

# Having a doggone good time at Pet Spot

by Jennifer Sauers

Whether you're away at work for 10 hours or taking a trip for 10 days, there's a dog lover in town who will make sure your pet remains busy and happy. Meet Jeff Voelpel who, along with business partner Terry Rath, runs the luxury pet care facility Pet Spot. Says Jeff, "People can go to work or take their vacations knowing their dogs will have a blast." Located just seconds off of the Norwood Lateral, Pet Spot must be doing something right, since over 8,000 pet owners have signed on for their services.

The concept of day care for dogs seemed to originate about 10-15 years ago on the West Coast. "People started thinking of their dogs more like a family member than a pet. They wanted their dogs to play during the day, not just hang out in the backyard or in a kennel cage for 8 hours.

"Besides," Jeff continues, "people hated the old style kennels. They smelled bad, they were dirty, and it made their pets sick." In contrast, Pet Spot is the ultimate in pooch pampering. From the climate-controlled rooms with themed décor, to the sophisticated cleansing system which sanitizes the entire facility each night, no detail has been

left undone. Referring to its webcams, spa treatments, and playgrounds, Jeff laughs, "Some people think Pet Spot is the greatest thing. Others think this place is insane."

Before his dog-centric days, Jeff worked in the corporate world. Although it was a good learning experience, he couldn't stand the thought of being desk-bound for the next 30 years. What Jeff really wanted to be was a veterinarian, but he had already accumulated two bachelor's degrees, and picking up another diploma would bump him from the workplace for years. Instead, he enrolled in a four-month grooming college with a one-year internship to gain in-depth knowledge about pet grooming.

In 2003 he opened K-9 Kamp next to Mulligan's in Hyde Park, and spent every day in a happy muddle of 30 to 40 dogs. He never advertised because referrals came word-of-mouth. He quickly ran out of space to take additional pups, so he drafted a business plan to strategize an expansion. But he ran into one problem: no funding. Ironically, one of his weekly customers, Terry Rath, asked Jeff if he had ever considered growing his business. Jeff

pulled out the business plan from his desk. It wasn't long until the two formed a partnership with Terry providing capital and Jeff running daily operations.

Fast forward three years: "It has been a whirlwind," said Jeff. "I think back a few years ago when I was single, ran K9 Kamp, and played golf in my free time. Since then, my business has grown 1000%, I met my wife at work and we married and I have my second child on the way." Not only did he retain most all of his K9 Kamp clients, but referrals to Pet Spot snowballed. "People can tell we're running Pet Spot the right way for the right reasons - their dogs."

Located in a former printing company, the Midwest's largest indoor and outdoor doggy day care occupies a mammoth 40,000 square feet of space. Currently, Pet Spot uses two stories and leases the third floor to a tenant, but the building offers expansion room if later needed. The first floor consists of 18,000 square feet and houses the lobby, Moochie & Co.'s satellite retail pet store, a cat room, offices, grooming services and boarding facilities. Upstairs, there are 10 day care rooms.

Pet Spot offers a menu of five services:

**Boarding:** During your next business trip, you might be in your budget hotel bed, but you can rest assured that your pooch is relaxing in style in a luxury villa or suite. Each villa - with names such as Golfer's Paradise, Horse 'n Hound, Up in the Clouds - is thematically decorated with wallpaper and paint. (And if you and your dog are fans of the Bearcats, Musketeers, Wildcats, Reds, or Bengals, you can select an apropos room to show your team support.)

All the climate-controlled rooms have sound-reinforced walls, elevated bedding and food/water stations, glass viewing doors, and even TVs tuned to Animal Planet

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Grooming is one of the many professional services offered by Pet Spot.