

News

Meet cava-poo-chon: the canine Peter Pan to fit your handbag

Will Pavia New York

When the first “goldendoodles” emerged blinking into the California sun, a great many dog lovers with hair allergies hailed the new breed as the perfect pet, mixing the sweet temperament of the golden retriever with the tightly coiled coat of the poodle.

Then came the cavachon, which blended the miniature stature, cheerful disposition and disregard for vigorous exercise contained in the bichon frise lapdog and the Cavalier King Charles spaniel.

Yet the dog breeders of America have not been resting on their kennels. The quest for ever smaller dogs who will remain puppy-sized even in their dotage and can fit comfortably into a Louis Vuitton handbag runs on, like a retriever after a stick.

Two retired engineers from Arizona are now being

credited with the latest innovation: the cava-poo-chon. With the aid of a geneticist, Linda and Steve Rogers say they have achieved a “triple-cross” — a hybrid of three distinct breeds — while screening out the genetic defects common among pure-bred dogs.

The result is said to be a canine Peter Pan. “They are attractive pups that keep their puppy face for ever,” said Mrs Rogers.

For more than ten years, the Rogers had been breeding goldendoodles, a dog whose lineage they traced back to Hollywood. “Natalie Wood had a standard poodle that jumped the fence and bred with her neighbour’s golden retriever,” she said. Ms Wood and one of her poodles (though possibly not the fence-jumping philanderer) appear in the book *Hollywood Dogs*, published in New York this week, alongside Humphrey Bogart’s bulldog and the cocker spaniel that was



Natalie Wood's poodle began the goldendoodle cross trend, after an illicit assignation with a neighbour



LINDA ROGERS / WWW.TIMSHELLFARM.COM

The Rogers claim to screen out health defects in their cava-poo-chon puppies



Woof to wash aids disabled

Disabled people using canine helpers can now have a washing machine that is activated by their dog.

It enables trained animals such as Duffy, right, that can already strip beds, fill

laundry baskets, and load and empty washing machines, to unlock the door with a footpad and start the cycle with a bark.



the companion of the teenaged Elizabeth Taylor.

A more direct progenitor of the cava-poo-chon was the Rogers's red toy poodle Spankie, who was initially used to complete the first triple-cross. “He’s a really busy fellow now,” says Mrs Rogers. Scores of the dogs have found homes; 58 families have returned for a second cava-poo-chon.

Steve Haynes, a dog trainer, who has worked with more than 50 of the dogs, says their arrival in the world reflected the craze for ever more miniature lapdogs. “People trended towards smaller dogs, Linda organised her breeding programme around it,” he said.

The demand for these small dogs has often come from “clients that I would categorise in the upper echelons of the wealth bracket”, who travel a great deal and may spend some of their time in the more restricted living spaces of Manhattan.

Beyond obedience training, Mr Haynes caters for demands such as “how to get the dog to run up the stairway of their idling Gulfstream jet” and how to get one into a Louis Vuitton bag. “A client just came in with a Louis Vuitton carrier,” he said. “She said, ‘I can’t get the dog into the bag’, and could I teach it to jump in there? I said, sure, I can do that.”

In response to at least one critic, who suggested the dogs were a gimmick, Mr Haynes says the Rogers had bred the dog responsibly, though he feared that puppy mills in Oklahoma, Kansas and Arkansas could seek to replicate the triple-cross with less of an eye for screening out health defects.

“It’s like the fashion industry,” he says. “The designers do their work then the Chinese come and knock everything off.”