

## A Name Like No Other

Choosing a name for your four-legged friend

By Charlotte Reed

Flipping open my daily schedule, I see that I'll be visiting Humphrey Bogart, Shadow, and Princess Lulu today. No, I'm not a psychologist treating a patient with multiple personality disorder. I run a pet care service in New York City, which means I come in contact with dozens of pets every day. I have become accustomed to dealing with all kinds of breeds and personalities, but what is always fresh and exciting to me—what I can never predict—is a pet's name.

We have named our four-legged friends since the days of Pharaoh. Leather collars and hieroglyphic reliefs show the ancient Egyptians took inspiration from many sources: the animal's appearance (White Cloud), its lineage (The Third), its abilities (Fierce Hunter), or its companionship ability (Good Friend).

### WHERE NAMES COME FROM

I tend to name my dogs based on their behavioral traits. With five dogs, two of which I show, the process by which I came up with each of their names was as quirky and spirited as the dogs themselves. Burberry is named after the store that sells fine English rainwear. My favorite brand, it seemed, was also his—he managed to chew on it, and only it, as a puppy. Kidder's Geste was always having fun at others' expense. While the other dogs were turned away, he would take their toys, lie on them, and then watch as the rightful owners searched in vain. No mean thief, he would eventually return the toy. For short, I call him Kidder.

Some people base their dogs' names on their breed. Mr. Bumble is a stout English



## HELPFUL HINTS

When choosing a pet's name, anything goes. However, there are a few helpful hints that can make the process—and the results—a little smoother. One-syllable names are popular since they tend to be easier for pets to learn and therefore respond to. Any name that might sound similar to a word that you'll teach your pet as a command should be avoided. For your sanity's sake, make sure it sounds different enough from the names of your family members—your dog Rex will be perplexed when told to take out the trash and your son Max might be a little miffed when told to get off the couch! Last, once you choose a name, stick with it so your pet can learn and become a member of the family as quickly as possible. For other advice and tips on naming a pet, check out these resources:

- **The Complete Book of Pet Names:** An ASPCA book, compiled and edited by George Greenfield.
- **IVillage Pet Name Finder:** [www.ivillage.com/pets/petnames](http://www.ivillage.com/pets/petnames). Browse the list of pet names by letter or category, then investigate the meaning and origin of the names that interest you. There is also a list of favorite names to review.
- **Bowwow Meow Pet Names with Personality:** [www.bowwow.com.au](http://www.bowwow.com.au). Search for names, review the top 20 names and names of the month, and contribute your favorite names.
- **Dog-O-Mania:** [www.dogomania.com/dog\\_names.shtml](http://www.dogomania.com/dog_names.shtml). This database contains over 25,000 names listed alphabetically, by category, and by origin.



bulldog that belongs to my client, Lorenzo. His name says it all: The breed is a bit formal (as those Brits can be), but bulldogs are definitely on the tubby, laid-back side. "They take their sweet time and enjoy life, much like the bumblebee visiting their flowers," says Lorenzo. Another client, Daphne, named her Rhodesian Ridgeback (a breed of African ancestry) Kenya, although she tends to stick to the small game, unlike her predecessors.

What do you do, though, when your pup behaves and doesn't have an easily defined lineage? (Good Dog and Mutt, after all, don't have quite the ring.) There are plenty of places to troll for bright ideas. The easiest is to look where new parents always go—a baby book. The most popular dog

name, in fact, is also widespread among the preschool set: Max. Favorites like Sam and Lily are often used by pet parents who love the name but weren't able to bestow it on a human child. The book, of course, can also be used to find less common names that would fit your new little furry baby, like Agatha.

While you're at the library, perhaps there are characters from beloved books that you'd like to have around the house—you could cuddle up with Jay Gatsby or play fetch with Huck Finn. Paris Hilton famously named her tiny Chihuahua Tinkerbell: She is

## My name is Wrinkles

