

Cross-Country Trip Turns Up Hotel 'Top Dogs'

Woman and dog seek out luxury dog-friendly hotels with the best pet amenities.

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Janine Franceschi and Irish setter Beau. Janine Franceschi and her Irish setter Beau set off from Nantucket, Mass., in August to go on a four month, cross-country trip. Franceschi, the owner of a new hotel booking website Pet-friendly Accommodations Worldwide (PAW), was on a mission to source, visit, and review luxury pet-friendly hotels.

Now, about 13,000 miles, 30 states, and 50 pet-friendly hotels later, she has compiled a list of the "Top Dogs" in luxury accommodations, with the help of Beau, of course.

The "Top Dog" list represents hotels that have at least a four-star rating and, in Franceschi's opinion, not only offer the best in human and pet amenities, but also execute those amenities exceptionally well.

"The Top Dog list, they are all hotels and businesses and resources that genuinely want to see you with your pet," she said. "They're not necessarily businesses that have pet programs to keep existing clients or attract clients. They really are excited to see you and your pet."

Taking the title of PAW "Top Dog" Luxury Pet-friendly Resort 2008 was Calistoga Ranch in Calistoga, Calif. Westin and Kimpton tied for first place in the luxury pet-friendly hotel chain category and Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows in Santa Monica, Calif., was named the PAW "Top Dog" Luxury Pet-friendly Hotel 2008.

Recognition for the best pet-welcome amenity went to The Woodlands Resort & Inn in Summerville, S.C., for its personalized dog collar. Hotel Palomar of Dallas, Texas, received honorable mention for its goldfish bowl.

Also included on the list are the top pet-friendly activities, resources, and restaurants Franceschi encountered throughout her and Beau's trip.

In the pet-friendly restaurant category, Fetch, in the Upper East Side of New York City, and 50 Plates, of Portland, Ore., tied for first place. Franceschi said Fetch received high marks for its atmosphere and 50 Plates received high marks for its food.

The title of PAW "Top Dog" Pet-friendly Activity 2008 went to New York Dog Tours, of New York, N.Y., and the title of PAW "Top Dog" Pet-friendly Resource 2008 went to Dining with Sophie, of San Francisco, Calif.

Franceschi noted several vendors she and Beau discovered along the way. Among them are ArfDog, a provider of high-end dog-themed gift boxes; Bowser Beer, a manufacturer of a malt barley drink for dogs; Dogs Lovers Wine Club, a wine-of-the-month club that features illustrations of dogs on its wine labels; and Dog is Good, an online retailer of gifts for dog lovers.