

Joining the pet set

The boarding kennel just won't do for pampered pets these days.

Rachael Oakes-Ash finds some more glamorous options

BABIES are so five minutes ago. The ultimate accessory of the millisecond is the pooch.

Pet travel has gone upmarket, especially in canine-friendly North America and Europe.

Airlines, hotels and specialty dog services are a fast-growing trend in the travel industry abroad.

United Airlines allows pooches to fly up top with their owners on domestic flights in the United States, though Fido and friends must remain in their designer kennel, stored under the seat in front, for the flight.

Continental Airlines offers a similar service in lieu of carry-on cabin baggage. But a maximum of one pet is allowed in business and first class and no more than four pets in the economy cabin.

Passengers flying to London from America with Continental need not worry about pesky quarantine time.

The airline is part of Britain's Pet Travel Scheme, which allows domesticated pets to travel between accredited countries without quarantine.

For Qantas passengers this means no waiting time to play fetch with Fido when travelling from Australia to London via Singapore.

However, only service dogs are allowed in the cabin, the rest have to be checked in below.

But where does pooch bed down when he arrives?

Check into dog-friendly Four Seasons hotels across America and

your four-legged loved one will be greeted with heart-shaped dog biscuits, squeaky faux newspaper toys, dog bowls with paws for feet and a welcome letter from the hotel for the truly educated canine that can read.

The luxe Fairmont Hotels of Canada understand the separation anxiety pooch owners can feel when leaving puppy behind.

Several of its hotels employ resident hotel dogs for guests to treat like their own.

Fairmont uses retired guide dogs and puppies in training as house dogs. They mingle well with guests who have brought their own.

Dogs and snow go hand in hand at many ski resorts.

Princess pooches at Little Nell hotel in Aspen have their own room-service menu and upon check-in Princess receives her own bling, an identification tag with the hotel's address. She can join a group exercise class with the hotel dog walker, or may prefer personal training. There's even a stylist on hand for her coiffure.

Farther north in British Columbia at Whistler Mountain, the Westin's infamous Heavenly Beds are extended for Rover with the trademarked Heavenly Dog Bed.

The annual 'Ruff Weekend' sees dog lovers descend upon the hotel.

If your dog's name is Westin, and you can prove it, you score a Heavenly Dog Bed and matching dog bowls.

And Rover could work for his supper. If he wins the crazy tricks competition the room for the weekend is free.

Even Cunard cruise liner, the *Queen Mary 2*, allows pampered pets on board. Doggy biscuits at turndown, a QM2 dog coat, Frisbee, name tag and a portrait with pet owners are just some of the extras.

In Europe, hotel brands Sofitel and Hilton take care of dogs and their accompanying humans.

Most restaurants in France allow canine guests, so long as they are well behaved and lie quietly under the dining table.

Closer to home, most farm-stay holidays and some bed and breakfasts allow room for the family dog, but they usually have to sleep outside.

Boutique hotel, The Medusa, in Sydney's Darlinghurst, has several dog-friendly courtyard guest rooms and claims to be the only luxury hotel in Australia that allows guests and dog to sleep under the one roof.

Health and quarantine regulations in Australia restrict the number of dog-friendly hotel services available and quarantine means you can take Fido on holiday in Europe, but you'll have to wait 30 days to get him back when you return.

But be warned, with all this pampering your canine will be demanding upgrades and a turndown service when he gets home.

No more 'ruffing' it for him.



Doggie brag: pooches lap up the luxury in front of the fire at Little Nell



Paw service: pooch goes walkies with a dog walker aboard the *QM2*.