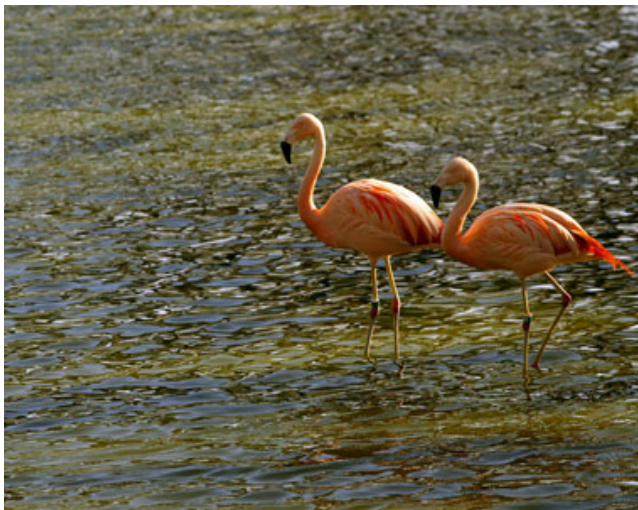


September 1, 2010

Pet-Friendly Hotels with Pets on Staff

by Cathay Che

The pet-owning populous has spoken: When it's vacation time, no four-legged family member will be left behind. According to a U.S. Travel Association survey, 18 percent of leisure travelers say they have taken their pets on a trip this past year. But in the same way that it's no fun for a child to be the only kid at a hotel, you don't want your pet to feel out of place. Fear not. There's a new breed of hotel staffers—the pets on the payroll. Although these animals-in-residence are fairly pampered and often enjoy celebritylike status, they have a job to do: amping up guest relations and rolling out a new kind of (stain-resistant) red carpet.



Thelma & Louise, Guyana Toucanets JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort, Palm Desert, California

A little squawking is common in a hotel lobby, but usually, it's over the bill. Not so at the 884-room [JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort](#) near [Palm Springs](#), where Thelma and Louise, a pair of Guyana toucanets, lead the chorus of 13 birds who hang out in the lobby. Just as people come to this tropical oasis for sanctuary, so do migrating birds: Depending on the time of year, you might see six species of ducks, Canada geese, coots, egrets, and green heron. A flock of about 30 Chilean flamingos have been sticking around all year, and a chick, named Mireya, hatched on the property in August 2010. But it's the smallest birds who are the stars—carefully placed feeders attract hundreds of hummingbirds to the grounds.

Petiquette: Given how delicate these avian species are, bird lovers will understand why dogs and cats aren't allowed at this hotel. But you can add to your own menagerie by purchasing a Cloud Dew Drop hummingbird feeder from the hotel, which will attract a mesmerizing spectacle at home.

[JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort](#)

Palm Desert, California

Tel: 760 341 2211

Rooms start at \$139