

Melbourne dog trainer releases four one-of-a-kind shell cordovan collars for the Year of the Fire Horse

PK9 Gear has built four hand-stitched collars in marbled red shell cordovan to mark a zodiac year that only comes around every 60 years. The marbling is the leather's own anatomy, so no two pieces in the run look the same.



Melbourne, Victoria May 27, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - K9 Gear, the Australian-made working dog gear brand handcrafted by trainer Chris LoveSeed, has released a four-piece limited collection of leather dog collars to mark the 2026 Year of the Fire Horse. Cut from marbled red shell cordovan, the

collection is available now through the [PK9 Gear Year of the Horse collection](#) at AUD 871 per collar.

Each of the four collars uses marbled red shell cordovan from [Rocado](#) in Ponte a Egola, Tuscany. Shell cordovan is not regular leather. It is the dense fibrous membrane that sits under the rump of a horse, and each animal only yields two small shells. Rocado is one of the last tanneries on earth still producing it, spending six months in vegetable tanning pits before shaving the surface by hand to expose the vein and fibre structure underneath. That structure is where the marbling comes from. It is the leather itself, not a print, which is why no two [dog collars](#) look the same.

The 60-year cycle behind the release is the reason the brand picked this material. The Fire Horse only appears when one of the 12 zodiac animals meets one of the five Chinese elements in the same year. The last Fire Horse was 1966. The next will be 2086. The collection is being made through 2026 only, in numbered runs of four.

The four collars are named in Mandarin. Zhūquè 朱雀 (Vermilion Bird) is the brightest of the four, cut from the centre of the shell where colour saturates deepest, on a wider body for medium to large dogs.

Dānxīn 丹心 (Cinnabar Heart) is built on a sighthound profile for whippets, greyhounds, salukis and other long-headed breeds whose necks are wider than their skulls.

Jīnzōng 金鬃 (Gold Mane) pairs the marbled shell with an Old England pull-up lining from La Perla Azzurra that softens and patinas with wear.

Chìyàn 赤焰 (Crimson Flame) runs Bisanzio Oro lining and keeper from Conceria Puccini Attilio right around the collar so the gold reads continuously against the red.

All four are hand-saddle stitched with two needles using Lajin Twist gold metallic thread. Every hole has its own structurally independent pair of stitches, so if one length breaks, the next stitch still locks. It is the same construction Hermès uses on its leather goods. Hardware is a stirrup or west-end style buckle in 24K gold PVD over 316L surgical-grade stainless steel from Hility. PVD plating runs at 800 to 4,000 HV, compared to 100 to 200 HV for standard electroplated brass, so the gold does not rub off the high points the way it does on cheaper buckles. Edges are burnished in ten stages with Tokonole, a Japanese water-based gum made from natural paste, resin, wax and silicon.

"The Fire Horse only comes once every 60 years. That is not a marketing line, that is the calendar," said Chris LoveSeed, founder of PK9 Gear. "A year that rare deserves a leather that rare. Marbled red shell cordovan from Rocado was the only material that felt right, and because the marbling is the leather's own vein and fibre structure, no two collars in this run will ever look the same."

LoveSeed is a working dog trainer with over 15 years on the lead. He started Positive K9 Training in 2011 and grew it into one of Melbourne's largest dog training schools, covering dog sports, behaviour, assistance dogs and substance detection. PK9 Gear started because he was sick of putting cheap imported gear on dogs every day and watching it fall apart. He still tests every piece on the dogs he works with before anyone else gets near one.

The brand is the exclusive dog gear partner of [Park Hyatt Melbourne](#) and has stockists across nine countries. Bespoke work has been produced for Oprah Winfrey's dogs and Jelly Roll's dog.

Each collar is made to order in the dog's exact neck measurement with a 2 to 4 week production time. Buyers can also browse the full range of [leather dog collars](#). The Year of the Fire Horse collection is

available only while shells last and will not be re-cut after 2026.

About PK9 Gear

PK9 Gear is a Melbourne-based maker of premium working dog equipment, handcrafted by professional dog trainer Chris Loveseed using Italian vegetable-tanned leathers, English bridle leathers and 24K gold PVD hardware. The brand supplies trainers, handlers and luxury hospitality clients, including Park Hyatt Melbourne and has stockists across nine countries.



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Source : PK9 Gear

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