

WELLNESS CAUSES TRENDS INTERVIEWS RESCUE LIFESTYLE

HamptonsPet

THE GLOBAL LUXURY PET MAGAZINE

EXCLUSIVE!

KATHRYN HALL

Former U.S. Ambassador
shares her love for
wine and pets

HYDRANT HOTEL

State-of-the-bark
pet boarding

CHRIS ONTHANK

Modern day Dr. Doolittle

WITH

DOMINIQUE MOCEANU

Conquers another dream

RACHEL GRANT

The *Bond* Girl and her new
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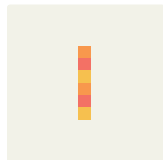
ANDY SABIN

The Environmental
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THE MASTER BEHIND THE MENAGERIE

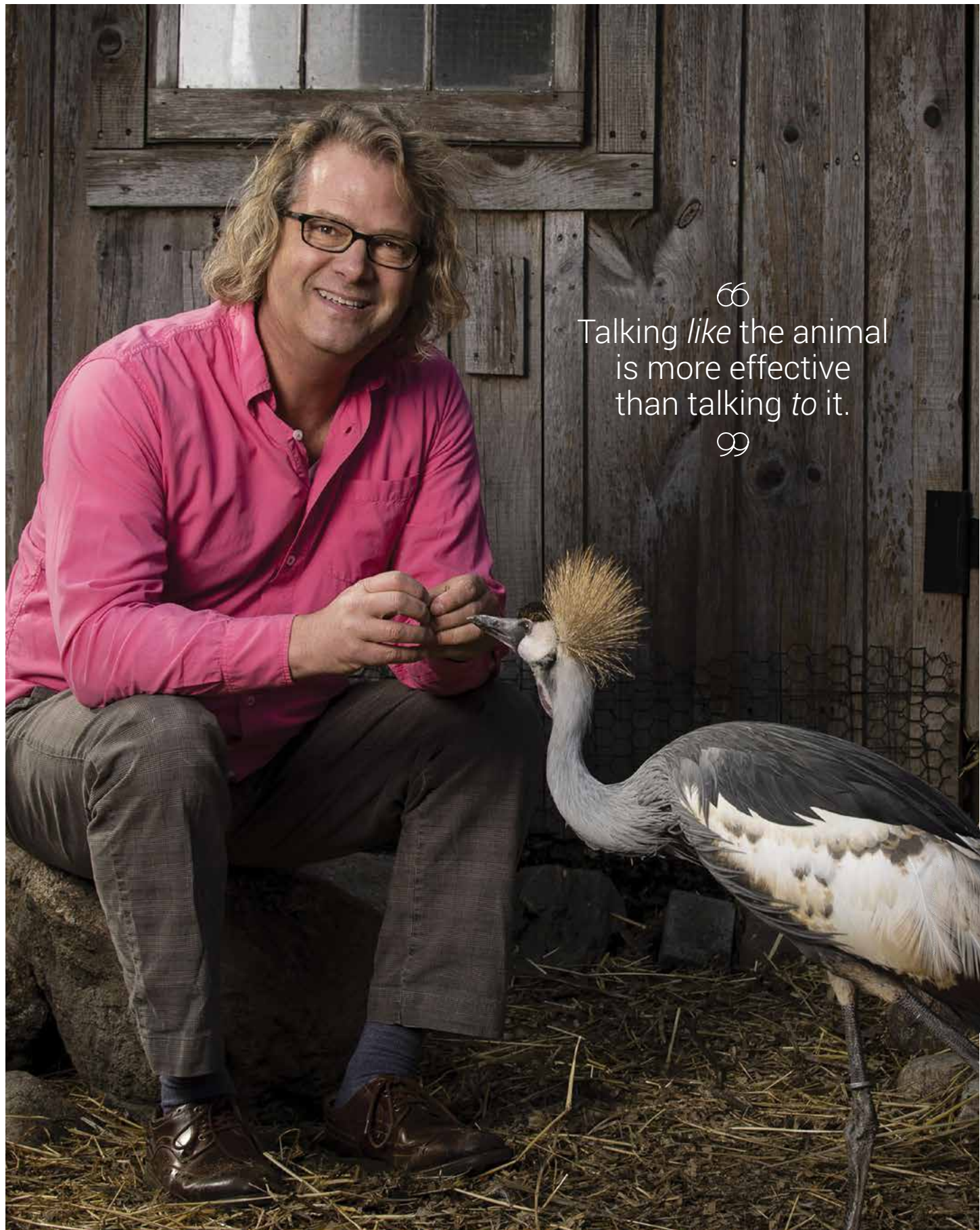
Dr. Doolittle knows his birds from the bees...
and the dogs.



f one could talk to animals and learn their languages, think of all the delightful conversations! Chris Onthank does just that. This modern day Dr. Doolittle has found a way to communicate with so many species with an ease and trust that is rarely seen when humans infiltrate the animal kingdom. From Dobermans to ducklings, Chris knows the secret handshake to get in to this club of creatures, where he is greeted upon entry as a trusted confidante and caretaker.

What is most evident upon meeting Chris is how his smile reflects a life spent where the personal and professional lines have been blurred by making a career out of his passion. His mobile office consists of an oversized SUV filled with chicken feed, hay, several new pet product prototypes, and a rescue dog named Dave. Canine Master and animal behaviorist, Chris has spent the last 30 years as a coveted dog trainer and inventor of pet products that improve the way animals and humans coexist.

With a skip in his step, Chris says, "You gotta see this." One cannot help but share his enthusiasm for his latest animal friend, a Bearded Dragon named Buddy. Viewing animals



“
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”

DID YOU KNOW?

Chris Onthank, known as Canine Master, also raises many species of birds, including Wood, Falcated and Chinese Mandarin ducks, Red-crested Pochards, Canvasbacks, Eurasian Teals, Chloe Wigeons from Chile, and sea ducks such as Smew, Hooded Mergansers, and Barrows Goldeneyes. He also homes geese from around the world, including Red-breasted and Emperor geese. From one of the highest-flying birds, the Bar-headed Goose, to his prized collection of Black, Bewick and Whopper swans, Chris is truly dedicated to ensuring all his animals have forever homes. Several birds that outgrew Onthank's farm now call The Bronx Zoo their home.



through the looking glass of his boyhood optimism and wonderment, Chris giggles while exclaiming, "Isn't this so cool?"

Only his wife and two young children share such an understanding of animals. On their five-acre homestead in Wilton, Connecticut, the family greets chickens laying eggs with as much normalcy as most families greet their plated breakfast eggs. Further exploration of the sprawling sanctuary is enough to assure anyone that this is a man who has a lot to teach about talking to animals and how to create harmony between humans and their pets.

As Canine Master, Chris helps clients "master the relationship" with their dog. His philosophy toward dog training is that talking *like* the animal is more effective than talking *to* it. For instance, a dog views its master as a dog with two legs, and expects them to speak their language. When a human does not speak in dog, it may cause that dog to feel unsafe or unstructured.

Some of his best-known training techniques include using body language and posture in a way the dog understands. Chris also teaches pet parents to use the tone of their voice to mimic the naturally occurring instinctive sounds dogs use to communicate with one another. A verbal correction may be a squeal of discomfort when a puppy mouths a master's hand or a praise tone that lets the dog know what they are doing is welcome.

It is within this language that dogs are most receptive to

learning, making it easier to train them to be the very best companions. From simple jumping to serious aggression, the groundwork is the same. There is a mutual respect and love that Chris gives and gets not only with his own animals, but with his clients and their pets as well. Maybe that is the secret to being a true master.

When not giving expert advice to clients, Chris spends the day tending to the beloved bevy of beasts, small and large, that pepper his property. Talk about the birds and the bees! He is a state and federally permitted game bird breeder who happens to also be an aviculturist dedicated to preserving and raising waterfowl, pheasants and cranes. Four active beehives also dot the property, allowing Chris to harvest the honey that his neighbors have come to rely on for their personal stockpile.

The latest and rarest additions to his farm are his African Crowned cranes—tall, majestic birds with golden feathers. His favorite crane, Jack George, named by his children, follows him around like a dog, which is most fitting. Perhaps Canine Master is not a broad enough term. How about Creature Master? 🐾



Chris Onthank can be heard regularly on Pet Life Radio® and his Canine Master Podcasts are available on iTunes. For more information, visit caninemaster.com.

Chris' smile reflects a life spent where the personal and professional line has been blurred.

