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Models AND Dogs can work that runway!

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By Jason Benitez



Giselda and her canine companions strut their stuff down the runway

It was lights, camera, fashion Friday night on the rooftop lounge of the Mayfair Hotel & Spa in Coconut Grove. Press photographers snapped pictures at divas and their dogs as groups of people applauded excitedly. Modern rock pulsated through the rooftop of the Mayfair for a surreal night of fashion and fun.

Models strutted down the aisle wearing fashion influenced by musicians like Lenny Kravitz. Beside them walked their pawed companions, sporting the latest in doggie clothing, courtesy of TORU.

"This was a really great event," said model Giselda Gonzalez, sporting a Ramones t-shirt matched perfectly to her electric blue punk hairstyle. "Everybody loved the pets. I walked by with the dog and everybody was all over the dog! It was cool."

It was doggie fundraiser turned rock modeling show as pet business owners, dog clothing designers and even celebrities showed up to party, mingle and lend their support to Paws 4 You Rescue's, Rock the Runway. After weeks of planning and pulling resources, the Paws 4 You Rescue team managed to pull off an evening like no other: a rescue fashion show with the vibrancy, style and sophistication Miami is known for.

"Beautiful venue, great event, and a lot of enthusiasm and support for such a great cause," said Giselda's sister Lissette, a guest at the show. "You see people of all ages bringing their pets and even the fashion was really cute; all around a fun evening for a good cause."

Friday night's event brought in more than \$5,000 for the Paws 4 You Rescue organization. Comprised entirely of volunteers, Paws 4 You caters to animals on the euthanasia list taken in from the Miami-Dade Rescue Center.

Cool was one word for an animal fundraiser that could have passed as a typical chic Miami fashion show. The only notable difference: guests were allowed to bring their pets up to the rooftop lounge with them, thanks to the Mayfair Coconut Groves' pet friendly policy.

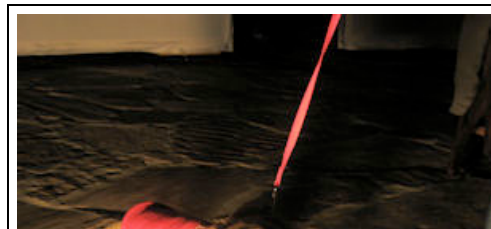
The show featured rescue dogs spruced in TORU wear, a pet and human clothing company that designs its clothes with a rock and roll edge. TORU introduced its Spring Line of Rescue Wear at Friday night's event, designed to promote adoption and spay/neuter awareness. The Paws 4 You Rescue received 15 percent of the proceeds generated from the TORU wear.

Whether standing by the bar or next to where the models were showing off their loveable rescues, people could be seen enjoying an evening of entertainment aimed at awareness.

"With the economy the way it is, there's a demand more than ever to rescue animals," said Carol Balnicki Caridad, President of Paws 4 You Rescue, Inc. "Our (Miami-Dade) animal control is overwhelmed; they don't want to euthanize 100 to 150 animals ever day, but that's the reality. People need to understand that."

Carol is also the writer of Carol's Column, a column featured in the Pinecrest Tribune about general pet care and adoption advice. Carol, a veterinarian pharmaceutical representative, created the non-profit Paws 4 You Rescue in April 2007.

"Rescuing is more of a responsibility than an action," Carol said.



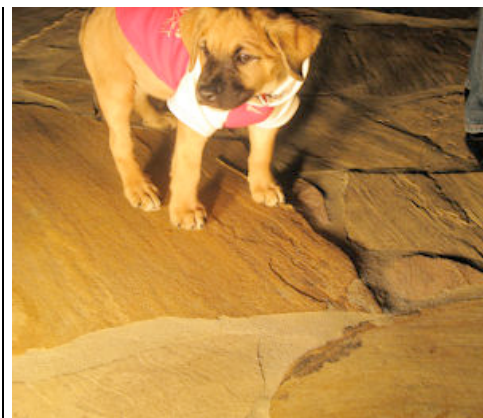
The fashion show was held at Cabana One on the Rooftop Lounge, and was priced at \$25 per person. Included were one drink ticket, hors d'oeuvres and a raffle entry for the special prize drawing. DJ Vic Mendez spun live music all night long.

"The event is amazing," stated Vanessa Rossman, co-designer of TORU clothing line. Vanessa too was adamant about getting the message out.

"What we really wanted to take part in was to bring awareness to adoption and rescuing, especially in Miami-Dade. It's been very rewarding doing this, and we hope that this line gets spread nation-wide."

And create awareness they did, as Sean, a terrier mix (re-christened Pilot) was adopted that same night.

Who doesn't love a little Rock 'n' Roll?



This little guy struck a pose in hopes of finding a new home



Two happy guests enjoying the show

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