

## Beauty for the beasts

### The Dog Spa gives canines the treatment

By James Ivancic  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Lola, a standard schnauzer, was getting a haircut at The Dog Spa in Warrenton and seemed to be enjoying it. She didn't fuss while she stood on a table and Ashlee Pezzuto ran a cordless electric razor over her.

Pezzuto says business has been good at The Dog Spa since she opened it. The spa is at 585 Frost Ave. in the Warrenton Towne Centre shopping center.

"I like the atmosphere here with the other shops. People can go out and shop while they're waiting for their dog," Pezzuto said.

Pezzuto got into pet grooming eight years ago when she was living in New York state. She moved back to her native Virginia and continued working as a groomer, always for someone else. She decided to go out on her own and found a rental space that met her needs.

The Dog Spa has tubs, dog pens and a grooming table. There's a small waiting area for dog owners, who can watch their pet being groomed.

Rowdy, a 7 year-old goldendoodle, was roaming the floor waiting for his owner, Cindy Burbank, to pick him up after his spa treatment. Every other week Burbank brings him in for a bath, blow dry and brushing. Every month he gets a haircut.

Burbank said she's been bringing Rowdy to Pezzuto since before The

Rowdy makes friends easily. "Everybody knows Rowdy. My husband walks him twice a day – down Main Street or White's Mill, Rady Park, Northern Fauquier Community Park, Crockett Park. He's so friendly. He'll try to get into the car with someone if the car door is opened as he's walking by," Burbank said. Rowdy became friends with a maintenance worker on the Warrenton Greenway who carries treats for him.

Zira, a Siberian husky owned by Pezzuto, was at the spa recently as her owner worked. Pezzuto is a sled dog racer who competes in events in Canada, Michigan and upstate New York. Huskies pull her sled; she also enters them in shows.

Pezzuto said she's never been bitten while grooming a dog.

"I have a background in dog training. I've learned how to read body language. Dogs know when you're confident and when you know what you're doing," she said.

She grew up around farm animals and worked for a veterinarian before getting into grooming.

Pezzuto said dogs who have been her longtime customers know the routine.

"They'll jump on the table to get dry. They know the routine and the pattern," Pezzuto said.

Fees range from \$45 to bathe a small dog to \$85 for a large one. Haircuts can run from \$75 for a small dog to \$120 for a large dog though the fee can be as high as \$150 to groom a large dog with a heavy



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Cindy Burbank's Rowdy has her eye on the prize.

Bathing also includes drying, nail trimming and ear cleaning. Pezzuto uses a shampoo and conditioner.

There are fees for special service such as a massage, blueberry facial, teeth brushing, exfoliating treatment and nail "pawlish."

In a fun, do-it-yourself innovation, customers can groom their own pets if they choose. For a fee they have access to the tubs, brushes, towels and a supply of shampoo.

Hours at The Dog Spa are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday.

Pezzuto has a Facebook page at The Dog Spa LLC and will have a website soon. The phone number is 540-729-1625. Pezzuto can also be reached via email at [Thedogspa19@gmail.com](mailto:Thedogspa19@gmail.com).

Pezzuto currently works alone but plans to hire help in the new year.

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Ashlee Pezzuto's Siberian husky Zira waits for her mom to finish working