

Canine Cocktail, Anyone?

Downtown San Diego unleashes plenty of “mutts-sees.”

by Arden Moore



The new, 12-story Hotel Indigo, located in the Gaslamp Quarter in downtown San Diego.



In dog years, I am now the same age as Chipper, my Golden retriever/Husky mix, who is seven. With our birthdays just one day apart, I knew the perfect place to celebrate with her and my other dog, Cleo: downtown San Diego.

Proclaimed “America’s Finest City,” San Diego is also fast becoming a “mutts-see” destination for dog lovers. The San Diego Padres play in Petco Park—a place that evokes the pun, “the house that ‘woof’ built.” During every Sunday home game, the Padres showcase adoptive shelter dogs and cats at its Power Alley location. During home games, the big screen draws plenty of applause when it flashes photos of pets sporting Padres attire. Game day or no game day, leashed dogs are permitted to walk and sniff around Petco Dog Park, located in the outlying areas of the stadium beyond centerfield.

Throughout the year, opportunities exist to participate in some type of Fido event in San Diego, from surf competitions to Woofstock dog walks to costume contests. We recently participated in a fundraising event for local animal shelters called the Pup Pub Crawl that had us making seven stops at Fido-friendly places to raise money for animal groups.

Want to keep fit? No problem. San Diego is now home to a special workout class conducted by personal trainer Dawn Celapino (and Jack, her Cairn terrier). Fido and his guardian can sprint, jump and stretch together in an outdoor fitness class aptly called “Leash Your Fitness.”

Hungry and thirsty? Many eateries with outdoor cafés offer water bowls and even sport special doggy menus in the famed Gaslamp Quarter, located in the heart of the downtown. Our favorites include Funky Garcias, Tin Fish, The FleetWood and Gaslamp Tavern.

The city of San Diego is just about a 40-minute drive from my home in Oceanside, California. Picking the place to host a birthday party for the human and Fido guest list was easy: the new Hotel Indigo that opened in July 2009. Acclaimed for its eco-friendly architecture and located just one block from Petco Park, the 12-story Hotel Indigo does more than just put out

tipbit

Downtown Dog Lover hosts and showcases Fido-friendly events, eateries and attractions in the city of San Diego.

www.downtowndoglover.com

For a list of clubs, calendar events, pet businesses, hotels, restaurants, emergency vet locations and other pet must-knows in San Diego County, obtain your free copy of the San Diego Edition of the Pet Lovers Handbook.

(760) 631-7886 or

www.petloverspublications.com

a welcome mat for friendly Fidos. The hotel prides itself on not charging pet fees or setting size limits on its canine guests.

This 210-room, full-service, lifestyle hotel partners with the San Diego Humane Society in promoting worthy causes for pets. General Manager Chris Jones, a lifelong pet lover, shares his office with Sandie, a fast-growing Labrador mix he adopted from that shelter. Sandie, who was named San Diego minus the “go,” eagerly serves as canine am-

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF HOTEL INDIGO

IF YOU GO

SLEEP

Located in the Gaslamp Quarter, just one block from Petco Park, **Hotel Indigo** welcomes well-behaved dogs of all sizes. 509 9th Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101; no pet fee; nightly rates start at \$102; hotel hosts *Canine Cocktails* Tuesdays, 5–8pm; (619) 727-4000; www.hotelindigo.com/sandiego.

EAT

Eat and drink with your dog Wednesday from 5–7pm at **The FleetWood** bar and restaurant. Try the signature FleetWood Mojito or Applejack cocktail and pick a special treat for your pup from the dog treat menu. 639 J Street, San Diego, CA 92101; (619) 702-7700; www.thefleetwood.com.

PLAY

Bring your mitt and your mutt to watch the **San Diego Padres** play at Petco Park. Once a year each August, leashed dogs are welcomed to attend the game. For reservations, pick up an application at a Petco store or call (619) 795-5198.

Stay fit with Fido by joining **Leash Your Fitness**, a workout class for humans and dogs. For class schedules and locations, www.leashyourfitness.com.

Sip wine each Wednesday from 5:30–9pm and bring your leashed dog to the **San Diego Wine and Culinary Center**; 200 Harbor Drive, Suite 120, San Diego, CA 92101; (619) 231-6400; www.sdwineculinary.com.

Keep your dog looking great and shop for pet necessities at **City Dog**, 545 Park Blvd., San Diego, CA 92101; (619) 269-0201; www.citydogsd.com.

Watch or participate in the annual **Surf Dog Surfathon Fund Raiser** for Helen Woodward Animal Center. Held every September. www.AnimalCenter.org.

WoofStock! Dog and People Festival benefits Canine Companions for Independence, held every April. Balboa Park; www.cci.org/woofstock.



Cleo and Chipper pose in the centerfield bleacher seats at Petco Park, home of the San Diego Padres.

WHEN THE PADRES PLAY AT HOME, YOU CAN ACTUALLY SEE AND HEAR THE CRACK OF THE BAT FROM THIS TERRACE.

bassador for all guests.

“I adopted Sandie three weeks before our hotel opened,” said Jones. “I saw how great she was with kids, and I liked her friendly spirit. She loves coming to work with me every day.”

My birthday fell on a Tuesday, which happens to be the weeknight that Hotel Indigo hosts its popular *Canine Cocktails* event from 5–8pm. Just ride the elevator up to the ninth floor and enter the doors leading to the Phi Bar Terrace. Unleash Fido and take in the amenities: a reflection pool, herb garden, drool-proof lounge seating and fire pits—all enclosed in glass walls that offer stunning panoramic views of San Diego’s skyline.

At *Canine Cocktails*, no need for a designated driver for Fido. All canines are treated to bottled water and healthy treats dished up by local vendors. Enjoy libations from the bar, including the signature Blue Indigo Phi martini. The hotel donates \$1 per drink to the San Diego Humane Society. And, local merchants stage drawings for free pet product giveaways.

“We welcome hotel guests and local residents to check out our *Canine Cocktail* event,” said Jones. “When the Padres play at home, you can actually see and hear the crack of the bat from this terrace.”

My friends surprised Chipper and me with a bone-shaped cake, balloons and off-key renditions of “Happy Birthday.” The terrace quickly filled with people and dogs, ranging in size from confident Chihuahuas to mellow Great Danes. At evening’s end, I leashed Chipper and Cleo and headed to our room, which featured a king-size bed, hardwood floor, 37-inch high-def TV, spa-inspired shower, dog beds and treats (plus a supply of waste bags). This eco-friendly hotel also provides a recycle container for trash.

I’m not sure which one of us fell asleep first, but celebrating our birthdays in Fido-friendly San Diego definitely proved to be a memory-making and great decision. [f](https://www.facebook.com/hotelindigo) [i](https://www.instagram.com/hotelindigo) [p](https://www.pinterest.com/hotelindigo)

Watch a video of the *Canine Cocktail* event at www.FIDOFriendly.com/destinations/hotel-indigo