



The Rise Of The Resident Cat

It's always hard to leave a beloved fur-baby at home when you travel, but what if you knew you could find a new fluffy friend to cuddle up with wherever you go?

STORY: ASHLEIGH MILLS (WWW.HOTELSWITHCATS.COM)

After meeting a resident cat in a villa in Bali, a global hunt to share stories of resident cats across the world was created through Hotels With Cats — a travel directory for cat lovers! More than 30 hotels, cafes and sanctuaries have been featured, from five-star resorts to bungalows on the beach.

The stories flooded in for the directory and one thing became clear, so many of the cats were rescues or strays that had been given a new lease on life!

And so the Hotels With Cats mission grew, inspiring a compassionate response towards stray animals by hotels worldwide. In fact, kindness to animals is great press! It's certainly worked for these three hotels with a heart that have given homeless kitties a place to call home.

Skabenga at The Oyster Box, Durban, South Africa

It wasn't in the plan to have a resident cat at the five-star hotel in Durban, South Africa, but once Skabenga arrived as a teeny little kitten many moons ago, he knew he was onto a good thing. The dashing tabby wandered onto the property as a stray and was fed tasty and expensive tidbits, including prawns

and seafood. The rest, they say, is history. He never left, except briefly during building operations, when he was cared for by a local cat-lover.

Skabenga thoroughly enjoys the spoils that come with being the resident celebrity at The Oyster Box. He loves regular treats of catnip, has a favourite couch, and has 'impeccable timing': emerging every time the red carpet is pulled out. Skabenga hosts a big birthday party each year, using his celebrity status to raise donations for local animal shelters and charities. What a caring cat!

Hamlet VIII at The Algonquin Hotel, New York City, USA

Long associated with a resident cat, The Algonquin Hotel in the center of New York wouldn't be the same without a feline receptionist on duty. Their latest moggie, Hamlet VIII, started his life at a feral colony in Long Island and now attends birthday parties and is even looked after by his own Chief Cat Officer!

Hamlet isn't the only kitty to cause such a fuss at The Algonquin as he hails from a long, lucky line of rescue cats who have called the luxury hotel their home. The Algonquin Cat was believed to originate in the 1930s, when a stray wandered into



the hotel for food and water. The hotel is now proud to say the lineage of The Algonquin Cat dates back to the early 1920s.

"The cats bring a touch of home to the hotel," says Alice De Almeida, 'Chief Cat Officer'. "Many people come here because they know we have a cat." Hamlet is often found working the reception, and receives fan mail from all around the world, including Japan, Australia and Russia.

Dolphinfish at Seawall Apartments, South Australia

With humble beginnings in an RSPCA shelter, Dolphinfish was picked for the purpose of filling the vacant role of 'cat in residence' at the seaside apartments in Glenelg, South Australia. "A hotel cat is a bit of a tradition, they keep mice away, and guests just love her", says Rachael, owner of Seawall Apartments. Rachael admits that Dolphinfish makes a very poor receptionist and is often found sleeping on the job during check in and out, but is forgiven for her good looks. She loves roaming around the hotel and putting her paws to use on security patrol, visiting all of the 22 apartments and seeing who will feed her. One of her favourite pastimes is to stand by the tap near reception and meow loudly. "If she does this during your stay she is kindly asking you to turn the tap on," Rachael says. She loves to submerge her head under the cool water for a drink

Opposite: Skabengoa, being ever so regal at The Oyster Box. Above: Hamlet VIII, conducting sheet inspections at Algonquin Hotel. Right: Dolphinfish, manning reception at Seawall Apartments.

after her patrolling duties. Dolphinfish is a free spirit and if she's not at Seawall sleeping on the job or stealing the office chairs, then she might be found extending her patrolling duties trotting along the Glenelg foreshore.

If you want to find resident cats on your next holiday, visit hotelswithcats.com for more!

Hotels With Cats are launching their first travel magazine for cat lovers this September. Every RSPCA reader who purchases the magazine in September will receive 10% off with the code RSPCA at the check out. Order before September 30th at hotelswithcats.com/store/magazine.

3 Tips on Being a Global Animal Lover

Feel helpless when encountering stray dogs or cats on holidays? Here are some tips on how to improve global animal care when travelling

1. Plan ahead and research

Do some research before your trip. What is the stray cat or dog situation like where you are visiting? Are there shelters, or Trap, Neuter, Release programs in place? Are there people already doing great work that you can support while visiting? Are international adoptions available or not? Could you raise funds before you travel? What do locals think about cats and dogs? In countries of extreme poverty, animals don't have the same level of care as our own. Sadly, it's the way of life. As a traveller with time and resources, you can plan ahead and think what you can do to make the most impact while you are there

2. Go a step further during your travels

After your research, think about what time and resources you have available and are willing to give in the location you are visiting. Can you bring donations or supplies to a local shelter? Can you volunteer for a Trap, Neuter, Release mission with local groups? Donate your time to a sanctuary for cuddles? Raise some funds before you travel? Have a cat or dog desexed during your visit? Once you start imagining, the opportunities are endless.

3. Ask questions during your stay

Ask questions of people who are in a position to make a difference to stray animals during your stay. Be an AWARE tourist. Ask your hotel or cafe what they are doing to support stray dogs or cats around their property. Do they have feeding stations? Are the animals desexed? Perhaps you can encourage them kindly to do so. A lot of hotels think cats are bad for business, but the reality is simply not true, perhaps even drop a line about Hotels With Cats

