When canine loved ones need more than a bath, it is time for them to visit a professional dog groomer. However, pet owners should not choose just any dog groomer. They need to find a professional groomer who is competent enough to get the job done properly, safely and with minimal discomfort to their pets.

The following are steps that pet owners can use for selecting the best dog groomer:

• Potential clients should inquire over the telephone as to how long an establishment has been in business, as well as the extent of their experience with one's specific breed. Clients should be wary if an establishment has not been in business for a while.

• Another important step is for dog owners to find out the services offered and their prices, as well as what is included in the price. Dogs' sizes and the shapes of their coats may require more care; therefore, most businesses will only quote a price range until they actually see the dog. This is not meant to offend, and if a business does not offer a price range, clients should be cautious.

• Severe hair matting should be removed by an experienced dog groomer to avoid accidental cuts. Clients should know that if a dog has an excessively matted coat, the time taken by the groomer will be longer, as this first cut will be more intense and tedious. In this situation, a professional groomer will strive to minimize the dog's stress by giving it as many breaks as necessary.

• A professional grooming salon requires clients to pick up their pets within 30 to 45 minutes after the services are completed. Responsible dog groomers should never have pets at their facilities all day. A professional dog groomer schedules pets appropriately so as to get them in and out, causing less stress for pet owners and pets alike. The allotted time for a pet's cut is based on its size, breed and shape of its coat.

• Dog owners should visit the facility beforehand with the intent of ensuring that it looks and smells clean, is well-lit and that the animals are handled gently. Clients can get a better feel by speaking to the groomer directly, asking questions and expressing concerns. For instance, a dog may tend to get agitated by the blow-drying process. Dog owners should ask how this type of situation is handled. Most professional groomers are trained to cater to individual pets' needs and requirements.

• Pet owners also can ask if the dog groomers will advise them of any areas of concern they see while working. For instance, the best pet groomers notice things, such as lumps, nodes or any other type of skin irritation, and they let the owners know.

• Professional dog groomers always keep owners advised as to how often to bring their pets in and what services are required at the time of each visit. Based on individual temperaments, it may be beneficial for pet owners to take in their dogs for a minigroom to get them used to the groomer. This assists the dog groomer and alleviates stress on pets.

• Potential clients should ask if the groomer is accepting new clients and how long the average wait is to get an appointment. Certain salons cater to walk-in clients by having additional staff like bathers assisting the dog groomer or additional groomers specifically taking walk-ins.

• Most importantly, dog owners must feel confident about who they are leaving their beloved canines with and that they are receiving the best service possible.

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