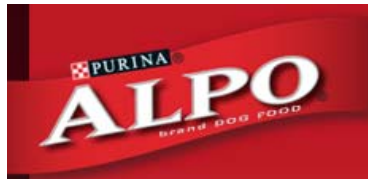


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Few Pamper their Dogs with Luxury Goods and Services



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Most Dog Owners Say They Indulge Their Pups with Simple Pleasures like Treats, Belly Rubs and Walks

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New York, NY – Dog owners today tend to stick to the basics, opting to treat their dogs with simple pleasures than they are to do so with gourmet food or expensive services, according to a new survey of dog owners nationwide aged 25 and older conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs on behalf of ALPO. Of the various special things that owners do for their dog, the most common is feeding them treats (79%). Majorities also give their dog belly rubs (73%), take them for a walk (69%), and play fetch (50%). Many owners also give their dog special treatment by letting them sleep in bed with them (45%) and feeding them a meaty meal (33%).

Only very few treat their dog by getting them a professional doggie massage (2%) or dressing them in designer doggie clothes (2%). One in eight owners (12%) says that they also do other special things for their dog.

When it comes to pampering their dogs, owners most commonly do so with special treats or biscuits (71%). Many owners also buy them holiday or birthday gifts (38%). Nearly one in five treat their dog to specials meals, either with gourmet dog food (18%) or by cooking for them (17%).

- Women are more likely than are men to pamper their dog with special treats or biscuits (78% vs. 64%) and holiday or birthday gifts (44% vs. 32%).

Fifteen percent splurge on pricey toys, though few (3%) purchase designer clothes for their pooch. Just 3% take their dog to doggie day care, 2% to the doggie spa, and 1% to a professional doggie massage. Less than 1% of respondents have a gym membership for their dog. Seven percent say that they pamper their dog in some other fashion, though 20% say that they have never indulged their dog in these ways.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted June 29 – July 9, 2009. For the survey, a national sample of 713 dog owners aged 25 and older from Ipsos' U.S. online panel were interviewed online. The dog owners surveyed have at least one but no more than four dogs and are not dog breeders. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the U.S. adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of 713 and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.7 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire adult population of these dog owners aged 25 and older in the United States had been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

According to owners, it is also the simple pleasures that their dog most enjoys. When asked what makes their dog happiest, majorities of dog owners say it is greeting them when they come home (62%) and being taken for a walk or a run (52%). Many also mention receiving treats (48%), napping on the couch (32%), chewing a bone (30%), playing fetch (29%) and hearing their food being opened (23%).

Fewer mention any of:

- Playing in the mud (only 7%)
- Getting pampered at a doggie spa (3%)
- Traveling in their owner's purse (3%)
- Playing at doggie daycare (1%)

Some dog owners volunteered that their dog is happiest when riding in the car (3%), sleeping in bed (1%), chasing animals (1%), playing with the family (1%), swimming (1%), or sitting in their lap (1%).

Similarly, most owners think that their dog prefers to stick to the basics when it comes to mealtime as well. If their dog were in charge of their meal, more say that he or she would want table scraps (38%) than mention a meaty meal (19%), a steakhouse dinner (16%), or home-style food (13%). Less popular picks are natural or organic food (4%), gourmet food (1%), or some other kind of meal (7%).

Being a "Real Dog"

When thinking about what it means to be a "real dog," owners most commonly think of a dog being a loyal companion (85%), more so than any of the four other attributes tested. Other common associations include caring and loving (61%) and playful and energetic (56%). One in six dog owners would consider a "real dog" to be mischievous (16%), though a similar proportion think of "real dogs" as being pampered and indulged (15%).

- Women are more likely than men to think of "real dogs" as being caring and loving (67% vs. 55%).
- Dog owners aged 25 to 34 are more likely than older owners to associate playfulness and energy with "real dogs" (75% vs. 52%).

When asked to grade their dog on how much they behave like a "real dog" – defined as doing things like sleeping on the furniture, drooling for dinner, rolling in the mud, chasing his/her tail, etc. – 39% give their dog top marks, meaning that their dog "totally behaves like a real dog." Another 29% of dog owners would give their dog a B, while 21% would give their dog a C. Few (6%) feel that their dog deserves a D, and just 4% would give their dog a failing grade, meaning that they don't behave like a "real dog" at all.

On average, these dogs earn a GPA of 2.9, or the equivalent of a B+. However, this does vary across demographic groups:

- Dog owners aged 25 to 54 would give their dog a GPA of 3.0 on average for being a real dog, whereas older dog owners tend to give their dog a lower grade, with a GPA of 2.7.
- Unmarried dog owners are also more likely to consider their pup to be "real dogs" than those who are married (GPA of 3.1 vs. 2.8).
- The same is true of dog owners with multiple pooches at home. Those with two or more dogs award an average GPA of 3.1, while owners with just one dog give a GPA of 2.8.

At the same time, over half of dog owners (52%) say that their dog acts like a "real dog," more so than a prince or princess (15%), a bodyguard (15%), a celebrity (4%), or a cat (3%).

- Those under 35 (65%), college graduates (61%), dog owners with a household income of at least \$50,000 (57%), and those with multiple dogs at home (57%) are among those most likely to say that their pooch acts like a real dog.



Impact of the Economy

Though the economy has taken a toll on many Americans, most dog owners (78%) say that it has not affected their dog's lifestyle. However, some dog owners have been scaling back. Twelve percent say that they are giving their dog less luxury but more love and affection, while 8% say that they have gone completely back to basics. Just 1% reports that they are pampering and indulging their dog even more.

- Those with a household income of at least \$50,000 are less likely than those with a lower household income to say that the economy has had an impact on their dog's lifestyle (84% vs. 71%). Likewise, less affluent dog owners are more than three times as likely as those with a higher household income to say they have gone completely back to basics (13% vs. 4%).

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