

At Rub-A-Dub in Toms River, you can do the bathing, and they'll clean up



Roxanne Groff of Manchester bathes her dog, Breezy, a 12-year-old golden retriever, at Rub-A-Dub Dog Wash in Toms River.

(STAFF PHOTOS: BRYAN FERREIRA)

Need a spot to wash your dog?



Looking for a treat for your pooch? Rub-A-Dub has them, too. Shampoos and cologne also are available.

By **CHRIS LUNDY**
TOMS RIVER BUREAU

TOMS RIVER — When Jeanie and Ted Carter had to bathe their 121-pound bull mastiff, Fiona, they had two options: either make a mess of their bathroom or find someplace else to do it.

They found Rub-A-Dub Dog Wash in Toms River. "In the summer, I wash her outside," Jeanie

Carter said.

But in the winter, she said she'd first have to try to get Fiona into the bathtub, which is a challenge. After the bath, Carter said, she'd have to clean the bathroom.

Instead, the owner of Rub-A-Dub, Laura Seylaz, was able to walk Fiona up a set of steps and into a huge tub, and Jeanie Carter could give her dog

a bath there.

"It was such a pleasant experience. If we didn't have that, what would she (Fiona) do? I guess she'd go through winter without a bath," Carter said.

Rub-A-Dub, located between Coolidge and Vaughn avenues at 2008 Route 37 E., offers self-

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service bathing and full-service grooming.

Seylaz, 35, of Toms River, purchased the business almost two years ago from a woman who had operated it for eight months but had had to sell it when her husband was offered a job in Australia.

Before that, Seylaz was in real estate, but she never felt that career suited her. When she saw Rub-A-Dub for sale, she became obsessed with the idea of owning it.

"I came and saw it and couldn't sleep," she said.

It was a daunting challenge, she said. She'd never run a business before, and was frightened about how it could turn out.

The going was tough for a while. She had to tend bar a few nights while the business was developing.

Now, Rub-A-Dub has repeat customers, she said. And many of them spread the word to bring in new business.

"People are so happy when they do find it," she said.

There are six bathing stations, equipped with large stainless steel tubs for larger dogs, grooming tables, and supplies like ear cleaner and brushes. There are shampoos and towels, as well as aprons, rubber gloves and goggles.

"We provide everything you need to give your dog a proper bath and you leave us the mess," Seylaz said.

The cleaning areas are all waist-high, to prevent back strain, she said.

Dogs aren't kept in cages while they dry, she said.

A section of the store displays all-natural treats. There is also a boutique, with clothing, designer collars and other merchandise.

Some of the shampoos and cologne packages are so fancy the only way to tell they are for dogs is the paw print on the packaging.

The ultimate goal would be to build up Rub-A-Dub to the point that she could sell franchises, Seylaz said.

But for now, she enjoys spending the day with her dogs, Alexander, a French mastiff, and Tiffany, a Chinese crested, who have their own section of the shop.

"I really think I did it for them," she said.

Prices to wash your own dog are \$15.95, or \$19.95 for a large tub. Full-service grooming is around \$40 and up, based on the condition of the dog's coat and the animal's size.

Rub-A-Dub is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays, although appointments can extend the hours.