

A girl's best friend

No, not her mother or her handbag, we're talking her pet pooch.
Five women tell KATE O'DOWD about their canine chums.
Photographs by TREVOR HART.

The ultimate fashion accessory of late – from Paris Hilton's multiple Tinkerbells (a recent tally came to 17 chihuahuas) to Jennifer Anniston's more substantial Welsh corgi terrier, Norman, her constant protector against a world of men hellbent on doing her ill – every celebrity from Cannes to Miami Beach comes complete with pooch. And why wouldn't they? In the fickle world of fame, a dog's unconditional devotion is one of the few relationships that will stand the test of time. Not to mention the health benefits – dogs make excellent therapists (they rarely talk back and don't charge by the hour), and the very act of stroking your ball of fluff is a huge stress reducer.

It's generally thought that dogs can't tell the difference between themselves and humans, that's why they make such good pets. Like their ancestors, wolves, dogs are social creatures and eternally loyal to their family. For our part, our relationship with dogs is entirely egotistical. We love the adoration they give, the comfort they bring and the fun they provide. It's a match made in heaven really, as long as we give back as much as they give us.

Women, in particular, become so close to their mutts that they are often talked about as if they were children. The recent Dublin premiere of *Beverly Hills Chihuahua* (a children's film, if we're not mistaken) brought reports of women taking their handbag dogs to the cinema to watch the film – with no child in tow. And, while this might be taking things a little far, you can't deny the consideration with which these women treat their loyal companions.

What is it they say ... a dog is man's best friend? Pah! We say it's woman's.

Caroline and Gussy

**CAROLINE KENNEDY, RIGHT, MD OF
KENNEDY PR WITH KERRY BLUE IRISH
TERRIER, GUSSY**

"Gussy and our other Kerry Blue Rosie make the typical couple She's bossy and domineering and he's protective and caves easily.

They're both family dogs, but I suppose Gussy is mine (we bonded instantly) and Rosie is my stepdaughter Jessica's. **I'm sure I'm biased** but I really feel that ours are instantly likeable – people like to volunteer anything they might know about them, especially since they're such an unusual breed. There aren't that many Kerry blues in Ireland at all, but apparently there was a time when Dublin, in particular, was full of them. **They both come from Dublin breeder** Una Rigney, a great family friend, who gave us Gussy after his predecessor passed away unexpectedly. He is kept looking beautiful by Patricia Kelly his groomer. Vain creatures, Kerry blue's keep themselves in great nick, cleaning themselves like cats every evening."