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Move over 'America's Next Top Model.' Here's America's Top Dog Model

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Bill Ingram

Sherlock, (C), a three year old Labradoodle, stands out among his peers while dress like Teddy Roosevelt, with a Teddy Bear on his back, before the start of Americas Top Dog Model casting call during the South Florida Pet Expo Saturday March 19, 2016, at the South Florida Fairgrounds in Royal Palm Beach. Twenty nine dogs from throughout south Florida took part in the event. (Bill Ingram / The Palm Beach Post)

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Americas Top Dog Model casting call finalist are, (LtoR), Remy, Lulu, Louis Vitton, and Pearl during the South Florida Pet Expo Saturday March 19, 2016, at the South Florida Fairgrounds in Royal Palm Beach. Twenty nine dogs from throughout south Florida took part in the event. (Bill Ingram / The Palm Beach Post)



Photos: America's Top Dog Model 03-19-2016

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Americas Top Dog Model casting call during the South Florida Pet Expo Saturday March 19, 2016, at the South Florida Fairgrounds in Royal Palm Beach. (Bill Ingram / The Palm Beach Post)

By Hannah Winston

Palm Beach Post

Sherlock, a 3-year-old labradoodle, spends his days as a medical alert assistance dog in Loxahatchee, Florida. On Saturday, however, he was dressed as Theodore Roosevelt, wearing gold wire-rim glasses and an olive green uniform.

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Twenty-nine dogs, including Sherlock, competed at the 12th annual America's Top Dog Model casting call at the South Florida Pet Expo in suburban West Palm Beach. This year's theme was "Meet the Paw-liticans" and featured dogs dressed like presidents and others as political figures throughout history.

Kate Kilpatrick, Sherlock's owner, said she trained the rescue dog to help her college-student daughter keep tabs on her blood sugar levels years ago. Now that her daughter wears a monitor to keep track of her levels, Kilpatrick said she gets to keep Sherlock to herself most days and enters him in contests whenever she can.

"He's doesn't work for free, but he works cheap," Kilpatrick joked, "paying" him with a doggy treat.

America's Top Dog Model was founded in 2005 by [Jo Jo Harder](#), who has watched the growth of the national organization that includes her own 7-year-old miniature greyhound, Romeo. Harder is also taping a reality show that she plans to pitch to different networks.

"It's been wonderful. (We're) just one big family," she said.

Lulu, a 2-year-old Harrier who splits her time between West Palm Beach and New York with her owner, Gautam Dasgupta, was one of four finalists chosen Saturday. Dasgupta said he's never entered his rescue dog into any contests but was convinced by Harder to enter, and he was glad he did. Lulu, though, went as herself instead of as a politician.

Finalists go on to be featured in the America's Top Dog Model calendar and the top winner gets to be on the cover.

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Peaches, a 3-year-old Yorkie, wore a golden tutu while sitting on the sideline as the reigning top dog model. Her owners, Claire Spielman and Bob Spielman, said they got Peaches when they retired and then got her certified as a therapy dog. It wasn't until winning the competition in 2015 that they realized her other talents.

"It really changed everything for us," Claire Spielman said. Then came magazine shoots, a website and dozens of prizes and honors.

But even with all the publicity, Peaches still spends Mondays playing with children at a local hospital and on Thursdays she comforts adults in therapy.

"It's how we give back now," Bob Spielman said.
