

## Animal Passion

At Pussy And Pooch, They Call It Puppy Love

Everyone knows walking a dog is one of the best pick-up strategies around, especially in pet-obsessed California. But it wasn't until Downtown Los Angeles' hottest pet boutique, Pussy & Pooch, planned its first Valentine's Day speed dating event that a lonely animal lover could pick up the latest in designer doggie duds and find a soul mate in one fell swoop.

From the start, Pussy & Pooch's husband and wife self-proclaimed "petrapreneurs," Janene Zakrajsek and Rob Gaudio, wanted to make their boutique a community hotspot, and the speed dating event February 12, seemed like a logical first step to Zakrajsek. She says the night is for everyone who wants to find love. The only requirement is that registrants bring their pets. "We wanted to create a place where people could stop in, do a little shopping, meet their neighbors and hang out," explains the former student of Downtown's Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM).

For those who haven't visited downtown in a while, finding love on the corner of 6th and Main might seem a bit crazy, but Pussy & Pooch's design-savvy store chock full of high-end dog beds, gourmet treats and organic food by Primal, Nature's Variety and Honest Kitchen are light years away from the area's seedy past. And with interactive amenities like a fully stocked do-it-yourself grooming center, doggie food counter called PawBar and adjoining art gallery — one would be hard pressed to see how love couldn't bloom.

The one-stop shopping, edgy pet boutique in this up-and-coming neighborhood has been in the works for more than two years and all the planning has paid off. Zakrajsek's background shines in the concept, stylish products and visual merchandising. "I look for items that are truly unique and reflect what the urban pet owner wants," she says. Those items include the brilliant Pet a Potty (Petapotty.com) a small grass patch that loft or apartment owners can put on their balconies when Fido really has to go, luxurious grooming products by Sexy Beast (Sexybeaststyle.com) and collars by Diamond Dogs, which are studded with dozens of hand-set Swarovski crystals sewn on to leather.

Can't bear another Valentine's Day sitting with Fluffy on the couch alone? Throw caution to the wind and head on down to Pussy and Pooch for speed dating (registration costs \$30). Then, who knows? It might be the perfect place to find a companion of the two-legged variety.

564 S. Main Street, Los Angeles  
[www.pussyandpooch.com](http://www.pussyandpooch.com)



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