

Dogs exchange wedding bowwows for better or worse

People are becoming more and more eager to spend lavishly on finding the right partner and having a fairy-tale wedding — for their dogs. Companies in the bridal and pet industries are trying to attract generous "parents" of eligible pooches with services like matchmaking parties, in hopes that they lead to wedding ceremonies for canine couples.

In Tokyo, Osaka and other large cities, dogs can have their very own wedding ceremony for anywhere from ¥100,000 to ¥300,000 or so. Antwerp Bridal, a Tokyo-based wedding services firm, charges slightly more than ¥100,000 for its basic package, which includes ceremony fees and marriage certification.

Usually, total costs add up to about ¥150,000 to ¥200,000, as customers may also pay for wedding attire rental, venue decoration and other services. The average bill per couple is on the rise, according to Antwerp Bridal, because of



A dream wedding for Fifi and Fido costs about ¥100,000 to ¥300,000.

growing use of extra services.

"Recently, we receive an increasing number of inquiries about our dog wedding service — 20-30% more than a year ago," said an employee of the firm.

At Dog Amusement geihinkan, an entertainment, retail and dining complex for dogs and their owners in

Osaka, a wedding ceremony and party, including an exchange of collars, costs about ¥200,000 in total.

A pet store operated by Joker Corp. at the Lalaport Yokohama commercial complex started holding matchmaking parties for dogs a few times a month in March of last

year. Each party is intended for a specific kind of dog — poodles or Chihuahuas, for example. Each guest accompanied by a dog is required to pay ¥2,100 to attend the party, where people and pets get to know each other.

Man's best man

Dogs are also taking a more prominent part in human weddings. Next month, Dog Amusement geihinkan will start accommodating wedding parties that canine companions can also attend. The pets can also stay at a pet hotel in the facilities while their owners are away on honeymoon.

WeddingPark Ltd., which operates a Web site for soon-to-be brides and grooms, sees the pet-friendly trend as an innovative attempt by wedding halls to attract engaged couples at a time when the number of wedding ceremonies is on a decline due to the rapidly aging population.