

upscale Pet Hotels

| By Chrystle Fiedler |

Need a vacation?
Now, you both
can *relax*

Want to get away but don't have a place to leave Fido or Fifi that meets your exacting standards for pet care? Now you have a new option, the luxurious pet hotel. It's a new trend across the country and on LI. Recently opened Chateau Des Paws (www.chateaudespaws.com) in Riverhead, for example, takes its inspiration from peaceful village life in France, complete with storefront awnings denoting a florist and bakery. "We wanted to make it stress-free for the animals," says Lynne Christianson, administrator and co-owner along with Richard Rothman, DVM, and Gal Vatash, DVM. "Instead of having runs lined up that are three feet apart, we have 18 suites surrounding the perimeter and a 'town square' where they can play all day long."

At Best in Show Pet Resort (www.bestinshowpetresort.com) in Mineola, giving dogs room to play and socialize was also top priority. "We've made a huge effort to make it a dog-friendly environment," says Raymond Polley, DVM, co-owner with a childhood friend from Garden City, C. J. Bockett. "We've dedicated 3,000 square feet of our 16,000-square-foot facility for three large rooms where dogs who are separated by size and temperament get to play with each other." This interaction with other dogs and pet-care attendants gives pet "guests" physical exercise and mental stimulation. The result? A stress-free stay.

Doggie day care, which is also available, can be especially helpful if a dog has separation anxiety, if you are away from home for long periods of time or for young dogs who need to release excess energy. "When both the husband and wife work, a dog is not getting any physical exercise, mental stimulation and socialization during the day," says Dr. Polley. "Here they're running around playing with other dogs. They go home like a kid after a soccer game — tired, happy and content."



Cats have fun at these upscale pet resorts too. At Best in Show, cats who stay in the cattery even sleep in four-poster beds. At Chateau Des Paws, cats enjoy cat condos with secret passages, so they can go condo climbing. You can even ask for a catnip party for your kitty with other cats and a staff member.

Both pet hotels also offer spa treatments and grooming. Chateau Des Paws features natural spa baths, therapeutic body massages and pedicures with nail "pawlish." Best in Show even provides an elevator to assist elderly and arthritic dogs who need help in reaching the grooming area. Spa tubs have ramps so dogs can just walk in for a soak.

Besides helping dogs look their best, another of Best in Show's goals is to help homeless pets find a home. To this end, they've designated one room as the "Adopt Me" suite and work with local animal shelters like The North Shore Animal League to help animals find forever homes. "We've tried to give a little bit back to the dog community by always having a dog in there for adoption," says Dr. Polley.

Animals benefit from the fact that each facility is under the watchful eyes of experienced veterinarians and staff 24 hours a day. Chateau Des Paws is connected to the East End Veterinary Emergency and Specialty Center, where Dr. Rothman and Dr. Vatash practice. To ensure that every animal thrives while under their care, Christianson's staff keeps a daily progress report on each pet "guest." Dr. Polley is also on call 24 hours a day and the vet hospital is located in the same building.

All of these services are designed so that you can leave your dog or cat for the day or a week and have peace of mind. "I like to say that it's a luxury vacation for the pets and a guilt-free trip for the owners," says Christianson. 🏠