



Summer 2005

## Massages, Field Trips and Gourmet Food – The Cozy Inn is a Pooch Paradise.

By Liz Morrison

Eighteen years ago Carol Boerio-Croft had a brilliant idea. Pet boarding facilities should offer more than a cage, an occasional walk and a daily bowl of kibble. After all, Martha Stewart had more amenities than that in prison. And even if your dog doesn't create fabulous centerpieces out of his backyard findings or offer you insider stock tips, he deserves to enjoy his home away from home.

The idea for the Pennsylvania-based Cozy Inn and Orchids Spa came to Boerio-Croft when she was working as a vet tech with her veterinarian husband. She noticed that their clients weren't traveling because they didn't know of a safe place to board their pets.

"In the past, most kennels treated pets like inanimate objects. The Cozy treats pets like furry little children while taking into consideration their animal behaviors and instincts," Boerio-Croft explained.

The pet resort, which began as a six-room building, has evolved into two separate locations, one in Pittsburgh and the other in Stahlstown. And, although the pets may be cozy, pampered is really a better description. In fact, after you hear about the amenities, you may want to join Fido for a week at the Cozy Inn. (Sorry, four-legged guests only.)

A basic boarding package comes with a big, cozy bed, gourmet pet food, a bath, a massage, daily cookie breaks and play time. If Fido prefers a more deluxe experience, he

can practice his doggie paddle in the bone-shaped indoor pool and then relax those tired muscles in the hot tub's soothing water. If he's had a really tough week, Fido can choose from three different massages: all-over body, Swedish or sports. And baths are as far from the hose-in-the-backyard experience as you can get. A regular bath, featuring spa-quality shampoos and conditioners, includes a nail and ear cleaning, a body massage and a brush out. There are also specialized baths for flea and skin problems.

Boerio-Croft adopted a Zen approach to pet care she calls "canine sense", incorporating the principles of Feng Shui, an intuitive art used in architecture and decorating to create harmony and balance.

"Our mission is to create a loving, sensitive, healthy environment for the pets. We strive to continually have positive energy in the resort", said Becky Tarsala, finance and marketing director at the Cozy Inn.

But there's much more to the Cozy Inn than massage and relaxation. To keep Fido fit and healthy there's playtime in the Inn's Zen garden, hiking on nature trails and field trips to fenced dog parks. And if your pet's got lots of extra energy or maybe needs some behavioral modification, you can take advantage of the Cozy Inn's affiliation with the Lucky Dog Training Center. Owner Barbara Nicholas and her staff offer obedience classes, agility training and clicker training for tricks. Just think, you can drop Fido off, go on

vacation and when you return he'll be clean, well-behaved and looking forward to his next trip to the "spa."

Tarsala noted that the Cozy Inn offers other services in addition to the training facility. Both locations are affiliated with veterinary hospitals and both offer grooming including breed specific cuts. There are also doggie day care programs and day spa packages. So, if you plan to go to the beach for a few hours simply drop Fido off in the morning, choose your services and pick him up at the end of the day.

The Cozy Inn has a special facility for geriatric or ailing dogs as well as VIP guests. Mozart Hall offers a quiet environment with deluxe suites and more individual attention. For dogs recovering from surgery or just needing a little extra TLC, this is the perfect environment.

"In Mozart Hall, pets receive specialized care. There are heated tile floors and we have a veterinary hospital on site in case a dog needs to see a vet during their stay," said Tarsala.

Boerio-Croft is always thinking of ways to challenge her entrepreneurial spirit. She's in the process of writing a book about her experiences and is considering franchise opportunities for the Inn.

"This is my purpose in life, my passion," she explained. "I love the dogs and I love my relationships with my clients. I truly believe this is what God wants me to do."