

Hot, Hairy Kitties

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO SHAVE A CAT

by Andy Valentine | Photo by Trask Bedortha

A week of 90-degree days is enough to make anyone break out short sleeves, but we hairless humans have it easy. Imagine, if you will, a world where the only escape from scorching summer temperatures is a full-body shave. This reality exists, and your cat lives it every time the heat bears down. Thankfully, Beth Swanzy, owner of Amazon Park Professional Pet Grooming, has your kitty's back, and she makes the job look easy.

"I've been grooming cats for 30 years," says Swanzy. "I've had this shop since '87. So basically if I can't do it, you wouldn't really want to go anywhere else."

Swanzy runs the practice largely by herself — with help from only a few others — but it's clear immediately from the energy she exudes, and the way the animals respond to her, that she's passionate and skilled when it comes to grooming.

"They're not like dogs where they stand up straight," she says. My long-haired cat, Ernest, fidgets worriedly beneath Swanzy's fingers, but a few quick strokes (and a bit of kitty-baby-talk, because who doesn't do that, let's be honest) and she's able to calm him down. First, she clips Ernest's claws — a task that has left me bloodied in the past — but she obviously knows what she's doing. Ernest responds with a struggle, but Swanzy shows great patience and care. "A lot of groomers don't groom cats, for obvious reasons," she says. "For a lot of people, it's not worth the risk."

Next come the electric clippers. Ernest seems perturbed, but Swanzy's technique is caring and swift, so it's all over quickly. As a long-time all-breed groomer of both cats and dogs, Swanzy understands the trade, but more importantly, she understands the customer:

"Even though I learned all breeds [at first], I didn't really know anything. It takes years. It's looking at a face and seeing a dog with an underbite versus a dog that doesn't, and the creativity that comes with it later on is awesome. You can know the fundamentals, but it takes time. You need to get a feel for the temperaments."

You could take your cat to the vet and have it shaved, but that requires anesthesia, and your cat is unlikely to come out looking quite so cute. Swanzy's practice is to a vet what a private salon is to Perfect Look. And it's not too pricy. For about \$50 your pet gets the royal treatment. Ernest came home looking like a majestic little lion, and he feels much better with the heat off his back. Lane County is littered with cat and dog groomers. Call for prices and ask questions to make sure your cat or pup gets the care and cut you are looking for. 🐾

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Pip
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Sven
Wild and crazy guy who is always on the go! My favorite kind of fun is chasing my own tail and running after the laser pointer.

All of these awesome rescue cats (and more) are available for adoption at S.A.R.A.'s Treasures. We're open every day from 10:00 until 6:00, so stop in soon to meet your perfect match!