

Come! Sit! Stay!

Sometimes if you're trying to get away from the house during a renovation, pest treatment or other more romantic reason, but don't want to leave town, finding a pampering venue for you and your pet (and partner) is just what the vet ordered. Also, there may be times when friends visit from out of town and need a close-by hotel that is pet friendly in the city. Last edition travel writer, William Dalziel, took us on a journey to some of the more lux accommodation found in the US. Fabulous, pet-friendly hotels and resorts where travellers of the two and four footed are shown the welcome mat and given the four paw treatment.



Pups take a rest at the Medusa Hotel

You may be surprised to learn that Sydney too, has hotels that quietly open their rooms to travellers packing a pooch. We discovered a little luxury hideaway in the middle of Darlinghurst.

The Medusa Hotel is conveniently located on Darlinghurst Road just a bone's toss from the hustle and bustle of Kings Cross and the shopping heaven of Oxford Street. From the outside, this little gem is quite inconspicuous-even walking down Darlinghurst Road, you could blink and miss it.

It's a large Victorian, heritage listed property that has all the features of larger hotels without compromising its friendly, personalised and attentive service. All rooms feature the comfort of King or Queen sized beds, a choice of pillow-down or synthetic, superior linen, ensuite bathrooms that stock Aveda toiletries and 24-hour reception and concierge service.

Medusa has received numerous awards for its interior architecture and personalised service including Gourmet Traveller where it received the prize for Innovation in Travel and National Geographic Traveller which included the hotel in the Best of Sydney. Medusa was voted by the international travel bible, Condé Nast Traveller as "one of the coolest hotels of the 21st Century". Proprietors Terry and Robert Schwamberg created this contemporary and luxury boutique hotel and with the appointment of award winning Sydney architect, Scott Weston, the Medusa is popular with the creative set from advertising, film, fashion, design-and those other style setters-travellers with dogs.

The designated 'dog guest rooms' are spacious and conveniently located on the ground floor. All these rooms have access to the central courtyard that is an inviting paved area where you can rest, enjoy a coffee and catch up on some reading. The furniture, colour design and muffled street noises are more reminiscent of courtyards in historic New Orleans than downtown Darlo.

Other features of the room include kitchenettes with microwave oven, mini bar, entertainment systems and TV with cable access. It would seem a shame to just spend your whole time cooped up in a hotel room-no matter how luxuriously funky-when there's so much on your doorstep for you and your four-footed companion.

One of the house rules at the Medusa, is that your dog should accompany you at all times as you're not allowed to leave behind your pooch. If some of your plans cannot include your dog, the helpful staff at the Medusa can organise an experienced pet sitter and dog walker to come, collect and entertain your pet pal.

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Medusa's courtyard

While your dog is being entertained, you may want to take in the many attractions this vibrant area has to offer. From hip boutiques, cool cafes, bars, interesting bookstores and galleries. Less than one block away is the pampering palace—the Zen Day Spa. Here you can be rejuvenated, re-hydrated, reflexed, revitalised, relaxed, realigned, wrapped and reborn with the range of therapies they offer. The Zen Day Spa has been a Sydney institution for over ten years and has a reputation for quality and service. Their prices are at the higher end of the spa spectrum, but their quality and commitment to service is world class.

And two blocks away is the Ginseng Bathhouse in the Crest Hotel which has two sections for men and women featuring steam, sauna, ginseng bath, spa pool, exfoliating salt scrubs, massage and many other luxuries as packages or just a four hour block of taking a bit of everything.

There are numerous cafes and restaurants that have outdoor dining tables and welcome dogs. Just around the corner from the Medusa is Sel & Poivre, a French restaurant and café that is a favourite with travellers and locals alike. A twenty-minute stroll up Oxford Street will get you to 'dog park heaven'—Centennial Parklands.

Whether you live further from the epicentre of Sydney and want a weekend away to enjoy Sydney's cultural or shopping delights or just want to get rid of friends who come to town with dogs, this is an inner city mutt oasis for the seasoned and sophisticated traveller.



Balcony views from the Grand Room

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The Ginseng Bathhouse
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