

ST. CHARLES

avenue

MAGAZINE
June 2009

Turn On Your Bright Idea

The Idea Village celebrates its first book!

Sally Forman, Margaret Beer, Merritt Lane
and Mark Romig (seated) for Idea Village
book launch: *Trust Your Crazy Ideas*.

The
Idea

VILLAGE

IT'S A ZOO OUT THERE!
Quirky and individual clothes
for your little wild one.

NO PAWS-TURING
Giving your furry friend a
staycation without the guilt.

Dog Day Afternoons



Staycation ideas for your furry friends.

By Su-Jit Lin
Photographed by Cheryl Gerber

JAZZ FEST is over and you know what that means – time to whip out those swimsuits and dust off those cameras; another year has passed us by and it's time to think about summer vacation plans! Recession or not, peak traveling season's here and arrangements must be made,

Michelle Ingram
owner of Zeus' Place



including those for your four-legged family members who must sit and stay in New Orleans during your hiatus from real life. However, making plans for your dog doesn't have to mean just hiring a dog-walker to come check in on Spot a few times a day. A growing trend has recognized that the level of attention and stimulation needed by your pet may exceed these basic daily stops, and dog-boarding establishments have been popping up all over

metropolitan New Orleans. Now, taking a human holiday doesn't necessarily mean your pet can't take a break from a dog's life; socialization-focused care has become widely available, putting all the old worries and risks to rest.

You would think that the services of a professional boarder would be costly, but it's actually remarkably affordable in this city. Compared to places like Chicago and New York, the average price per night is actually at least a good third less than what you'd pay elsewhere for similar quality of care, including supervised play areas, private spaces and on-demand webcam access – all day, every day.

Zeus' Place in the Freret Street corridor has all of the above amenities, and proves itself a bargain at just \$25 a night for dogs 50 pounds and heavier, and only \$20 for dogs smaller than that. This facility usually likes to double-book the suites to encourage endless play, or you can add your second dog as a roomie for half the going rate. Grassy outdoor space littered with tennis balls is where recess takes place five to six periods each day.

In the Garden District, Deedra Wing's **Canine Connection** has been growing in popularity, and with their new "digs" on Tchoupitoulas Street opening up this summer, the quality of care is only going to improve. The massive new facility introduces amenities like 'round the clock supervision,



a whopping five outdoor play spaces, three indoor recreation areas, 60 suites and larger ones with outdoor patios, and of course, the extensively detailed written application and temperament tests that made their services so popular. Every question imaginable is asked to help the staff understand your pet better and to ensure a safe environment, with spray bottles of water handy to

restore order to overly playful pups. Doggy daycare is included for just \$5 more daily, allowing the pets to play all day, and free baths are given after a seven-day stay. Prices start at \$25 for a standard kennel to \$35 for the "Luxury Space," closed spaces in the back boarding room. Siblings can of course be kept together for \$40 and \$50 total for the standard and suite, respectively.

If kennels aren't your style and you can't wait for **Canine Connection's** grand opening, recently established **Au Pair des Chiens (New Orleans Dog Nanny)** is based around cage-free boarding and 24-hour on-site care for your peace of mind. Founder Ann Marie Hesson says, it's "all about the dog here," which is obvious from the three massive, diligently cleaned play areas lined with cushioning TUFLEX and secure, multiple-gated outdoor space, where the bulk of your dog's time will be spent. Kiddie pools add to the fun, and light spray misters installed throughout the large fenced area keep the temperature cool and



Au Pair des Chiens
manager Charles Swinley



Zeus' Place

comfortable. Conveniently located downtown off Interstate 10 on Claiborne Avenue and Poydras Street, the rates are \$40 for one dog and \$35 each for two. Prices do decrease, however, for extended periods: five nights or longer save you \$3 a night per dog. After seven days, a bath is thrown

in to wash away all signs of just how much fun was had.

For dogs that need a little extra care, Kim Dudek (of Belladonna Day Spa)'s uber-inspirational **Dag's House** in Marrero is just what the physical therapist ordered. Their 24-hour facilities are designed to restore motion and spirit, or just plain fitness and conditioning to dogs that need a little more help than simple nature can give them. Situated on a massive 2.5 acres, the facility is equipped with an agility course, hydrotherapy pool, Cavaletti rails, treadmill, handicap access for the wheelchair-bound but fully mobile canines, and dedicated team of trained professionals whose specialties cover the entire pet care spectrum.

Even if your dog doesn't have

extraordinary physical needs, **Dag's House** also deal with dogs that have separation anxiety and other emotional concerns – part of the beauty of leaving your pet at an establishment owned by a rehabilitation counselor, who understands the psychological needs of the furriest member of your family. Boarding prices in this state-of-the-art retreat are based on weight, ranging from a mere \$20 for the smallest of pups to a reasonable \$40 for dogs over 91

pounds, and the accommodations are spacious, plush, and designed to encourage play and relaxation.

Each boarding facility aims for healthy socialization and animal safety, but as Michelle Ingram of **Zeus' Place** points out, "Not every kennel is the right fit for every dog. I would rather refer a client to another kennel that's right for their dog's personality than have that dog board with me and be uncomfortable." More than anything, this statement



Canine Culture

Canine Connection

New Location Coming Soon!
The new boarding, daycare, & bathing facility will be located at

4920 Tchoupitoulas
and will offer:

- Large Suites with outdoor patios. Suites & cage-free boarding. Cat condos.
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We are also opening our 2nd Canine Culture retail store at the same location.

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www.canineconnectionnola.com

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EVERY DAY IS A DOG DAY
AT AU PAIR DES CHIENS!

proves that it's not the differences that are apparent between the establishments, but the common threads of love and compassion for their fellow creatures, ensuring you and your dog a good night's sleep, no matter the miles that separate you.

Abandonment Issues?

Even if your dog doesn't have an abandonment complex as he forgets to pine for you in his frenzy to make same-species friends, you may have

some abandonment issues and still feel some pangs of guilt. But there's a cure for that! There's nothing a little retail therapy won't solve. With specialty stores like **Canine Culture** and **Petcetera** designed to cater to your and your pet's every whim, it's easy to buy a little happiness to soothe your unnecessarily stirred up conscience.

Diane Lundeen of **Petcetera** tells us that she's "always looking for interesting new things," a point that almost goes without saying after one quick browse through her kitschy boutique. "Quality, reachable luxury" is what they specialize in, from custom fabric beds, designer carriers, and greyhound favorite Martindale collars to green toys, toys for chew-happy clients, grain-free treats, fresh-baked pet pastries and cakes, and hand-painted artisan bowls and jars to put those goodies in. Pulling products from influences around the world, Lundeen stocks her



store with the unique and obscure.

Deedra Wing does the same, utilizing her 20-plus years of retail experience to ensure that **Canine Culture**, a "lifestyle, feel-good store" carries great products for people and their pets, from shirts for both to treats that are human-grade. Eco-friendly toys made in the U.S. are making their way to the shop as well, and locally-made quality merchandise like Cecile Hardy's **NOLA Couture** dog line are flying off the shelves. A local designer who made her mark

in neckwear for people and branched out into neckwear for dogs, Hardy is known for her durable, handmade goods with cute designs like repeating fleur-de-lis or hurricane symbols ("To ward them off; not to invite them in!"), and plans on unveiling new designs with whimsical streetcar imagery and seafood gumbo, priced at \$30 a pop. After all, everyone deserves a post-trip souvenir – even your dog-tired, recreation-worn, fuzzy staycationer. ♦

Dog grooming at Zeus' Place



Going on Vacation?

When you leave on your next trip, experience peace of mind knowing your best friend is in the best hands! Camp Bow Wow New Orleans' staff is professionally trained in dog behavior and group play dynamics, certified in Pet First Aid and Dog CPR.



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