

fetching waves

Surfing SoCal canines raise money for a good cause.

this is total craziness!" says Beverly Kerns, surveying the frenetic scene around her. From bulldogs to golden retrievers, dogs of all sizes and shapes run in circles and bound back and forth over surfboards, yipping with delight. Some look ready for action, preening in life jackets and hot-pink swim goggles. Others stretch

their legs in the sun, as if warming up for the big event. Even though the leashes are off, there are no dustups or disagreements, just dogs being dogs.

At the second annual Surf Dog Surf-A-Thon on Del Mar Beach, almost 2,000 spectators show up to cheer on 42 talented pups and their owners. The goal? To raise

money and awareness for the Helen Woodward Animal Center and to put on a show like no other. Pre-event dog surf clinics helped draw twice the number of participants as last year.

The surf routine typically goes something like this: Dog and owner wade out together with a surfboard in tow. Then the dog balances on the

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PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF MICHAEL SCHRAGER



surf's up

The 2008 Surf Dog Surf-A-Thon takes place September 7 on Del Mar Beach. For more info, visit animalinter.org/surfdog.htm. To find dog-friendly beaches in the United States and Canada, visit dogfriendly.com/server/travelguides/beach/beach.shtml.



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From bulldogs to golden retrievers, dogs of all sizes and shapes run in

board, eagerly anticipating the perfect wave. When the time is right, the owner gives the board a gentle nudge, and the pup glides toward the shore.

Veteran surfer Buddy, a Jack Russell terrier, could practically go pro. He barks and nips at the board, awaiting his turn. As he catches a

wave, Buddy inches as close as possible to the front of the board. "On one wave, Buddy did a bottom turn off the lip and then walked all the way around the board," says judge Mike Emerson. "I gave him a perfect 10." Buddy's skills garner him the Top Dog title.

Torri, a duck-tolling retriever in a floral one-piece, wins third place in only her second surfing contest. "My wife read a book about teaching your dog to surf, so we just started to teach her," says owner Mike Pasko.

Dogs that don't take to the waves can find other ways to fetch a win.

circles and bound back and forth over surfboards, yipping with delight.

Mixed-breed pup Dootsie Do competes in the Beach Bum and Bikini Babe Costume Contest wearing a flattering rhinestone-covered suit. She doesn't claim first prize, but she does get a nice, long belly rub from her human dad following her runway performance. The competition is

stiff, too. A few dozen pets strut the "cat walk" in front of judges and the "pawparazzi." In the end, wetsuit-wearing, tail-wagging basset hounds Elvis and Dude trot away with top honors.

As the sun fades, most pups appear tuckered out. They retreat

to the shade under beach umbrellas for a nap and like nose-to-nose on fluffy towels. No doubt sleep will come easy tonight, which gives attendee Debbie Boyd an idea. "We should do this once a month," she says, "so I can wear my dog out." ●

