

A Sanctuary for the Birds – and Cats

The Purring Parrot in San Diego customizes care for pets.

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This pretty kitty enjoys its surroundings at The Purring Parrot, a unique cat and bird sanctuary in San Diego. A sanctuary that caters to birds and the cats who love them recently opened in San Diego. Maria Brinson, who owns The Purring Parrot with her husband, Patrick, says the birds provide entertainment for the cats from the safety of an enclosed aviary.

While the business owners have two cats and four birds of their own, they understand how some birds might be bothered by the sight of a peeping cat. With that in mind, the aviary was built using one-way glass, so the felines can look in from their surrounding cat rooms, but the birds only see their own reflection in the soundproof glass.

In addition to bird watching, the cats are provided with filtered water, kitty grass, play ramps and stands. They lounge in the comfort of 21 rooms furnished with pet beds and perches surrounding the aviary.

For the birds, the sanctuary offers an indoor aviary with solar tubes to let natural light in, roomy cages, wood stands to play, sing and chatter, as well as personal care, Brinson said.

Those avian and feline guests who have special dietary needs are catered to based on the requests of their owners, she said. If certain birds prefer to be outside of their cage, they are able to sit on top of the cage until it's time to go in at night.

Merlin isn't bothered by cats at the sanctuary because he can't see them. "We can customize care," Brinson said. "There's nothing else out there like us."

Brinson and her husband had searched for a place where they could board their birds, SodaPop, an African grey; Bean, a bare-eyed cockatoo; Merlin, a blue-and-gold macaw; and Hercules, a cape parrot, while they traveled. However, they weren't satisfied with what they found.

With her experience in the cat-sitting business and the couple's combined knowledge of caring for birds, the Brinsons decided to open The Purring Parrot in September. Two other people are on staff to help care for the furry and the feathery guests.

Eventually, Brinson said, she and her husband would like to open a second sanctuary in the San Diego area, and expand up the California coast as well as into Las Vegas and Arizona. "Dog care has gotten huge," she said. "We think, why wouldn't cat people want that for their cats and birds, too?"