box problems. "L.A. takes the prize in the spoiled-small-animal contest," she acknowledges, adding that "body work," a type of therapeutic Reiki, "helps them with bad habits." Author and entertainment journalist **Cindy Pearlman's** 13-year-old German shepherd suffered what appeared to be a stroke, and Ranquet prescribed "simple exercises that help ailing animals, saying holistic care is invaluable for pets," says Pearlman. "My dog wound up living two more years."

Ranquet also works with cats ("They actually are trainable"), not to mention birds, horses, rabbits and iguanas. She taught producer **Naomi Rowe** how to keep her cats from running around all night by having her play with them more during the day. Says Rowe, "The situation improved greatly." And Ranquet's not above more typical psychic duties. Reports actress and independent producer **Paula Killen**: "Joan sadly and correctly told me a coyote had gotten one of my cats because the cat communicated it to her. When I broke up with my boyfriend, another of my cats told Joan I was still sleeping with him. I didn't tell her that, but she knew."

Explains **Patricia Schaller**, a self-proclaimed pet psychic, "Animals have the same souls as us, just in different bodies." She worked with Vanderpump and Giggy, answering the reality star's questions. Vanderpump: "Should I leave him home?" Schaller: "He says he always wants to be with you." And: "Is going out in front of crowds too much for him?" The psychic: "He says no — it's his job." Vanderpump has only one bone to pick, making a play on her dog's full name. "I'm not quite sure she was spot on with Giggy calling me Mama," she jokes. "After all, everyone who knows me knows he is my Gigolo."

► **PET MASSAGE**  
Just because Valley-based masseuse Holt works on more fur than skin doesn't mean she isn't the real deal: She attended the Ojai School of Massage, has an associate's degree in veterinary technology from L.A.'s Pierce College and studied animal Reiki. Her clients often are older animals with arthritis. "Even the slightest massage releases endorphins," says Holt. "The first time they're not sure what it's about; the second time they get it. It pumps blood through their little bodies." Some cats scratch if they don't like massage, she adds, "but cats seem to love Reiki."

Holt does five or six appointments



"Petting your pet is great, and pet massage is petting with a purpose," says masseuse Holt, with Giggy.

## L.A.'S POWER PET HELPERS

**DOG PILATES**  
PuPilates by **Earlene Verona Winn**  
tailwaggersmassage.com;  
310-994-4305

**DOG YOGA**  
Doga videos by **Amy Stevens**  
yoga4dogs.com

**PET SHRINK**  
**Joan Ranquet**  
joanranquet.com;  
425-333-6888

**PET PSYCHIC**  
**Patricia Schaller**  
petreader.com;  
818-754-1265

► **PET MASSAGE**  
**Pam Holt**  
buddhadog.com;  
pam@buddhadog.com



► **DOG SWIM COACH**  
**Dina Zaphiris**  
behaviorsavior.com;  
818-712-6949

**PET ACUPUNCTURIST**  
**Liz Friedman**, doctor of veterinary medicine  
323-314-8536

**PET POT DISPENSARIES**  
Pet-suitable pot by

Companion Cannabis ([companioncannabis.com](http://companioncannabis.com)) is available at the following dispensaries:

■ Zen Healing, 8464 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, 323-656-6666

■ Marina Caregivers, 730 Washington Blvd., Marina del Rey, 310-574-4000

■ La Brea Compassionate Caregivers, 735 N. La Brea Ave., 323-933-4372

■ Mecca Natural Medicine, 5650 W. Washington Blvd., 323-937-0299

**PET PLASTIC SURGERY**  
Animal Medical Center of Southern California, 2340 S. Sepulveda Blvd., 310-575-5656

a day at \$50 an hour. Her schedule is full with weekly regulars, and some clients come three times a week. "Some are older, but some are just spoiled," she admits. Client **Chaz Dean**, a celebrity hairstylist and owner of WEN hair products, has three dog nannies for his three dogs, takes a private plane so his dogs can travel with him and gives them weekly massages. **Kari Whitman**, **Jessica Alba's** decorator, raves about Holt to every owner she knows: "The pets learn it's OK to be loved."

► **DOG SWIM COACH**  
**Dina Zaphiris** has trained dogs belonging to **Ridley Scott**, publicist **Paul Bloch**, **Al Pacino**, **Nicolas Cage**, **Kate Beckinsale**, **Ron Meyer**, **Bruce Willis** and **Wallis Annenberg** and is acknowledged as the best in the biz in several specialties — but teaching dogs to swim is her forte. And it's not only for recreation. "A lot of dogs drown each year, like children. They fall into pools and don't know how to get out," she says. "But all breeds can swim. I've taught greyhounds, bulldogs, Tibetan mastiffs and small puppies. You can have a swimming dog in one lesson." Zaphiris, star of Animal Planet's *Petfinder* in 2008, uses leashes initially and first teaches dogs how to descend and ascend pool stairs, making it fun with snacks and tug toys. "I don't recommend you teach your dog

yourself," she says, especially if a flailing mastiff doesn't seem like something you can handle.

► **PET ACUPUNCTURIST**  
**Liz Friedman** is a veterinarian adept at animal acupuncture, and she does house calls in the West Hollywood and Pasadena areas. "It's been practiced for thousands of years," she says. "The Chinese used it for horses and cattle with infertility and bladder problems. Not all animals do well with Western medicine. I've been doing it on dogs with spinal cord problems, arthritis and pain."

How well do Hollywood pets do with needles? "Some won't tolerate it, but most are fine," says Friedman. "Cats can take needles in their face but not in their paws. I try to put in the most sensitive areas last. It definitely calms them down, and they often sleep with the needles." And as with humans, acupuncture helps with anxiety.

► **PET POT DISPENSARIES**  
We're not talking about regular tokes on your sativa for your pooch or kitten: Companion Cannabis was formulated by veterinarians to control pain and improve quality of life for pets with terminal conditions, as well as to stimulate appetites and relieve nausea and anxiety. Some reports suggest pet pot — which can be purchased at such human-servicing dispensaries as Zen Healing and La Brea Compassionate Caregivers (see sidebar) — might have cancer-fighting properties.

► **PET PLASTIC SURGERY**  
A face-lift for Fido and Botox for Buster. Only in L.A., right? Wrong. The world's leading pet plastic surgeon happens to reside in Sao Paulo: **Edgard Brito** has done tummy tucks on obese dogs, eye lifts on shar-peis and chows and face-lifts and nose jobs on such squished-in breeds as bulldogs and Boston terriers. Some procedures can be justified as improving sight or breathing ability; others, not so much. The American Veterinary Medical Association and The Humane Society oppose cosmetic surgery on pets, but in 2010, \$2.5 million was spent on nose jobs for dogs in the U.S. and \$1.6 million on canine eye lifts. The Animal Medical Center of Southern California in West L.A. employs veterinary surgeons who are equipped to perform such surgeries, if an owner can justify a medical reason. *THR*