

Favorite Things

As seen on the runways of New York, the must-have accessory this season is soft and furry.

"Pawparazzi," miniature plush pets accessorized with fashions fresh off the runway, are the brainchild of brothers Chris and Eric Ryan. The siblings are the co-founders of Noodle Head, Inc.

Wanting to take their company beyond the image of just another toy company, the brothers, with the help of their spouses and children, came up with the glitz-and-glamor plush toy that takes a page from real-life paparazzi.

Noodle Head is known for putting a new spin on pets, haute couture and fashionable jewelry. And in a masterstroke of promotion, the Ryan brothers debuted their latest product as a fashion accessory during a real runway show, the Vogue Bambini children's wear show in New York. The Ryans decided to take a humorous approach to spoofing famed personalities such as Paris Hilton, who has been photographed time and again with her small pooch, which she carries in her designer bag.

"This is a tongue-in-cheek product for our family," said Chris, the father of two daughters, ages 11 and 15.

Brother Eric, the father of a 7-year-old daughter, added, "The line started out by watching our own kids and the items that continued to hold their interest. We discovered that glitzy, princessy details and miniature things were a winning combination."

Wanting to create a high-profile image for the pets, the team created a fictitious world of fame and celebrity for each furry critter. The Ryans also came up with a vehicle to link owners with their micro plush pets, Pawparazzi magazine, where the pampered celebrity pets model their chic accessories.

"We created the magazine because we wanted to make the pets come to life for the children by establishing an interactive avenue," said Eric.

Each Pawparazzi comes with a chic carrying purse, blanket, name charm, collar with matching girl's bracelet, leash and a copy of Pawparazzi magazine (\$15).

"Quality is the most important component of our product. We worked really hard on the jewelry and fashion element," said Eric Ryan.

Despite discouragement from some business insiders, the brothers insisted on using real rhinestones in the dog's collars. The bags are modeled after those seen on the runway, emulating the hottest textures and designs.

The first set of Pawparazzi includes five pets: Cocoa, the chocolate labrador film star; Powder, the supermodel cat; Salsa, the singing canine sensation; Kyra, a rock singer, and Bailey, a British dog model.

In addition to the standard set, there will be a boxed "celebrity style" kit that will include all of the aforementioned items that come with each Pawparazzi, plus silver dog dish, leather placemat, chew toy, rhinestone collar and matching bracelet for the owner (\$29).

"What gets me the most excited is when little girls gasp when they see the product. This is the reaction we were hoping for," said Eric.

"It's the glint in a child's eye that gets me," said Chris Ryan. "A customer commented to me that we had gotten into the mind of the young girl [consumer] and that we understand their interests. That was a sign that we did something right."

The pets will paw their way into department, specialty toy and fashion stores next month.

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