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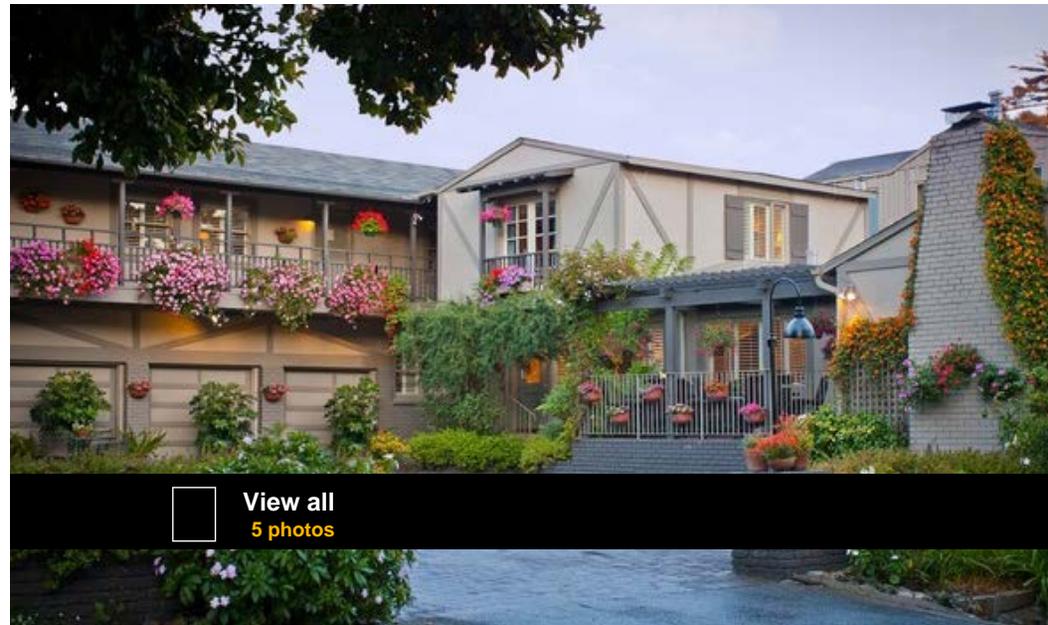
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Beautiful Carmel Country Inn welcomes dogs of all stripes

Carmel Country Inn

While accommodations in most of the country are coming around to welcoming **dogs** more and more, those in Carmel, California, wrote the book.

Take the Carmel Country Inn, for example. The pretty B&B, overflowing with flower boxes dripping with blooms, has 12 rooms. Last weekend it welcomed 10 dogs, happily. That's because it was "Poodle Weekend" in Carmel-By-The-Sea, one of several weekends throughout the year devoted to different canine breeds, and not only are the pets well behaved and well groomed (one couple was meticulously brushing and spraying their dog before taking

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Carmel Country Inn

her to their room) but many are either dressed identically to their masters for the occasion, but colored and fluffed and costumed to a fare-thee-well. A lady in a red and white polka dot dress led her pooch, in the same fabric dress, proudly through the streets of the town.

Not a bark could be heard all weekend. Amy Johnson, innkeeper at the Carmel Country Inn, said that her canine guests are the best, and many return year after year with their appreciative masters. Johnson keeps a scrapbook of photos of past weekends and past canine visitors, and she said that those owners whose dogs have left this earth are especially glad to go through her scrapbook to recall their beloved former pets.

Most of the hotels and inns in Carmel are pet-friendly, and the love affair with dogs may have begun with Actress Doris Day, who with co-owner Dennis LeVett, purchased the distinctive Cypress Inn years ago. When she stayed at the inn, she wanted her dogs with her, and although the 92-year-old doesn't sleep at her inn anymore, lots of dogs do, with warm welcomes. The inn offers a "Yappy hour" at cocktail time, when guests enjoy their signature cocktails from the 1950's and later (Stingers, Manhattans with old-fashioned whiskey-barrel-aged bitters, French 75's, Orange Blossoms and Whiskey Sours, among many others), their dogs relax quietly beside them with their own treats.

Some dog owners who are familiar with Carmel's reputation for dog kindness at the public beach, drive down from other nearby towns just to let them frolic for the day without being leashed, as this is one of few beaches nowadays that allows this freedom. They're also welcome in many of the village pubs, with barkeeps telling visitors that they don't care whether you enter on two legs or four.

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