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Written by
Kathy Strong

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Nearly 30 million Americans travel with their pets, and, judging by the number of creative pet perks being offered by the luxury resort industry, a high number of these pet-toting travelers are looking for top-notch personal service for both themselves and their furry companions.

Within a few hours' drive from the desert, choose from a wide array of resort options that really know how to give "pet-friendly" a new, decadent meaning. One warning: your precious pooch may not want to check out.

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Casa Laguna Inn & Spa's Francois Leclair with canine massage guest Hudson. / Courtesy photo

Pawriffic room service in Santa Barbara

Two-legged guests are not the only ones who thoroughly enjoy their stay at Fess Parker's Doubletree Resort, directly across the street from a soft, sandy beach and the sparkling Pacific in Santa Barbara. The 24 lushly-landscaped acres have walkways with "pet posts," and each guest room has a private balcony or patio. All pets are greeted with a special amenity bag upon arrival; an in-room pet menu is both "pawriffic" and "purrific."



Torito checks in to West Inn in Carlsbad. / Courtesy Photo

The luxury beach resort with garden-set pool, Del Mar Spa and fitness room is just across the street from East Beach with a 1 1/2-mile walking path, where pets are allowed on leash, along the beach towards the wharf. Dog-friendly beaches are within a short drive; the on-site concierge is happy to provide dog-friendly park, beach and restaurant information, as well as a list of

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West Inn & Suites, Carlsbad, (866) 431-9378; www.westinnandsuites.com

Casa Laguna Inn, Laguna Beach, (800) 233-0449 or www.casalaguna.com

L'Auberge, Del Mar, (800) 245-9757 or www.laubergedelmar.com

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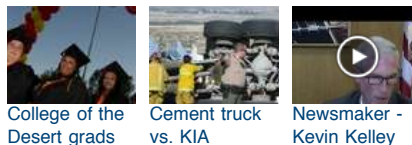
Pet's name, photo await in Carlsbad

One of Carlsbad's finds is the West Inn & Suites, centrally located within a five-minute drive to everywhere you want to be. The boutique hotel with 86 luxurious rooms and suites is becoming a favorite with both business and pleasure travelers because of its many special touches and free amenities — from a complimentary hot breakfast and evening pouring of special wines to a nightcap of cookies and milk.

The hotel, off the interstate and 1/4 mile from Carlsbad State Beach, also loves its pet guests. Even before you check in, pet bowls, beds and a welcome bag with treats are placed in the room, along with pet aromatherapy. Pets are welcomed with a photo taken for the digital frame in the lobby and the pet guest's name on a pet chalkboard. A dog run and dog park, equipped with a dog water fountain and bags are on site; dogs are allowed on the Bistro patio while you dine.

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