

Second Loves

Doris Day's Cypress Inn reflects the stars class and affection for animals.

Sandy Robins

They used to come over the Thanksgiving weekend, Wiese says. The cats were all leash-trained and every evening would accompany their owners to the living room and join other guests for a pre-dinner drink around the roaring fire. Other pets were always in the room and to this day there's never been an incident. At the Cypress Inn, there is no jacket and tie rule for guests, but pets are required to leash up at all times. We also request [that] owners never leave them alone in a room. This is for their pets safety, says Wiese, who also admits that the inn is far more accommodating of animals than of small children. Housekeeping is informed in advance if a pet is checking in and a specially designed pet bed is placed in the room giving them their own comfort zone. [The bed] are made exclusively for us with lambs wool on one side for warmth and the other side is moisture-resistant in case of an accident. We have a turn down service too, Wiese continues. When the staff places chocolates on guest pillows at night, they place treats in a special velvet bag on the pet bed.

Off-season the inn runs at about 40 per cent with pet guests. But over holidays, every room has at least one cat or dog in residence, Wiese says. The huge roaring fire in the main living room is a popular place and so is the sunny courtyard where guests can enjoy breakfast in the mornings. Darlene Wright, a Cypress Inn receptionist, is one of the hotels most popular pet sitters and has formed friendships with countless pets over the last five years.

The first cat I was asked to sit spent the entire evening under the bed, Wright says. I later discovered that its owners had left its leash on and it was too scared to come out. I think pets know when you love them and my charges usually warm quickly to me. When I pet sit a cat, we usually hang around the hotel. If they are comfortable on a leash, we'll take a walk in a quiet courtyard, have dinner and then curl up together and watch TV. While I take instructions from the owners, Wright continues, ultimately, it's all about what the pet wants to do and that's just fine with me.