



LEFT: Piles of Labradoodles, touted as cute, smart and non-shedding, have arrived in West Linn — and already been sold to their new owners. Breeder Sheila Lamvik holds 17-day-old Kukui, who is headed for a couple in Maryland in December.

ROBERT BACH
THE OREGONIAN

BELOW: Kali, a 2-year-old chocolate Labradoodle, is the mother of nine puppies at Oregon Labradoodles of West Linn.

Photo courtesy of
OREGON
LABRADOODLES

'DOODLE DOGS IN DEMAND

A West Linn couple, among the few Oregon breeders of Labradoodles, a Labrador-poodle cross, keep a Web camera trained on their latest 18 puppies

By KATE TAYLOR
THE OREGONIAN

WEST LINN —

Oodles and oodles of 'doodles to canoodle! That's what they asked for and that's what the Lamviks of West Linn got last month — two furry piles of Labradoodle puppies.

Labradoodle?
Labradoodles are a newish and highly sought-after hybrid dog. They're part Labrador retriever, which breeders say gives them sweetness and floppy lovability. They're part standard poodle, which accounts for their smarts, their curly, non-shed hair and that certain *je ne sais quoi*.

"When I first heard of them I laughed. I said, 'Labradoodle? No way am I owning a dog with such a dumb name,'" Sheila Lamvik, 39, said last week. In two blanket-lined washtubs nearby, 18 puppies — nine chocolate and nine apri-



cot — yawned, stretched and dreamed puppy dreams.

Each, except one that the Lamviks plan to donate to a guide dog agency, has already sold for \$2,500. The puppies, which will grow to be 17 to 25 inches tall, are from the Lamviks' first two litters, born Oct. 13 and Oct. 16. More puppies are likely to arrive in May.

It all began as a months-long quest for the perfect pet.

They found the name on the Web and clicked on history to discover that the first Labradoodles were bred in Australia to be service dogs in the 1970's.

They read on, checking a list of the qualities they desired in a pet.

Must not shed. *Check.*

Must be fabulously cute. *Check.*

Must be smart. *Check.*

"This is not your ding-dong Lab next door,"

Please see **LABRADOODLE**, Page 9

Labradoodle: Breeders often have yearlong waiting lists

Continued from Page 1

Sheila Lamvik said, petting the dandelion-tuft head of her chocolate Labradoodle, Kali. The dog has a Lab's features, but it is leggier and covered head to paw with tight curls. After a day of intense mothering, it's a bad hair day — the neat curls on her head straightened into frizz.

After a year on a waiting list, Sheila Lamvik and her husband, 45-year-old Lynn Lamvik, got their first standard-sized dog from a Canadian breeder. An addiction developed, and they got two more.

Now they are among just a few Oregon breeders offering multi-generational dogs, according to the Australian Labradoodle Association of North America. Their business, Oregon Labradoodles, has a waiting list that includes people from this country, Canada and England. It's not uncommon for breeders to have yearlong waiting lists, two other breeders said.

It's impossible to say how many Labradoodle breeders there are because the American Kennel Club doesn't recognize the breed, said spokeswoman Lauren Sebastiani. Karen McKay of the Australian Labradoodle Association estimates 15 breeders of "true, multi-generational Australian Labradoodles" operate in the United States and Canada. The association records the lineage and tests breeding dogs to maintain the integrity of the breed.

The excitement about Labradoodles is a big part of the fun of

LABRADOODLE LORE

For information about Labradoodles, visit these Web sites:

- ◆ www.oregonlabradoodles.com
- ◆ www.labradoodle-dogs.com

breeding them, Sheila Lamvik says. She takes notes on why people are drawn to Labradoodles.

For example, many prospective owners appreciate that they can get great curls and smarts without the prissy, pointy-nosed look of certain (not yours; yours is fine) poodles. Many men seem more willing to accept a Labradoodle than a poodle, she said.

As a service to customers, she keeps a live Web cam rolling most mornings, so that prospective owners can choose a puppy, or visit with the one they've already bought.

"It gives them a little more. They feel more a part of the birthing process," she said.

But stop everything.

One of the puppies' owners is online and must see her little darling. Sheila Lamvik runs to get little Kukui and hold him up in front of the camera.

"Kukui? Hi Baby! He's getting big!" writes Lisa Grunder of Pasadena, Md. Sheila Lamvik and her mother, Jackie Partlow, chuckle, because Grunder saw him just a day ago.

In an interview on the phone later, Lisa Grunder said she's already nuts about the 'doodle.

"I just can't wait to come to work every day so I can just see him for a minute," Grunder, a 28-year-old loan administrator, said. "We have framed pictures up of him — he's already our life, our baby."

Lisa and her husband, Jason Grunder, bought the pup after months of research. He wanted a water dog, and Lisa Grunder, who's had poodles all her life, was thinking poodle once again. They both needed a dog that wouldn't set off their allergies.

When co-workers told Jason Grunder, a nurse, about Labradoodles, he thought they were joking. Now, he and his wife have a puppy bed, toys, and a date with a 'doodle: Kukui is scheduled to ar-

rive by plane at 5:12 p.m., Dec. 19.

Sheila Lamvik, Lisa Grunder said, has made it a great experience.

"She'll answer any question. She's even letting us send him a toy," Lisa Grunder said. "It's a little

wintertime fleece bear with a scarf. It smells like us, so he'll know us a little before he comes home."

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