

# Pet-palooza

Services for pets expand to meet growing demand

By **Kathleen Fitzgerald**  
BANNER CORRESPONDENT

PROVINCETOWN — Six years after the opening of its dog park and four years after being named DogTown USA by Dog Fancy magazine, Provincetown is experiencing a pet tourism boom with new and expanding businesses rising to meet the increasing pet services demand.

Making a play for a piece of this burgeoning market would appear to make good business sense. According to the American Pet Products Association, a national trade group, Americans are spending more and more on our beloved pets. U.S. pet industry expenditures topped \$55.7 billion in 2013, up from \$43.2 billion in 2008. Annual spending on U.S. pets has grown steadily each year for the past two decades, even through the recent recession.

In Provincetown, 300 dog licenses were issued in 2013 among its 3,063 human residents. That's down from a peak of 399 dog licenses in 2010, according to Town Clerk Doug Johnstone. Provincetown's resident dog population may be tailing off (or, perhaps, some residents haven't renewed their dogs' licenses), but as the town swells with summer visitors, it appears that a larger number have their pets in tow.

Acknowledging the recent surge in dog visitors, the town's animal welfare committee saw to the installation of 15 new "poop bag" stations around town last fall, said committee member Sherry Brec.

**'Awesome' park**

This increase in pet tourism was predicted by the four women behind the creation of the **Pilgrim Bark Park** — Kathleen Cote, Kim Cromwell, Debbie Grabler and Candace Nagle. They also promised that the dog park would be maintained 100 percent by private donations. So far, so good. The park's annual costs of between \$12,000 to \$15,000 are fully funded by private donations, of which 70 percent come from out of town, says Grabler. She estimates the park gets between 8,000 and 10,000 dog visits annually.

The one-acre dog park is located at one of the town's gateways at the corner of Shank Painter Road and Route 6. It is a

place where dogs can frolic off-leash on three different surfaces and features playful art elements donated by local artists. Dog Fancy Magazine named it one of five "awesome" dog parks in its July 2014 issue.

On a recent sunny morning, its parking lot was full and most of the cars had out-of-state plates. While the dogs played, a dozen of their owners socialized — a mix of town residents, part-time summer residents, vacationers and a Wellfleet resident.

Susan Comito and Paul Kearney of Bethlehem, Conn., arrived at the dog park with their year-old Irish wolfhounds, Caoimhe and Brigid, and received a warm welcome at the gate from a pack of curious, smaller dogs. "Every single year we get away," says Kearney. "This year we were looking for a place to take our dogs and we saw that Provincetown is the number one dog-friendly place in the U.S."

Barbara Siciliano, who owns a condo on Bradford Street, visits "three or four times a year" from Bloomfield, N.J., now with her "mid-sized, pure mutt" companion, Mattie. "Somebody in town told me to check out the dog park," she says. "We both love it."

**All about style**

Across Route 6 at 43 Race Point Road, Marj Bobbins is busy grooming a papillon, Lola. Her business, **Doggie Styles Grooming**, is in its seventh year. For the nine previous years, she provided grooming service at KC's Animal Resort, now transformed into the Provincetown Pet Resort & Supply (see companion story). Business is good, Bobbins says. She had 11 phone calls that morning, all from people coming for a vacation in August. She is now booked two weeks ahead.

"In the beginning our winters were very minimal," she says, as she works alongside another groomer, Kim Oliver. "But now we have business all year round." Bobbins thinks Provincetown being named DogTown USA in 2010 was a big help. She notes, too, the increased demand for other pet services, adding, "We could use more dog walkers in town."

**Pet-sitting proffers**

People like Jen Fond, who started her dog-walking service,

**Wannagoout**, in Boston 11 years ago and expanded to Provincetown last summer. Fond distributes her cards at the town's bed and breakfasts, believing that, while more and more of the town's accommodations are pet-friendly (more than 30 lodging options are listed on the Pilgrim Bark Park's website), four-legged guests may suffer from "separation anxiety" in their room and need to go out. Fond, who has three dogs of her own, is back for her second summer and her business is growing "slow and steady."

Georgia Moon, who worked as a veterinary technician in New York for nine years, started taking in dogs for in-home day-care and boarding for "a few close friends" about seven years ago. "I've built up a core group of regulars — mostly townspeople who go away for the winter." Now her **Pet Services Unlimited** is a "pretty, steady business year-round." She shares her "dog



PHOTO KATHLEEN FITZGERALD

Lola and Marj Bobbins at Doggie Styles Grooming.

ready" house on Harry Kemp Way with her golden retriever, Digger.

Gwen Kazlouskas-Noyes, of North Truro, launched a new business this year, **Purr-Furred Pet Care Services of Cape Cod**, which will offer in-home pet-sitting and dog walking from November through April. From May to October, Kazlouskas-Noyes and her husband, Scott, are busy at their other, recently acquired business, Big Daddy's Burritos, in Provincetown's

Aquarium Mall.

Pet services are a natural venture for Kazlouskas-Noyes, who grew up on a farm, and began working with animals professionally in 1997 at an animal shelter in Vermont. Once she and Scott made the move to the Outer Cape in 2000, she joined the board of the **Carrie A. Seamen Animal Shelter (CASAS)**. The Kazlouskas-Noyes family now includes five cats. She also

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PHOTO KATHLEEN FITZGERALD

Pet resort manager Adam Erenberg (left) with co-owner Tom Walter.

## Pups in luxe

Pet resort adds high-end accommodations for furry friends

By **Kathleen Fitzgerald**  
BANNER CORRESPONDENT

PROVINCETOWN — A bright new pet amenity in an increasingly pet-friendly town takes pet hospitality to a whole new luxury level.

Co-owned by Tom Walter,

David Sanford and Kenneth Masi, the Provincetown Pet Resort & Supply opened on Shank Painter Avenue at the end of June and offers pet boarding, day care, grooming and supplies.

For Walter and Sanford, who moved to Provincetown

in 1998 to open the Crowne Pointe Inn & Spa, and later expanded their human hospitality business to include the Brass Key Guesthouse, the pet resort fills a need.

"We were hearing the demand [for pet

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worked for 10 years at Herring Cove Animal Hospital.

She brings a pet-friendly sensibility to her summer food business as well. Last summer she observed how many customers were buying burgers for their dogs while she worked at Blondie's restaurant. So this summer she added a dog-safe burrito, the "PAWrito," to Big Daddy's menu.

**Trips & treats**

Along Commercial Street, dogs can score a biscuit at the post office or Seamen's Bank, and sip water from any number of dog bowls outside retail establishments. Special "barkery" treats and pet souvenirs are available for sale at **Paws & Whiskers** at its new location at 306 Commercial St.

For vacationers seeking a pet-friendly sailing excursion, sea dogs are welcome to join Rosemary ("Capt. Ro") Rudloff, and her rescue dog, Mini Mate, a bichon frisé, aboard the 30-foot cutter *Moondance II*, embarking from MacMillan Pier. She can accommodate up to six people and their dogs.

Rudloff did not set out to target vacationers traveling with their pets when **Dog Gone Sailing Charters** arrived in Provincetown in 2009. The name of her business was a tribute of sorts to her mother from a dog-crazy daughter.

"My mother would say when I was growing up, 'Is that dog goin' with you?'" Rudloff mimics. Her dog was her constant companion then and now. "When I would go places, I wanted my dog to go with me. So I really wanted to allow dogs to come onboard."

Maria Bizzotto, has operated her animal gifts and souvenir shop **Friends of Heart**, at 301 Commercial St. for 29 years, and has seen the town grow more pet friendly, especially in the last 15 years.

"In the beginning, people would ask me, 'Where can we stay [with our pet]?'" she says. "And, really, about the only place then was **Shire Max**, [at 5 Tremont St.] Now there are so many options." She sees the growth in pet services as a "socio-economic event."



PHOTO KATHLEEN FITZGERALD

Susan Comito and Paul Kearney with their Irish wolfhounds at the Pilgrim Bark Park.

"Pets are an active part of our lives. They are loved as family members," Bizzotto says. "And, because of the nature of Provincetown, people are more who they are here, and they show their love to the people in their lives and the animals who are a part of their family."

**Health & shelter**

Veterinary care has also expanded to serve the growing demand in recent years. **Herring Cove Animal Hospital**, a full-service hospital with X-ray and surgery, moved into the space at 83 Shank Painter Road in June 2010. It is open Monday through Friday year round as well as every other Saturday during the summer. Dr. Sadie Hutchings is joined by Dr. Stephen DeVincent during the busier summer season.

Herring Cove is one of four satellite veterinary practices on Cape Cod under the management of Lower Cape Veterinary Services, says practice manager Crystal Keon. The others are **Eastham Veterinary Hospital**, **Duck Creek Animal Clinic** in Wellfleet and **Stony Hill Animal Clinic** in Chatham.

Dr. Daniella Schutzensgel

moved from northern Virginia to open **Ark Angel Animal Hospital**, at 1532 State Highway Route 6 in Wellfleet, on Valentine's Day in 2012. She initially thought she would have a four- or five-day-a-week practice, but now finds herself "insanely busy" in the summer, she said by telephone on a Tuesday, her only day off.

"Year round from Friday night on for the weekend, no other vet is open from Eastham out," she said. Ark Angel also does house calls with its 26-foot mobile unit.

Those seeking to join the pet set might consider paying a visit to **CASAS**, the no-kill animal shelter located at 5 Sandy Hill Lane, off Route 6 in Provincetown. More than two dozen felines, under the care of dedicated volunteers, including Sherry Brec, David and Anita Butler, await adoption there.

The facility, which opened nine years ago, has a \$130,000 annual operating budget sustained by grants and donations, said Brec. Because of its residential location, CASAS does not shelter dogs, however it does provide assistance to those seeking to adopt canine rescues.

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accommodations] on the phone all the time from guests traveling with their pets," says Walter. "We have two pet-friendly rooms at the Brass Key and one at Crowne Pointe, but they were clearly not enough."

"Provincetown is very pet-friendly," he says. "But do you really want to leave your pet cooped up in a hotel room?" Daycare is "healthy for dogs," he adds. "They are pack animals and need to be socialized."

Walter and Sanford's own family pack includes two Rottweilers, Jessa and Stella, and two cats, Dylan and Marley.

This past winter they purchased KC's Animal Resort and set out to transform the property at 79 Shank Painter Road into what Walter describes as a "Crowne Pointe and Brass Key for pets." Contractors worked double shifts over six months to have the completely remodeled facility ready to open for the summer season, he said. The resort will remain open year round, and, Walter says, they expect it will support eight or nine full-time jobs.

In preparation for this new venture, the new resort owners did extensive research of pet products, attended the annual Global Pet Expo trade show in Orlando, and personally sampled different brands of premium dog food.

"I ate more dog food [at the expo] than ever in my life," Walter says, laughing.

The results are impressive. A tour of the shiny new resort reveals expanded play space for its daycare and overnight pet clients. The outdoor play yard has colorful playground equipment, shaded areas and a wading pool. Dogs cavort in fenced areas, separated by size and temperament, under the supervision of trained staff. There is also a spacious indoor playroom for use during inclement weather. Quiet time is worked into the pets' structured day. Overnight

guests sleep in style on Kuranda-brand raised dog beds in 28 cage-free boarding suites, including four larger VIP suites.

The resort works closely with Herring Cove Animal Hospital, just two doors down the road, to obtain information for their intake paperwork and to ensure pets' shots are current.

Sanitary conditions are a priority. Walter points out the resort's hospital grade HVAC system that circulates 100 percent fresh purified air and the newly poured anti-microbial epoxy flooring. Grooming services are available two days a week. The resort also includes a well-stocked pet supply store with a variety of premium pet foods, "barkery" treats, collars, leashes, pet shampoos, toys and more.

"We are the exclusive carriers of Blue pet food between here and Orleans," says Walter, adding that he came to appreciate the virtue of single-source protein dog food when he learned his own dog Stella's digestive problems were due to her chicken allergy. "Our pets eat better than we do," he adds.

Watching Walter greet some of his four-legged clients in the yard, one can tell the new business is a labor of love. "It's such a happy space. It's fun to be here," he says.

For Candace Nagle, a co-founder of Provincetown's Pilgrim Bark Park, this is the service pet owners have been waiting for. Pilgrim, her cavalier king charles spaniel, is a resort client.

"We got the dog park. We got the [dog] fountain in front of Town Hall," says Nagle. "One thing we sorely missed in Provincetown was an upscale facility catering to folks who want to go to the beach and leave their pets in daycare or overnight their pets if they are staying somewhere that isn't pet-friendly. Now with the new pet resort, we have it all in Provincetown."

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