



Pampered pets also on gift list

ABOUT 44 per cent of all pet owners will buy a special present for their pet this Christmas and with Australians spending \$4.62 billion dollars on their pets each year, Aussie pets look set for some serious pampering this festive season.

Research shows Aussies annually spend more on dogs than any other pet, totalling \$2.7 billion or \$732 a dog.

Gifts are an increasingly growing segment of this expanding market, said Mark Harris, marketing manager of The Kramar Pet Company.

Celebrity dog trainer and pet expert Steve Austin said Australia was a nation of pet lovers and buying gifts was a way for pet owners to show their love.

A Newspoll survey showed pet owners saw themselves as 'pet parents', with 85 per cent saying their pet was part of the family like a child and 57 per cent said their pet was their best friend.

Mr Austin said the best presents encouraged mental and physical stimulation.

He said 'treat balls' were a stand-out item because the dog had to work the toy to get food.

Mr Austin also recommended hard chews such as rawhide that encouraged licking, biting and chewing and promoted dental hygiene by preventing tartar build-up.

"The best presents are the ones that keep your dog happy and engaged doing what they love – this helps to channel destructive behaviour and promote happiness and wellbeing," he said.