

Boutiques beneath the Eiffel Tower

In Paris, people have always understood that looking good and wearing the right style is more important than other things. This view seems to be reflected by their pets too, as the boutiques Au Paradis Canin and Pattes à Strass demonstrate.

The status of pets has changed considerably in the French capital in the last few years. Pets are regarded increasingly as members of the family, whose well-being and smart turn-out receive particular attention. The two Parisian boutiques Au Paradis Canin and Pattes à Strass are an example of this. While Caroline Coutret, proprietor of Au Paradis Canin, has specialised primarily in pet grooming, the manager of Pattes à Strass, Guy Mongin, has concentrated on high-class accessories and fashion for dogs and cats. Mongin only opened his shop two years ago. His main aim was

to create a wide and original range of fashion, collars, leads, perfumes and jewellery in the minimum of space. In his 22 m² store, he and his wife thus offer unusual accessories such as motorcycle helmets or high-quality wedding fashion for four-legged friends. The clientele doesn't just include natives of Paris, however. "We have tourists coming into our shop time and again to look for a dog shirt with an Eiffel Tower motif. Our customers actually come from all over the world." And the model of the original little shop seems to be successful. The couple are planning to open a second shop in Paris in the next few months, although Mongin concedes that the Internet has contributed to their success as well as the original products. "The web is very important to us. Most customers have only found our shop in this way, and so we try to present as much of our merchandise as possible on the website."

Grooming in the city of love

Caroline Coutret in the salon Au Paradis Canin, on the other

hand, cares not so much about the "packaging" of pets, but more about their coat. She has been running the business since 2007 and has gained countless grooming awards. "The salon was already active and known as a grooming salon 40 years ago. We specialise in the grooming of terriers in particular." As well as grooming, Coutret has a small shop selling food and accessories for dogs on her 55 m² premises. Her skills attract customers from all over France to Coutret's salon. "Our customers are very demanding and know exactly how they want their dog to look and what they don't want." Her competition in the French capital is within manageable limits, stresses Coutret. "In times of economic hardship, many grooming salons no longer dare to present their clients with unusual, complicated work, but prefer to do something simpler with the clipper for a low price." But Coutret doesn't wish to rest on her laurels. In the next few months, she is planning to expand her work as a grooming teacher and perhaps even open another shop. ■

The salon Au Paradis Canin has specialised in grooming terriers.



Pattes à Strass specialises in particular in original fashion for pets.

