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Time to paws: Dogs take center stage at Worth Avenue pet parade

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Valerie Hurkley of Boca Raton, holding Jasmine, with Layla, in front, and Nanette DeRonda of Boca Raton, prepare for the Worth Avenue Association Pet Parade, as Laura Souza, right, readies her pets' transportation.

Video: Pet Parade in Via Amore

Shiny Shots: Pet Parade

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Robin Miller embraces Chewy, from Big Dog Ranch Rescue, and Gregg Beletsky, holds his friend's puppy, Junior, during the pet parade in Via Amore Saturday.

By Robert Janjigian

Daily News Fashion Editor

It was a day for the dogs.

There wasn't a cat in sight, and only a single bird, a male Eclectus parrot who goes by the name of Baby Nino, was among the more than 70 contestants in the 20th annual Worth Avenue Association Pet Parade, which was held Saturday in the Via Amore courtyard.

Nino, with his Shih Tzu siblings Gianna and Leonardo, shared the prize for the "most creative" in the medium-sized pet category.

The canines were costumed as police officers on patrol in their cruiser, with a "jailbird" passenger along for the ride. They were accompanied by their owner, Laura Souza of Delray Beach, who donned prison stripes to complete the theme.

The rest of the four-legged contestants, dogs of a variety of breeds ranging in age from a few months to more than 15 years, competed for prizes donated by Worth Avenue Association merchants and restaurants.

Dogs in the small-, medium- and large-weight categories were awarded for their obedience, creativity and uniqueness, with an entrant in each weight-class acknowledged as the "Best in Show" by the panel of judges. The judges were Mayor Gail Coniglio; designer Lon Sabella; Paulette Cooper Noble, "Pet Set" columnist for the *Palm Beach Daily News*; Wayne King of Burkhardt Construction, contractor for the 2010 Worth Avenue renovation; and JoJo Harder, publisher of *America's Next Top Dog Model*.



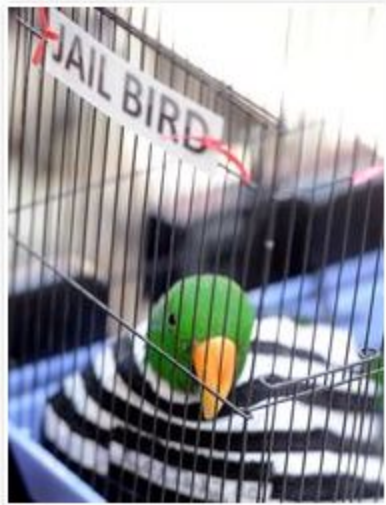
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Laura Souza's bird, Baby Nino, is dressed as a jailbird for the pet parade in Via Amore Saturday. He and his 'sibling' dogs won the 'most creative' title in the medium-sized pets category.

2013 Worth Avenue Pet Parade Winners

Large Pets (36 pounds and over):

Most Obedient: Salty, Old English Sheepdog, Ana and Daniel Hoffman of Stuart, owners

Most Creative: Lily, Dalmatian, Laura Cosgrove of Winter Park, owner

Most Unique: Audrey and Andi, standard poodles, Nancy Nicholson of Lake Worth, owner

Best in Show: Johnny, standard poodle, Debra Blevins of West Palm Beach, owner

Medium Pets (16 to 35 pounds):

Most Obedient: Jessey, Jack Russell terrier, William Feldkamp and Terry Bowie of Palm Beach, owners

Most Creative: Gianna, Leonardo, Shih Tzus, with Baby Nini, Eclectus parrot, Laura Souza of Delray Beach, owner

Most Unique: Junior, Weimaraner, Lee Wells of Palm Beach, owner

Best in Show: Charlotte, medium standard poodle, Marguerite Le Berge of Montreal, owner

Small Pets (up to 15 pounds):

Most Obedient: Kanga and Roo, Chihuahuas, Neely Waring of Coral

Springs, owner

Most Creative: Ozzie, Yorkshire terrier, Miranda and Bianca Matthews, owners

Most Unique: Daphe, Papillon, Lois Weiss of Coral Springs, owner

Best in Show: Layla and Jasmine, Imperial Shih Tzus, Nanette DeRondo and Valerie Hurlkey of Boca Raton, owners