

BARKING IN THE RAIN

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Walking the dog in the rain has taken a turn for the drier with the latest gimmick to come out of Japan — a special canine umbrella with a handle coming out of the top, making it look like an inverted umbrella. It keeps pups dry when it's raining cats and dogs, and the cute picture it presents has dog lovers begging for one.

Raincoats for dogs experienced a brief popularity, but the expense of replacing them as dogs got bigger had consumers growling for something more cost-effective. So, Ki. Creative Planning Co. in Osaka listened and developed the "Wanbrella." "Wan wan" is the Japanese equivalent for "Woof woof" or "Arf arf."

The wanbrella is controlled from above with a bent shaft so its direction can be changed frequently to follow a dog's movements. The diameter of the canopy is 70 cm, which can cover small to medium-size dogs and it is made of transparent vinyl so unexpected moves can be tracked from above by the handler.

Priced at ¥2,980, some 2,500 wanbrellas have been sold since last September when it was first put on the market.