



*and
their dogs!*

Debbie

Dave

by KRISTIN KRAMER photos by DONOVAN ROBERTS WITMER

Dave and Debbie Meas are the proud owners of Hair On The Avenue (HOTA), an award-winning full-service salon in Sinking Spring. They are also the proud owners of two 18-month-old Chow Chows, Hanna and Sasha.

Even if you are a regular HOTA customer, you might not realize the puppies come to work with Dave and Debbie every day. "The girls stay in our office," explains Dave. "We don't want to impose our passion for animals on our guests. Even though we are dog people, we respect that not everyone is. However, many guests do ask to see the girls. There are almost daily tours."

Owning and running a business requires the Meases to be at HOTA the majority of their time. Bringing their pups to work allows them to spend quality time with the dogs during the day. "It also provides a stress relief for our team who often visit the girls when they have breaks," Dave says.

"THE GIRLS ENHANCE OUR LIVES SO MUCH, AND THEY HAVE BECOME OUR CHILDREN"

Debbie shares, "They have our back all the time. The unconditional love is just amazing!"

"Whether we are gone for five minutes or for five days, we get the same kind of welcome from the girls – they are happy to see us," says Dave.

Historians trace Chow Chows back to the 11th century BC. The breed originated in Mongolia and China. Chows were kept as guard dogs by Chinese emperors and noblemen.

While most dogs have pink mouths and tongues, Chows' are dark purple/blue. The only other dog to have a similar trait is the Chinese Shar Pei, which originates from the same region. Legends try to explain the anomaly; the Chow supposedly was the chosen dog to lick up bits of blue sky that fell to earth upon creation, but the true reason remains a mystery.

Dave and Debbie have owned Chows for 22 years. "We wanted to find a dog that would be best for our lifestyle," Debbie explains.

Research initially led the Meases to the St. Bernard, but they realized the breed would be too big for their home. Debbie then discovered a book about Chows at the library, and she learned they were loyal and affectionate. "They look majestic, almost cat-like," says Dave. "We are cat people, too. For us, Chows were the right size, had the right traits, and, we felt, were the right breed for us. There is a saying, 'Once a Chow owner always a Chow owner,' and it really is true. We have become very loyal to this breed."

Because the dogs are so loyal and protective, the Meases stress the importance of socializing Chows regularly.

Sheba was their first Chow, followed by Mya, and today Hanna and Sasha. "This is the first time we have two dogs at the same time, and the experience has been absolutely priceless," Debbie shares. Even though the dogs come to work with the Meases every day, when Dave and Debbie are extremely busy, the girls have a playmate and keep each other company. "They are inseparable," Dave says.

"Someday we want to have a whole bunch of Chows," says Debbie. Dave adds, "When we retire, our vision is to open a Chow rescue, which we will call Chow Mane."

HAIR ON THE AVENUE

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