

Destination:

Dog-gone Stays

If you can't bear those sad puppy eyes, take Fido on your next getaway



Pup Paradise: Ponder Cove co-owner Gary Rawlins and Ponder, left, pose for a snapshot with some guests.

When you've run out of gas playing fetch in the backyard, fuel your tank for a road trip with Rover. Western North Carolina offers numerous dog-friendly accommodations. Here are three spots where you and your pup can vacation together:

Located in Rutherfordton and close to the trails at Chimney Rock Park, **Four Paws Kingdom** is a 33-acre campground dedicated to man's best friend. And according to owners Meik and Birgit Bartoschek, the pooch haven is the first of

its kind in the country.

Four Paws welcomes tail-waggers large and small. They'll love the property's hiking trails, swimming pond, fenced parks, and agility course. Birgit is a certified dog trainer who teaches agility and obedience classes. She's also an accomplished artist whose canine cartoons adorn the campground's signage. The offering of events, like a doggie treasure hunt, fun fair, and Olympiad, will entertain pets and owners alike.

Ponder Cove offers a memorable bed-and-breakfast experience where you can luxuriate in a bucolic setting only 30 minutes north of Asheville in Mars Hill. Your furry friend will love the welcome basket and complimentary treats, as well as romping on 91 acres of protected paradise with canine staff members Ponder, Buck, and Dolly Mae. You'll enjoy the spacious country-style rooms and gourmet breakfasts prepared by owner and innkeeper Martha Abraham. For more privacy, stay in the fully restored 1938 cottage.



The Catch: Barkwells' stocked catfish pond offers a chance for you and your buddy to fish together.



Barkwells, located in Fletcher, is only 10 miles from Brevard and a short drive from the trails and waterfalls at Dupont State Forest. Here you can stay in one of six luxury cabins and your dog can have the run of the place on seven fenced acres. Maybe you (or your pup) will catch one of the catfish in the stocked pond. Every cabin has been thoughtfully outfitted with dog beds, bowls, and towels. A nice touch is the dog door that leads to a gated porch. If you want to take an excursion without the "baby," you can leave her to play; every cabin has a fenced yard.

After a respite at one of these dog-friendly retreats, rest assured that your furry companion will be worn out while you'll feel well rested.

—Barry Silverstein

If You Go

Four Paws Kingdom

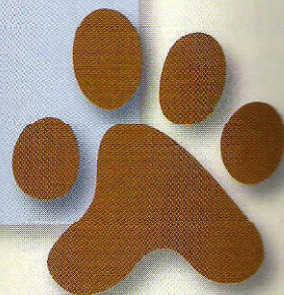
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Ponder Cove B&B

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PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BARKWELLS

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