

Weekend Warrior Visits Aspen

The snow is falling. Anyone up for a roadtrip?

By Sandy Robins

bonding experience, one full of good cheer.

Enjoying Aspen's miles of hiking and walking trails such as Rio Grande Trail, the popular Smuggler/Hunter Creek Trail and the challenging Ute Trail are pretty much a summertime activity, unless you're game to attempt them on cross country skis with your dog running along beside you.

There are lots of open spaces for doggy fun, such as the Wagner Park on Mill Street and Duran Avenue, Paepcke Park on Main Street and Rio Grande Park also on Main Street. The Horse Ranch Park on Brush Creek Road off Highway 82 offers dogs an off-leash space to enjoy. Remember to bring your own poop bags and lots of balls and Frisbees because you will no doubt lose a few in the snow, and they will only reappear when the snow melts, long after you've gone home!

Be sure to stop by the CB Paws Boutique in the Hyman Avenue Mall in downtown Aspen for a bag of their famous yogurt-dipped cookies. A bag of five giant treats costs \$15 and should last a weekend!

For a hearty bowl of delicious beef stew or a steaming bowl of soup, visit Little Annie's Eating House at 517 East Hyman Avenue. Sadly the restaurant doesn't allow dogs, but there's always a take-out option.


Wintersköl, Aspen's annual "toast to winter," has been an annual event since 1951. This year, Aspenites celebrate the four-day event from January 14–17. The festival includes a dog parade and canine fashion show along with on-mountain activities, Soupsköl competition, live music events and fireworks.

There is no shortage of pet-friendly accommodation starting with the Limelight Hotel, which has been Fido-friendly for the last 40 years. The hotel has a designated walk area for pooches and there's a dog park nearby on S. Monarch Street. There's a fee of \$25 per pet.

At Aspen's famous The Little Nell hotel, dogs can accompany their pet parents to the Terrace Bar. The hotel's "Petiquette" program offers doggy-size portions of the hotel's room service menu, including beef tenderloin with scrambled eggs and brown rice. Amenities include a dog-walking and pet-sitting service. A cleaning fee of \$100 will be added to your final bill.

There are no pet restrictions in terms of size, number of pets (or charges) at Kimpton's very trendy Sky Hotel. Pet sitting and dog walking services can also be arranged at the Concierge desk. Check out the Summer Pet Package that runs until November 24, 2009 with accommodation and treats starting at \$167 a night. Thereafter, the winter special deal called the Howlin' at the Sky Pet Package gets into gear and includes discounted accommodation for a minimum of two nights starting at \$249 a night. This package offers a choice of either a day of doggy daycare or a dog walk provided by Wags to Riches pet service as well as a dog bed, dinnerware and treats.

The St. Regis Aspen Resort also puts out the "pets welcome" mat, as does the Aspen Mountain Lodge, which offers very reasonable winter rates.

If you are looking to adopt a dog, take advantage of the Aspen Animal Shelter's program that allows visitors to spend a day in the company of a shelter dog looking for a home [(970) 544-0206]. Finding a new friend through this program would certainly make the weekend a memorable one. 

There's a great sense of adventure to spontaneously planning a weekend getaway. To be a weekend warrior this winter, all you have to do is pack a bag, along with your dog's gear, program your GPS to find a picturesque destination painted snow-white and decked with twinkling lights and accommodations boasting roaring log fires within a 50–100-mile radius of your home and instruct your dog: "Come on, let's go!"

This time, *FIDO Friendly* handpicked Aspen, CO, a picture-perfect destination that typifies the holiday season and one that will guarantee your pooch some snow fun alternating with wonderful quality time. As you curl up together in front of a roaring fire—your dog with a favorite toy, you sipping a Brandy Alexander or a mug of steamy hot cocoa—you'll have the ultimate

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Your dog is definitely going to need a winter wardrobe for this getaway. You can always splurge on a down doggy coat at the exclusive Moncler boutique—the only one in the U.S. Moncler; 432 East Hyman Avenue, Aspen, CO; (970) 544-5558; www.moncler.it.