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Monday, January 22, 2007

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Business caters to pampered pooches

Web-posted Jan 22, 2007

AROUND OAKLAND

By **KAREN AUCHTERLONIE**
Of The Oakland Press

OXFORD When Dawn Wung, Michelle Massingill and Marge Bolt all noticed the empty storefront near Pet Supplies Plus in Oxford, they knew it was meant to be. "It was one of those things, all of us said 'Oh, have you seen that store? That would be the best place to open a grooming spot,' " Wung said.

So they did.

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Wung, 41, and 46-year-old Massingill are co-owners of Tender Touch Pet Spa, which opened last October. Bolt, Massingill's mother, volunteers her time as a receptionist at the spa.

Business has been good for the 3-month-old grooming facility, which specializes in pooch-pampering services.

The 1,295 square foot spa has white picket fences cordoning off two play areas, where dogs wait for their turn to be pampered or picked up by their owners. Here, the pampered pooches can relax on a cushy bed, play with one of the dozens of toys or watch for their owners through the large glass window of the storefront.

Wung and Massingill beautify the dogs on two grooming tables directly across from the play area, allowing them to always be near the waiting dogs.

"We spend a lot of time hugging and kissing them," Wung said.

The spa also has a high-tech washroom with two tubs, where dogs get treated to a whirlpool massage bath and thorough cleaning, thanks to a hydro-surge washer. The specialized spray-hose penetrates soapy water through the dog's coat, ensuring the dog's skin, not just the hair,

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gets cleaned.

"The cost of a bath depends on the size of the dog, coat and what products need to be used," Wung said.

Most services, all by appointment only, range from \$40 to \$100, but a basic nail trim can be cost just \$5.

Wung and Massingill have a combined 38 years of experience in grooming dogs. Before becoming a certified groomer, Wung spent 17 years handling the grooming patients while working as a veterinarian technician. Massingill has been grooming for 17 years and also works as a veterinarian's assistant at the Gasow Veterinarian Hospital in Birmingham.

The two business partners met when Massingill applied for a grooming job at Wung's previous facility, K9 Clips, in Metamora. Massingill stayed with Wung when she moved the business to Almont.

The facility in Almont was sold so Wung and Massingill can focus solely on the Oxford location.

"In Metamora, we had quite a few customers from the Lake Orion, Oxford area, and we wanted something centrally located to that. Plus, we love this area," Wung said of moving the business to Oxford.

Wung and her husband, Dan, breed and show golden retrievers and live in Almont but plan to move to Oxford.

The women's husbands also help out around the spa. Wung calls her husband the "guest bather" Saturdays, and Massingill's husband, Vern, is the spa's "fix-it man."

Wung plans to add massage therapy and aromatherapy - for dogs, of course. Black licorice and vanilla are the two scents that work well on dogs, Wung said.

"It's just a chill-out, calming down type of scent for them," she said. Business: Tender Touch Pet Spa

Address: 973 S. Lapeer Road in the Oxford Towne Center

Owner: Dawn Wung, Michelle Massingill

Phone: (248) 628-2821

Web site: www.tendertouchpets.com

Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays

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