

# Enjoy hassle free vacations WITH PET HOSTELS

We know that our pets are one of the most valued parts of our family, and leaving them in the hands of strangers can sometimes be tough. Pet hostels are now a need. It is a home like environment for pets to stay while their owners are away. "Such a setup makes sure that the pet is well taken care of. Earlier, pets had to left with a friend of the family while the owners were travelling. This meant a change in routine for the family who was keeping pets for some time. Now with quality pet hostels, you can be rest assured that your pet is in good care," said Shalaka Mundada, a certified dog trainer and dog behaviourist and the founder of a pet hostel named Petsitters. Earlier finding a local pet boarding facility was not all this easy but now it is quick and painless. Although the concept of Pet Hostels is around five to six years old, the quality, services and the pet boarding facilities these hostels have are just a couple of years old. From a basic indoor kennel to a luxury pet hotel, you can find them all. So while the pet owners can go enjoy their



vacation, the pets can enjoy their own little getaway. Keeping the pet in the hostel helps both the families and the pet as well. "Its all positive provided the pet has been initiated in the hostel in the right manner. Some breeds settle down more easily than others. For most pets, we also do trial stays which makes the pet comfortable step by step," said Shalaka. "Most dogs that we

have boarded haven't taken more than a day to settle down," she adds.

But if these hostels keep the routine similar for pets as they would follow at home, settling down is much easier for them. Also, there are a lot many activities like swimming, playing with other pets, socialising, depending on what the pet enjoys most.

"The advent of Pet Hostels

is really a very innovative step. It has made our family outings and social visits very much easier. Earlier, we all five members of the family never got a chance to go out together because we could not leave Brandy, our 6 months old Pomeranian dog alone in the house. But now with such pet hostels we can actually leave her there and have the complete assurance that she will be taken care of very well,"

said Charu Wadhwa, a dog owner.

But the task is not all that easy for these hostel owners as well, they do at times face certain problems. Talking about the precautions that they take, "We as hostel owners, need to make sure that the pets which are coming in are infection free, tick and flea free as such infections quickly pass on to all the other boarding dogs. So health and hygiene is most important to us. A medical certificate from the vet along with an anti-tick treatment is compulsory. Plus at our end regular pet control, daily grooming is a part of our daily activity," said Satish Hulyalkar, another pet hostel owner. Talking about the safety of the pet's one must be sure that the hostels are safe as long as they provide quality service.

Owners need to examine the hostels and look for the cleanliness, hygiene, routine that they would follow for your pet, vet on call or resident vet services, play areas, kennel sizes, general pet comfort, grooming standards and food standards. The whole idea of a pet boarding facility should be pet comfort. If all the above standards are met, a pet hostel is a very safe haven for pets.

"Problems lie mainly in getting the right kind of people to work as handlers and care takers. Other than that, it's a very fulfilling job," concludes Shalaka.

— FARVI MOTIWALE