



Inspired by  
Wes Anderson's  
Isle of Dogs (say  
it quickly), we  
shake paws with  
a different breed  
of canine stars  
in London

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# Work like a dog

# Chad

**Breed** Labrador retriever  
**Age** 5 years old  
**Job** Guide dog  
**Fun fact** Is fed to the theme tune of *The Archers*

For Dave Kent, Chad isn't just a companion: he's his window on the world. So it's no surprise that his voice softens when talking about his steadfast steerer of three years. "I'm non-perceptive of light, so I see absolutely nothing, neither light or dark," says Dave in his warm Welsh burr. "I'm completely dependent on Chad for my mobility, both in London and anywhere else in the world."

Being a guide dog is extremely demanding, and nowhere more so than the capital. Every day, Chad helps Dave take the Tube to work. He only needs a few repetitions to memorise the route, but navigating Kings Cross station at rush hour is a different matter. "It's full-on chaos, with people moving hither and thither," says Dave. "If you're sighted it's a challenge, so it's amazing how the dog does it really. Fortunately he's not literate or numerate otherwise he'd be making all kinds of decisions himself!" Which is not to say that Chad's a shrinking violet. "He's quite barksy, quite gobby," admits Dave, "and he lets me know what's going on in the street. There's no real walking with him, either, he gallops."

It's not just Dave who benefits. As part of his job as Guide Dogs' engagement officer, Dave works with "people at the needle-sharp point of their mobility journey; people who are facing a huge, life-impacting event. I worked with a vision-impaired child and his mobility instructor because the young lad was petrified of barking dogs. After four sessions, I ended up putting his hand in Chad's mouth. He's passive enough that they can put their hands all over him and get a sense of him."

The pair have even travelled to San Francisco together (on Virgin Atlantic, naturally). "The best thing is being able walk off the plane the other side and work your dog," says Dave. "It's an absolute buzz to be independent and have the pride of having my beautiful boy next to me."

So what's the secret to their friendship? "The synthesis in the relationship, that bond of trust, to sense him working, and to know that he's relying on me 50 per cent," says Dave. "I'm his dad, you know? That's how we do things, we're a partnership." [guidedogs.org.uk](http://guidedogs.org.uk)



"drumsticks" and "momo" are all terms that corgi lovers use on Instagram – Winston's day job. Rachel began his feed three years ago because she "didn't want to bombard all my friends with pictures". On Winston's first birthday, "I put him on the table with a tiny little party hat and a cupcake and I did my first studio shoot. That's how I got hooked. I went into animal photography, and took his Instagram much more seriously. My career changed because of this little guy."

Like many models, Winston, it's fair to say, grew into his looks. "He was kind of an ugly duckling when he was small," says Rachel. "His ears were huge – almost the same length as his legs. It was just like: how are you even standing up?"

Winston has since amassed 70,000 followers. "It affects real life," says Rachel. "There's so much shit going on, I keep everything light-hearted. It cheers people up. We've had messages from people who've told us that seeing his face every day helped them through depression. It's really lovely."

At this, Winston barks in approval as if to say, "You bet your momo!" [racheloatespetphotography.com](http://racheloatespetphotography.com) / [@winnycorgi](https://www.instagram.com/winnycorgi)

**"I'm his dad, you know? That's how we do things"**

# Winston

**Breed** Pembroke Welsh corgi  
**Age** 4 years old  
**Job** Insta dog  
**Fun fact** Is a keen participant in #momomondays\*

We've all heard the stories about demanding models, and when Winston runs, barking to the door, it looks like he might be a furry little diva. "Corgis are quite vocal," says owner/pet photographer Rachel Oates. "But his trigger is happiness." Which makes a nice change from sex, drugs and rock'n'roll.

As it turns out, Winston is an absolute pro, posing with nothing more than a well-

placed treat to keep him in place. Indeed, he's so heavily involved with his own press, he tries to join in the interview, sitting with his stumpers (fore legs) and floof (fluffy chest) on the table, and his drumsticks (back legs) and momo (bottom – it's Japanese for "peach") on Rachel like he's our very own dog-ta-phone.

For the uninitiated among you, "stumpers", "floof",

\*An Instagram hashtag dedicated to corgis' fluffy bottoms



# Max



**Breed** Bernese mountain dog  
**Age** 4 years old  
**Job** Pub dog  
**Fun fact** Is scared of puddles

"I wanted a dog my entire life," says Ben Evans, "but most places you work, you can't have one." Things changed when he became general manager at the Windmill pub/hotel in Clapham. "As soon as I started I was like, I can finally get a dog!"

He adopted Max, who fast became a pub favourite. "Everybody loves him," says Ben. "He's just this big bear that everybody wants to say hello to. He's not on his lead in the pub - he just wanders round

where he wants, so people feel very privileged when he sits down next to them."

Max, it transpires, often has ulterior motives. "He loves sausage rolls, and anyone who buys one from the bar will generally get followed back to their table," says Ben. "He sits politely and makes as much eye contact as he can to see if he can get a bite." He even stole one from the bar once, but was caught on CCTV.

Since Max arrived Ben has noticed an increased number of Bernese dogs in the area, and some guests come especially to meet him. "People will book a room just to see Max," says Ben. "He's a boutique dog for a boutique hotel." [windmillclapham.co.uk](http://windmillclapham.co.uk)



# Robbie

**Breed** Maltese terrier  
**Age** 6 years old  
**Job** Yoga dog  
**Fun fact** Has special yoga pants (just in case)

In her leafy London garden, Mahny Djahangiri and her dog are trying out some yoga poses. In truth, Mahny's a tiny bit more into it than Robbie is. "He's doing this on purpose," she says, gently tipping him into the "hot dog" pose on her lap: that is, belly up, paws splayed. "He wants to be paid."

Robbie wants nothing of the sort: he just wants to be near her, and the feeling's mutual. The pair met in Hyde Park six years back, when Mahny bought him off an family who were heading home to the Middle East. "I fell in love with him the minute I saw him," she says. "He was relaxed from the start - I didn't train him to be like this."

Mahny began teaching Doga - essentially yoga lessons to which people bring their dogs - three years ago. Robbie, now sitting at her feet, adores it. "He starts getting really interactive because he thinks it's his class," she says. "Well, it is his class."

A typical Doga session begins with a "sniff and greet" for the dogs. "Anything can happen at that,"

she says. Indeed it can. When the pair appeared on *Britain's Got Talent* in 2017, "Robbie weed in David Walliams' shoes," she recalls.

After half an hour of intensive yoga, something magic happens. "Once the owners are relaxed, the dogs become relaxed and they start sitting down on the mats," she says. "Then I encourage the owners to reach forward and stroke the dog in the position, massaging the ears and so on."

The key is to provide a safe space for all concerned. "All the bad behaviour comes out," says Mahny. "The dog acts out the owner's neuroses. It gets worse to get better." If it sounds like they're exorcising inner demons as well as exercising - that's because they are. Says Mahny: "Doga is the ultimate pet therapy - for both human and dog." [dogamahny.com](http://dogamahny.com)





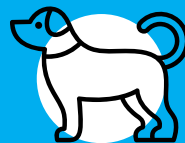
## Natural performers

Onscreen animals in gainful employment



### A Streetcat Called Bob

**Star:** Bob the cat  
**Job:** Busker  
**Fun fact:** The real Bob often played himself



### Air Bud

**Star:** Buddy the dog  
**Job:** Basketball player  
**Fun fact:** Has spawned 13 sequels/spin-offs



### Monkey Shines

**Star:** Ella the monkey  
**Job:** Nurse  
**Fun fact:** Was parodied on *Malcolm in the Middle*



### Babe

**Star:** Babe the pig  
**Job:** Sheep-pig  
**Fun fact:** 48 different pigs were used to play Babe

# Sherlock



**Breed** Cocker spaniel  
**Age** 5 years old  
**Job** Fire dog  
**Fun fact** Plays pony for Paul's daughters (grudgingly)

"The game," pronounces London fire investigation officer Paul Osborne, "is on." Tail aquiver with anticipation, Sherlock begins licking his lips and yawning. He's not bored – quite the opposite, this whirling dervish *never* stops – he's just warming up his olfactory system. Paul bounces a manky tennis ball, then utters the magic words: "Find the bomb." And Sherlock's off across the car park, nose to the floor.

Sherlock, you see, is a hydrocarbon detector dog, which means he seeks out traces of ignitable substances

in the aftermath of a fire to help establish how it started. "If someone's poured petrol through a letterbox, the chances are that it's dripped on to their clothing," says Paul. "Just one droplet will be enough for Sherlock."

Sure enough, Sherlock takes seconds to find the treasure: a few drops of white spirit hidden across the car park. To show us where, he stands rigid by the sample – well, as rigid as a dog can be when he's as excitable as an espresso-fuelled Energiser Bunny.

"He fits his name really well, because he assists us in solving some horrific crimes," says Paul. "Not only is he incredibly accurate, he's fast, he's cheap, he reduces the amount of time we spend at a scene and he gets that key evidence." It's not the only way that Sherlock resembles

his namesake. "As a general rule, he's bonkers," says Paul. "He's mad but we can certainly harness that."

For Paul, the objective is simple: he wants to stop people being injured in fires. For Sherlock, it's even simpler. He just wants his ball back. "To him, it's just a game of hide and seek," says Paul. "It's like the best game ever, because he knows at the end of it he's going to get a reward." It only takes another 10 seconds for Sherlock to find the second sample and, true to his word, Paul flings him the ball, which he catches, triumphantly, in his mouth. Game over. ■  
*Sherlock: The Fire Brigade Dog (Century, £12.99) is out now. To get free smoke alarms fitted, visit [fireservice.co.uk/safety/](http://fireservice.co.uk/safety/)*

 Watch *Isle of Dogs* onboard now