

## The Wag pet hotel is no run-of-the-mill kennel

OK, your dog is treated like a king at home, and yes, it's been clear for years that your cat owns you. Then why, Joel Leineke reasoned, would you want to give Fido or Mittens anything less than four-paw treatment when you leave town? That's why he helped create Wag, a better-than-the-kennel boarding facility in West Sacramento.

We take a moment to ask Leineke a few questions about the 1-week-old premier pet hotel.

**Q:** What exactly is a pet hotel?

**A:** A pet hotel is an upscale boarding facility for dogs and cats. We're not the Ritz-Carlton, but more of a Hilton or a Marriott. We're nice but affordable.

**Q:** And how has it been, opening the Sacramento area's first pet hotel?

**A:** I have a sense of what childbirth must be like.

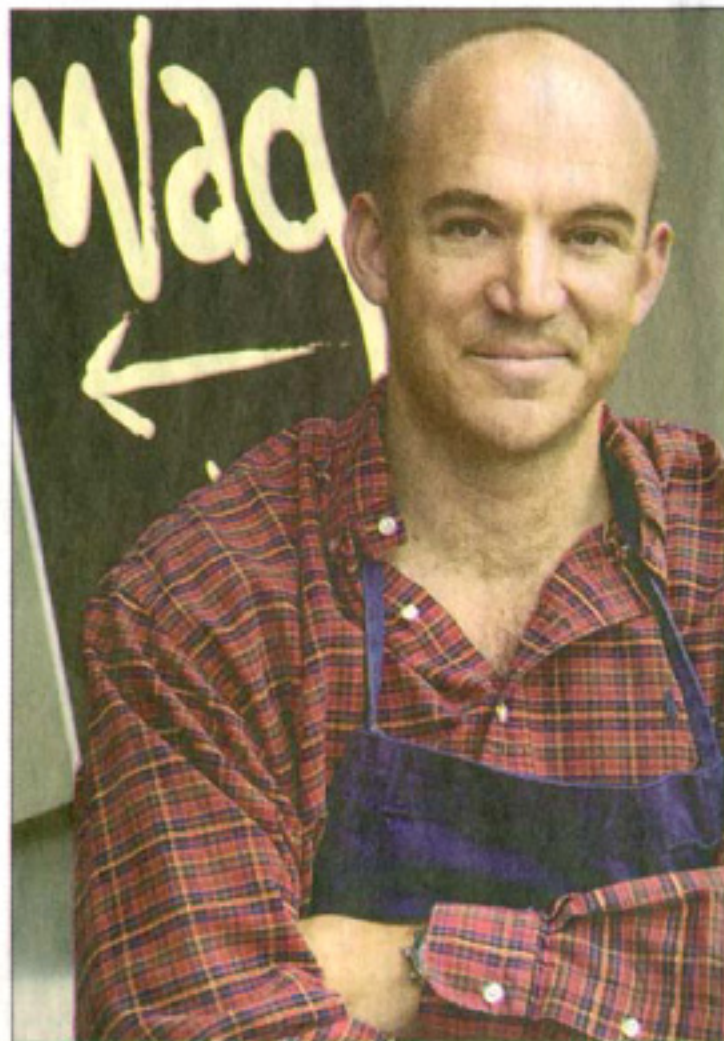
**Q:** Any funny stories so far?

**A:** We're just getting going, so the funny stories aren't so funny yet. It's more, "Quick, get over here and clean up whatever just happened."

**Q:** And what do you offer the furry ones at Wag?

**A:** Our luxury suites actually have Webcams and flat-screen TVs, little mini-sofas, little beds with headboards and artwork on the walls... We'll have an indoor pool by Thanksgiving.

The "cattery" has all two-story cat condos, and each cat gets a private litterbox and a pri-



Joel Leineke, president and CEO of Wag, compares his pet hotel to a Hilton or a Marriott. "We're nice but affordable," he says.

vate food-and-water area, and we give them a nice fluffy sleep sack. They're all surrounded by a great big aquarium - with fish in it, of

course. The dogs get out for group play and the cats need stimulation of their own.

**Q:** And how about for their human counterparts?

**A:** We really have the most state-of-the-art facility that you can imagine. We've done a lot from the standpoint that it looks great, but it also serves a terrific function. We have this very cool drive-through vestibule so if it's raining, you can drop off your pet on your way out of town and not get all wet. We have this customer lounge area with all these boutique products; we have WiFi access; we're staffed around the clock, and we're available for drop-off or pick-up 24 hours a day. We have emergency vet relationships (if your pet falls ill).

**Q:** How much does it cost?

**A:** Little dogs (which would be lodged in a correspondingly sized room) start at \$28 a night, \$32 for medium and \$35 for large. Mini-suites are \$44 and luxury are \$55. Cats are \$15.

This is not (just) for your upper-income people. This is for the 75 percent of pet owners out there that consider their pets their children.

**Q:** And as a dog owner, are you one of those 75 percent?

**A:** Oh my gosh, I completely refer to myself as "Dad"!

For more information: [www.waghotels.com](http://www.waghotels.com) or (888) WAGLINE (888-924-5463).

- Lisa Heyamoto

Reach her at [lheyamoto@sacbee.com](mailto:lheyamoto@sacbee.com)