

Crazy pet owners roll out their crazy dogs

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SANTA CRUZ — Which dog was the best kisser?

Yes, you read that correctly. That strange question and others like it were answered Sunday at a novel new Santa Cruz event: "Dog Show with a

Twist."

More than 60 dogs pranced, barked and tried to eat their owner's food Sunday afternoon at the show, which included competitions and dog-owner bonding time.

The show, at the Swift Street Courtyard on the Westside, featured a variety of dogs,

from Chihuahuas to pit bulls.

"I'm thrilled with the turnout," said Mark Sanchez, co-owner of Kelly's French Bakery, which co-hosted the event with Society Dog. "It's everything we had wished for. The dogs have been fantastic



Tarah Locke's well-heeled dog Bella took second place in the best-dressed category at 'Dog Show with a Twist' on Sunday.

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Dog show

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and the people were great with their dogs."

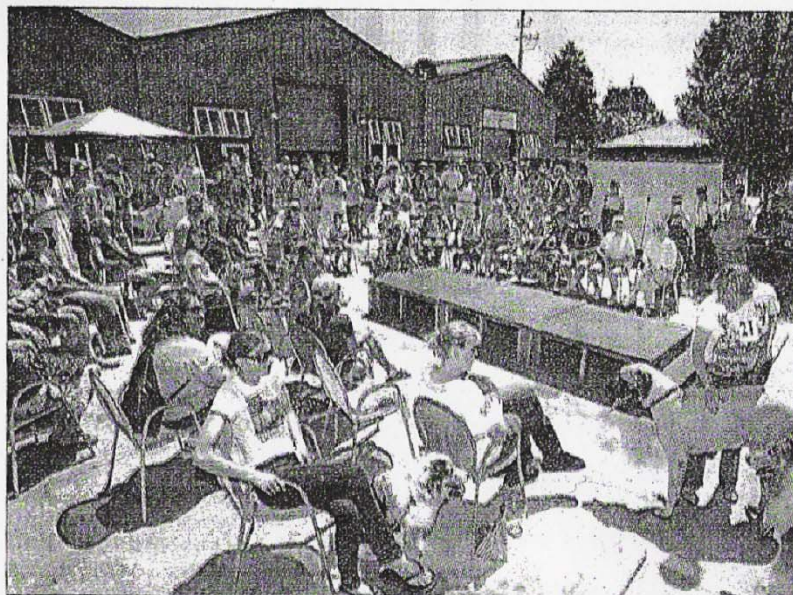
Open to all dogs, the competitions included some novel categories: best dressed, best kisser, best name, best trick, best singer and longest nose.

Tail-wagging participants waited in line, while emcee Terri Festa had owners walk their dogs up a catwalk, one at a time. Winners were chosen by the loudest ovation — both cheering and barking.

The dog show kicked off with the "oldest dog" competition, before moving to more exotic events. In the "best trick" competition, Pandy, a 5-year-old beagle, strutted up the catwalk, "shook a paw," and crawled for treats. Her owner attempted to get the dog to roll over, but she wouldn't cooperate.

Santa Cruz resident Donna Barber announced to the crowd that her Chihuahua Jiggy really didn't like the "F-word," which was "ferocious." So Barber said the word several times, and Jiggy barked and growled into a microphone.

"It started when he was a 1-year-old," Barber explained. "He was hiding under a blanket and I said, 'Boy you're acting ferocious,' and he growled. He really is the world's sweetest dog



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Beth Sczuka's English mastiff, lower right, Clover, won biggest dog.

though."

Some dogs looked better than their owners.

Britney, a pink and black bikini-clad pit bull with pink toenails, won the "best dressed" competition.

"She wore a 'bad to the bone' bikini," said owner Billy Foley of San Jose. "We

like to take her to shows and events so people can see what a true pit bull looks like."

Interestingly, all the dogs got along. Chihuahuas and pit bulls sniffed each other, and none of the owners seemed concerned.

"Pit bulls are amazing dogs," said

Dog show winners

OWNER/DOG LOOK-A-LIKE: Koa, a Weston and Chinese crested mix and owner Renee Kellythorne of Felton.

LONGEST NOSE: Chula, a Borzoi Russian wolfhound.

BEST DRESSED: Britney, a pit bull.

BEST TRICK: Jiggy, a Chihuahua.

BEST SINGER: Bella, a Shih Tzu-Chihuahua mix.

OLDEST DOG: Jelly Gambini, a Maltese.

BIGGEST DOG: Clover, an English mastiff.

SMALLEST DOG: Jelly Gambini, a Maltese.

BEST KISSER: Yoshi, a half Chihuahua mix.

BEST UNDER BITE: Mica, a Lhasa Apso.

BEST NAME: Duke E. Zucchi, breed unknown.

BEST SMILE: Britney, a pit bull.

Lynn Bradley, a Boulder Creek resident. "The stigma that comes along with a pit bull, it really is how they're raised."

More than 100 people came out to show their support for dog-friendly businesses and events.

"It's been a 10-cry event," said a tea-eyed Whitney Wilde, head of Society Dog in Santa Cruz. "I'm overwhelmed at how great this town is at coming out and forming a community. I'm so grateful to live in a town that comes together like this."

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