

Proof that a dog's life



Upmarket clientele: Dogs And The City owner Lisa Wolfenden (left), and two customers frolic at the Dogs @ Play centre (above and right)



New ways to pamper your pooch

By STEPHEN CORBY

THERE must be some very confused dogs out there. Why am I, a proud, outdoorsy animal, descended from wolves no less, wearing clothes, booties and bling, they might growl to themselves.

A dog's life can be confusing for your pampered pooch: wake up, crawl off the dog sofa (\$380) because you were too dog tired to make it to your leather dog-bed (\$695), tear off your pyjamas (\$35), dog shampoo (\$15.95) and conditioner (\$16.70) your fur, spray on Eau Dog Cologne (\$27.95) and pull on the Drizabone (\$89.95) as it's a bit nippy.

Then off to Dogs And The City, in Double Bay, where your sugar master buys your accoutrements — including your \$109 dog bowl and \$29.95 strap-on sunglasses to chew over some new Swarovski crystal necklaces (\$74) — or should that be scruff-laces?

"I just call them bling, doggy bling," says the shop's owner, Lisa Wolfenden, who believes dogs love wearing jewellery.

is a walk in the park



All that glitters: A Swarovski designer dog collar (left) a steal at \$117; satisfied customers at Dogs@Play (above), and Amanda Raine with some of her charges (right)
Pictures: Dean Marzolla

"Dogs feed off our emotions and when people get excited about dressing them up they feed off that affection. And they just love the attention."

"All this stuff is huge in the US. You don't have to look like a dog, you know, and they take their attire very seriously."

Dogs And The City has only been open eight months but it's already a barking success, which is hardly surprising in a country that spent \$2.3 billion on pets in 2004,

up from \$1.5 billion in 2002.

Ms Wolfenden says doggy bags (\$499) "as seen on Sex And The City" are a particular favourite.

"People use them to sneak their dogs into apartments or on buses; we're a bit anti-dog in Australia in that way," Ms Wolfenden says.

Suitably blinged to the teeth, it's off to Surry Hills for an afternoon of ruff housing at doggy day care.

Dogs@Play, which is able to cater for up to 30 dogs a day, is run by Amanda Raine, who

previously worked in child care.

"Dogs are just as demanding, but at least they don't dob on each other like kids," she said.

"Children are also less likely to bite, but aggressive dogs are weeded out by temperament testing before they are allowed to join Dogs@Play."

At \$45 a day, which includes two walks, food and games, you'd have to be passionate to enrol your pooch.

Suffly, Dogs@Play has a strict no-bling policy.

