

the CANINE CORNER

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www.balanceddog.co.nz / www.doggymom.com

Everyone wants to share photos of their dogs, right? In Christchurch, there's another option for celebrating the love of your dog (and other pets).

Pet portrait sessions are held regularly each month at the Paint 'n' Sip Studio. Studio owner, Anna Viniegra, has just celebrated the studio's fifth anniversary and says that the pet sessions continue to be one of the most popular that the studio offers.

On a somewhat chilly Saturday evening, I was invited to stop in and see how the portraits were coming along...

...with music playing in the background, I found a studio full of animal lovers wearing aprons and fully involved in painting their canvasses. Each pet session is scheduled for three hours and so, well past the two-hour mark, I could see the tones and textures of each animal's portrait starting to shine through. Dog portraits were certainly the most popular, but there was also a handful of other pets represented including several cats, one horse and even a kea.

Friends and families were sitting together, clearly enjoying the nibbles that were offered as part of their \$75 session fee. (Drinks, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic, are purchased separately). Some were celebrating birthdays, others simply wanted "something different to do".

Anna, who has an undergraduate degree in fine arts and a Master's Degree in design, hires artists to work for her who are either studying or who have completed their degrees in painting. Participants are asked to submit a photo of their pet which the artists sketch onto the canvas for them in advance. Backgrounds are always painted first to get everyone comfortable with their paints and brush and to get them relaxed. Then the real effort begins on the A3-sized canvasses using water-based acrylic paints.

Anna says that the best pet photos are those taken in good light with the animal's eyes facing the camera, "although we will work with whatever the pet parent gives us". If you have more than one pet in your photo, be prepared to pay an additional \$10 for the session.

Otherwise, the only thing left for you to do is to gather your friends together and make a booking at paintnsip.co.nz. 🐾



Above: Cousins Caraline and Leesa attended with Leesa's Mum to celebrate her birthday; here they pose with the finished product.

Below left: Dog portrait underway.

Below right: Work in progress

