

# Pooches have a special place in wedding

BY KRISTEN CASTILLO  
CREATORS.COM

Bud was the star of the wedding, aside from the bride, Geri Hinkle. So who's Bud? Hinkle's beloved dog, a Tibetan spaniel mix. When Geri married her husband, Zach, in May 2011 in Palmetto, Ga., little Bud was there, too.

"We felt it only necessary to include Bud in our wedding since he had such an enormous impact on our lives," explains Hinkle. "I had Bud for almost 16 years, and he was with me through every monumental occasion in my life, so of course I would want him standing up there with us when we got married."

Bud looked dapper, too, wearing a black bowtie collar that Hinkle purchased on Etsy. He wasn't the best man or even the ring bearer, but he was an essential part of the couple's nuptials.

"Bud's role was to do nothing more than just be by my side as I got married," says Hinkle.

## HOLY MUTTRIMONY

Bud and the Hinkles are featured in (and are cover models for) a new book: "Wedding Dogs: A Celebration of Holy Muttrimony."

The book includes the profiles and photos of more than 60 canines, their owners and the associated weddings.

It seems brides and grooms love having their pets take part in the big day. "I think having your dog attend your wedding is like having any important family member there on one of the most important days of your life," says Katie Preston Toepfer, who co-authored "Wedding Dogs" with Sam Stall. "They are like furry little VIPs that are great at helping ease the nerves on such a special occasion."

## DOGGY DETAILS

Having a dog at a wedding can result in a lot of surprises.

One wedding dog made a potty break on the way down the aisle.

Another cried during the ceremony because he was seated with the groomsmen and not with the bride and



'Wedding Dogs: A Celebration of Holy Muttrimony' includes the profiles and photos of more than 60 canines.

groom.

And yet another dog ran off with the bride's bouquet during the photos.

No matter the pet's personality, most are ready to assist during the big day.

"You can have best dog, dog of honor, doggie ring bearer or even guest of honor," says Toepfer.

Depending on how well behaved your pooch is, it may be a good idea to have a trusted friend or family member walk them down the aisle with the rings. "Some couples even dress up their smaller hounds and have their flower girls or page boys pull the cart down the aisle. This can make for some very cute photos and cause your guests to erupt in giggles!"

Not every dog makes it to the ceremony. Some are part of the wedding preparations, such as attending the bridal shower or posing for pre-wedding pictures with the groom.

Others are onsite but only make an appearance at the reception. Be careful, though, because once at the reception, many dogs love to dance!

## PUPPY PRAISE

Pets, especially dogs, can be scene-stealers, and guests love giving pups lots of attention. Guests at the Hinkles' wedding enjoyed seeing Bud. "They loved it and thought it was sweet," the bride says. "There were many

sighs and smiles as he walked down the aisle."

Canines not only look cute, but they can help the party, too. "I've heard countless stories of dogs having the ability to break the ice and add a touch of humor, which can often begin otherwise as a very serious day," says Toepfer.

## LASTING MEMORIES

Bud died of kidney disease six months after the wedding, but his memory lives on. "Looking back at the photos of him with us on our wedding day warms my heart and makes me extremely grateful for all the years of companionship he gave me," says Hinkle.

