

# Celebrity Photography

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Hillary Duff and Lola

Last issue we had an immensely popular article on the "Girls of the Playboy Mansion" which featured shots we bought from celebrity pet photographer Chris Ameruso. The more I learned about him and his extraordinary body of work, the more fascinating a subject he became for a photo feature. A few chats and emails later, this article evolved with great imagery from an amazing individual.

It's hard to believe that Christopher Ameruso's career as the leading photographer of celebrities' pets started only a decade ago. The handsome, tattooed, intense LA celebrity yapper snapper is not a paparazzi—he hates the word. You won't find his trademark baldhead and hip headbands in the pap scrums outside of restaurants. Instead, he'll shoot in the studio, on location or in the homes of his subjects—famous film stars, rock identities, models, media personalities and the generally famous.

He's carved a unique and successful niche in the Hollywood Hills, more a devoted personal industry than merely an occupation. The fringe benefits are that he gets to hang with some gorgeous folk in fabulous places, but it's still hard work. He's shot over 1000 celebrities and his images have made more than 40 magazine covers including In Style, Who Weekly, Paw Luxuries, Modern Dog, Hollywood Dog, Animal Wellness, New York Dog, Simply 4 Pets, Healthy Pet, Animal Fair and many more. He's also featured in People, The LA Times, NY Post, US Weekly, Star, New York Times and countless others.

He's known for his pet charity work in unusual ways. He created a pet calendar that saw four million copies shrinkwrapped to a popular US

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Chris Ameruso his own Chinese Crested, Stella Blue

cereal brand with the money going to charity. In May, he was a part of the 100th year celebration of the iconic US pet treat Milk Bone Dog Biscuits with ten of his favourite photos, autographed by the dogs and their famous pet parents auctioned off with the proceeds benefitting Canine Assistants.

He's also the creator of "PAW Print The Coolest Little Pet Magazine" which has evolved over the past few years to be a compelling 72 page free read that advocates animal welfare without being preachy and takes up the issue of over two million pets being stolen in the US annually for which he's done stunning billboards for the cause in LA's skies.

Add to that a one hour TV special "Stars and Their Pets Behind The Lens" for the Animal Planet as well as being a featured photographer on several TV shows such as "The Girls Next Door" "Groomer Has It", "America's Cutest Puppy", "Criss Angel's Mind Freak" and many others. It's no wonder he is also working on a feature film concept—he certainly has the star connections.

His most touching feature was a special project for New Yorker magazine which was a tribute to the search and rescue dogs of 9/11 featuring nine celebrities with the hero canines. People magazine in the US broke tradition with a five page feature of his black and white photography while In Style magazine did an eight page story on him recently. He's been extensively covered by professional photo mags such as Popular Photography and Photography which analysed his work, techniques and gear.

He spent most of his youth performing in a family rock band—similar to the Cowsills, Brady Bunch or Osmonds—and moved to Los Angeles with dreams of a music career. However grunge had taken over from pop in the music cycles. He switched from being behind an instrument in a band to putting his face behind an Olympus camera with no professional photographic experience or learning and soon found himself in a totally

different world. He's a self-made professional with a 'Just Do It' attitude whose artistic vision and access to celebs was the formula for success.

His stark, clear shooting eye and artistic perspective gave him an entrée into the world that is forbidden to enter for most of us but one which fascinates almost all of us. His compelling images and elite footage is not sensationalised like most paparazzi, it's respectful of the personalities and pets. It's allowed him easy access to photograph the likes of Hugh Hefner's girlfriends, Slash, Kate Hudson, Julianne Moore, Ben Stiller, Pam Anderson, Virginia Madsen, Rosanna Arquette, Angie Harmon, Ice-T, Nicollette Sheridan, William H. Macy, Courteney Cox, David Arquette, Christina Applegate, Paris Hilton, Hillary Duff and Ozzy Osbourne to name just a few.

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