



PAMPERED POOCHES

*Several Vail Valley hotels make their
canine customers feel special*

By Kimberly Nicoletti



*Moose gets cozy at the Grand Hyatt Vail
European Leash & Collar from The Pet Boutique of Vail*

Photograph by Brent Bingham

Bachelor and Scout, two Bernese Mountain Dogs, greet guests, pose for pictures with kids and play with dogs checking in with their owners nearly every afternoon at The Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch in Beaver Creek. Meanwhile, in Avon, a patient who's recovering from surgery performed at Vail Health or undergoing physical therapy at Howard Head Sports Medicine might be staying at the Westin Riverfront Resort with his or her dog for a few days or weeks. These are just two examples of how Vail Valley businesses prioritize, and welcome, mankind's best friend.

"Vail is the biggest dog place I've ever seen. You don't feel like you're constricted if you have a dog here," says Jonathan Reap, director of public relations and communications at Four Seasons Resort in Vail. "Everything is so dog friendly. It's like you're *supposed* to have a dog here."

Indeed, from art galleries and village shops to hotels, dogs are an integral part of mountain life. After all, dogs are part of the family, so why shouldn't they enjoy a life of luxury in Vail alongside their owners? Plenty of Vail hotels don't simply allow dogs, but also pamper them.

Most hotels provide plush dog beds, pet bowls and leashes. In fact, The Sebastian — Vail indulges its dogs with beds featuring orthopedic mattresses.

Larry Lauck, who recently stayed at The Sebastian — Vail with his family's black Lab, Ellie, says, sure, the pooch had been pampered before, "but never in such stylish comforts." He describes the residence club as "a dog's life."

What a treat

Some hotels, like Four Seasons, offer homemade dog biscuits (made of oats, whole-wheat flour, pumpkin puree and peanut butter), while the Westin hands out "pup-sicles," which look like popsicles. The Sebastian partners with Denver-based Enchanted Biscuit to make its gourmet, all-natural liver-flavored bone-shaped treats with human-grade ingredients free of corn, wheat, soy, salt, sugar and GMO. And, employees from bell clerks and front desk representatives to concierges, usually have plenty of them on hand.

"The bell team carries treats, so there's



Moving in at The Westin Riverfront Resort & Spa

Photograph by Brent Bingham

always something at every corner to look forward to for dogs," says Danielle Carp, guest experiences coordinator at Four Seasons Vail. "We make it as easy as possible for our guests and their four-legged friends, and we make them feel at home. Dogs are living the best life at Four Seasons. They certainly are loved."

The Westin greets their dog guests with a snack bag as owners check in at the front desk. And, the goodies are not just a one-time gesture.

"Our front desk guys are always handing out treats as the dogs walk by," says Wendy Malias, director of leisure sales and marketing

at The Westin. "And they know the dogs by name within the first day."

One TripAdvisor member says, "dog friendly does not even begin to describe just how (the Arrabelle) welcomed our two furry family members. They rolled out the red carpet," starting with the bell staff taking time to get to know the two Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, then giving the dogs signature Arrabelle bandanas to wear, along with house-made doggie biscuits. "They definitely felt like VIPooches."

Doggie dining

Many hotels allow dogs to hang out with their owners in lobbies and lounges. For example, dogs can dine with their “parents” in The Ritz-Carlton’s Great Room and curl up in front of the three-story, stone fireplace or watch people mill about at the base of Bachelor Gulch through the floor-to-ceiling windows. At The Westin, doggies can hang out on the patio at Maya, which serves modern Mexican cuisine.

And, though health regulations prevent dogs from dining inside restaurants, many establishments allow dogs on their patios. In the summer, the Grand Hyatt Vail hosts “Yappy Hour” on its patio every Thursday. For doggie dining, The Ritz-Carlton concierge team recommends Blue Plate, Loaded Joe’s, The Golden Eagle Inn, vin48 and E-Town. The Pines suggests Chophouse, Coyote Café and Blue Moose Pizza in Beaver Creek Village and Garfinkel’s, Bart and Yeti’s, Up the Creek and Bully Ranch in Vail.

At The Ritz-Carlton, you can also get room service by ordering the Puppy Love meal, made of ground beef, scrambled eggs and rice.

PET-FRIENDLY HOTELS

Arrabelle
Lodge at Vail
The Sebastian Vail
Four Seasons Vail
Grand Hyatt Vail
Park Hyatt Beaver Creek
The Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch
The Westin Riverfront Resort & Spa
The Pines Lodge
Vail Mountain Lodge
Christie Lodge



The Pet Boutique of Vail
Where indulged pets shop

*Collars from
Around the World*

182 E. Gore Creek Drive Vail Village
970-476-0255
thepetboutiqueofvail@gmail.com



Treats at The Sebastian-Vail

Photograph by Dominique Taylor

“Dogs are an integral part of the mountain lifestyle, representing the natural happiness we all feel in Vail’s great outdoors.”

Take a hike

Dogs can trot along many — though not all — of the trails in the Vail Valley. Pup-parents at The Pines Lodge receive maps with the top dog-friendly hiking routes, and they can check out a GoPro and a dog harness to secure the video camera, so parents can experience the mountains from their favorite four-legged’s point of view.

The staff at The Pines recommends several hikes, including Beaver Lake Trail at Beaver Creek Mountain, Booth Falls, Meadow Mountain, Piney Lake, Pitkin Lake, West Avon Preserve and Eagle Valley Trail (an on-leash trail along the Eagle River that extends through Avon, east to Vail and west to Edwards). Dogs can ride the gondola in Vail and hike around the top of the mountain in the summer.

Dog-friendly parks include: Wildridge Dog Park in Avon, Freedom Park in Edwards, West Vail Dog Park, Bighorn Park (an off-leash park in Vail) and Harry A. Nottingham Park in Avon.

Front desk staff at hotels like The Sebastian are happy to help walk dogs or watch them for short-term sitting — complete with lots of attention and belly rubs, says Bryan Austin, The Sebastian’s general manager. For longer dog-sitting needs, longer walks and grooming, concierges can make arrangements. The Westin recommends Walkin’ the Dog Vail in Avon, as well as Doggie Style Pet Grooming in Edwards.

Other goodies

After an active day on the trails, dogs at The Pines Lodge wind down with “pup pillow service,” which includes a nightly rawhide bone.

Furry friends can take home souvenirs of their vacation with such items as The Westin’s posh bed with signature piping and embroidered branding, or they can buy a logo leash. At The Pines Lodge, dogs can leave their paw print in the doggie guest book, and pose for a Polaroid picture capturing the fur-filled moment.

“Dogs are an integral part of the mountain lifestyle, representing the natural happiness we all feel in Vail’s great outdoors,” Austin says. “Here, we relish the opportunity to reward their unconditional love with unconditional pampering.” [VVmag](#)