

The *Bertram Inn*

A Victorian Retreat for You and Your Pet

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You're awakened by the aroma of freshly baked scones and rich, hot coffee. As you turn over on your plush mattress you feel the soft caress of the 300 thread count, 100 percent cotton sheets against your skin and the hot breath of your companion on your face. He licks your hand and puts a paw on your chest for emphasis. Apparently, it's time to take your four-legged buddy for a walk. No, you're not a character in a Jackie Collins novel. You're a guest at the charming Bertram Inn.

Located in the leafy suburb of Brookline, Massachusetts, the Bertram Inn is just 20 minutes from downtown Boston and is a perfect place to enjoy a getaway with Fido. Innkeeper Bryan Austin regularly brings his nine-month-old Lab puppy, Genevieve to work with him and enjoys having canine guests at the inn.

"We love well behaved pets," said Austin. "Everyone loves animals here. I make a special effort to be friendly to the dogs (that visit). I get down on my knees and scrunch them on the ears."

In addition to generous ear scrunching by the staff, the

inn has a fairly loose set of pet policies so dog owners can really relax and enjoy their stay, and there is no extra charge for pets. Austin recommends that you bring your own crates, bedding, bowls, food and toys for your pet, however if you forget something, the inn is prepared to lend you what you need.

Bertram Inn's pet policies are as follows:

- Two pets maximum per room
- Pets should be crated when alone in the room or when owner is sleeping
- Housekeeping service will not be provided to rooms with uncrated pets
- Please inform the inn if your pet is very large. There are larger rooms that can better accommodate big dogs.

One visitor, who stayed at the inn for six weeks with her dog, had this to say about the inn's pet-friendly atmosphere, "The Bertram Inn is 100 percent pet friendly. The location is perfect – with pet stores, groomers and vets minutes away. The staff even walked our dog, Albuquerque."

Humans have many amenities to enjoy while staying at the Bertram Inn. Like break-

fast, for instance, which offers three types of baked goods made right there on the premises, one hot item, like pancakes or eggs, three different coffee choices, fresh OJ and an assortment of teas. If you're a snacker, there are treats available all day and in the evening the inn provides an array of hot hors d'oeuvres to whet your appetite for the many local restaurants that are just minutes away. Guests often bring a bottle of wine to enjoy while taking in the twilight on the inn's spacious front porch.

The Bertram Inn is also very much about convenience. They offer a free parking lot, an essential amenity because the town of Brookline does not allow overnight street parking. The property is only a block away from the "T", Boston's incredibly efficient light rail system. So, if you're in town for business, you have the convenience of easy access to your meeting coupled with the comfort of a cozy inn to enjoy once the workday is done. For your palette's convenience, within a two-block radius of the inn there are about nine different restaurants offering a myriad of food choices.

And if you're an antique buff, you've come to the right

place. Austin, an award winning historical preservationist, lovingly restored the Victorian style Bertram Inn to its early 20th century grandeur. Each of the 14 beautifully decorated rooms is filled with antique furniture, period lamps and some have patterned, period inspired wallpaper. The house, built in 1907, was once owned by a wealthy merchant and still boasts the original sweeping staircase and rich oak paneling. Austin scours local auctions, estate sales and antique shows to find the truest period pieces from the turn of the century.

"(The inn) is furnished like a turn of the century Victorian would be. And every room has a different theme. Some are high Victorian, some are Arts and Crafts, some are themed 'A Year in Europe' and the pictures are all scenes in Europe. Of the 14 rooms, all but three are wallpapered and they're papered in historic patterns. Three rooms have fireplaces," explained Austin.

Preserving older homes is in his blood. During his high school years, Austin, the youngest of four boys, would help his family renovate one home each summer. His hard work paid off. Three years ago, he won an award from the town of Brookline for one of his renovated homes and this year the same award was won by his 70 year-old mother, who inspired him to tackle old houses.

The coziness of an older home is perfect for a good night's sleep. The Bertram Inn puts only the highest quality, 300-thread count, and 100 percent cotton sheets on its beds. All but the king sized beds have

Ralph Lauren sheets. The king mattresses are too thick for Lauren bedding products but they still have high quality sheets just the same. Austin, who takes comfort very seriously, only buys Swedish made Duxiana mattresses, a top-of-the-line brand that promises each guest the utmost in slumber comfort.

After a restful night swaddled in luxury, you'll be ready for a morning trip to the local dog park. Amory Park, an unofficial off-leash area with lots of room to run, is just minutes away and offers Fido a chance to stretch his legs. Local and visiting dog owners congregate in the park at 8:30 every morning to exercise their dogs and socialize.

"(Amory Park) is two blocks away and has three baseball fields. Twenty or 30 dogs come out (every morning) and run wild. It's a great exercise field," explained Austin.

Brookline is a great walking town and you and your dog will enjoy strolling along Beacon Street to Coolidge Corner, a quaint collection of shops and restaurants. One such shop is Brookline Booksmith. If you're a reader, this is a virtual treasure chest for you. And if you're a reader with a dog, that's even better. In fact, they even encourage dogs to browse the shelves. Their latest e-newsletter says it all.

"And don't forget we're dog friendly! Every canine customer gets a scratch behind the ears, and a dog biscuit. Don't leave Daisy outside after she's had her drink of water, bring her in and let her browse."

Brookline Booksmith is located at 279 Harvard Street. You can find them online at

www.brooklinebooksmith.com.

The inn is also near the world-renowned MSPCA Angell Memorial Hospital, a clinical veterinary institution located in Boston that opened in 1915 and is the first veterinary hospital to be run by a humane organization. Its mission is "to provide the best possible medical and surgical care to animals; and to advance the practice of veterinary medicine to an ever higher standard." Angell offers advanced treatment for animal cancers, sponsors animal blood drives and provides pet owners with viable options for difficult pet illnesses. MSPCA Angell Memorial Hospital is located at 350 South Huntington Avenue. You can reach them at 617-522-7282.

Austin is often told that his beautifully restored Victorian does not give off the appearance of a "business". The house blends in with the neighborhood, an area known for elegant older homes. He wants his guests, both two and four legged, to feel like they are very welcome and that they are staying in a very homey place.

"We understand that a lot of travelers have a difficult time traveling with their pets", Austin said. "We are extra warm and caring to make life easy for them and that makes us feel good."

The Bertram Inn is located at 92 Sewall Avenue in Brookline, MA. You can reach them at 800-295-3822 or visit their website at www.bertraminn.com. Rates go from \$109 to \$249 and there is no extra charge for pets.