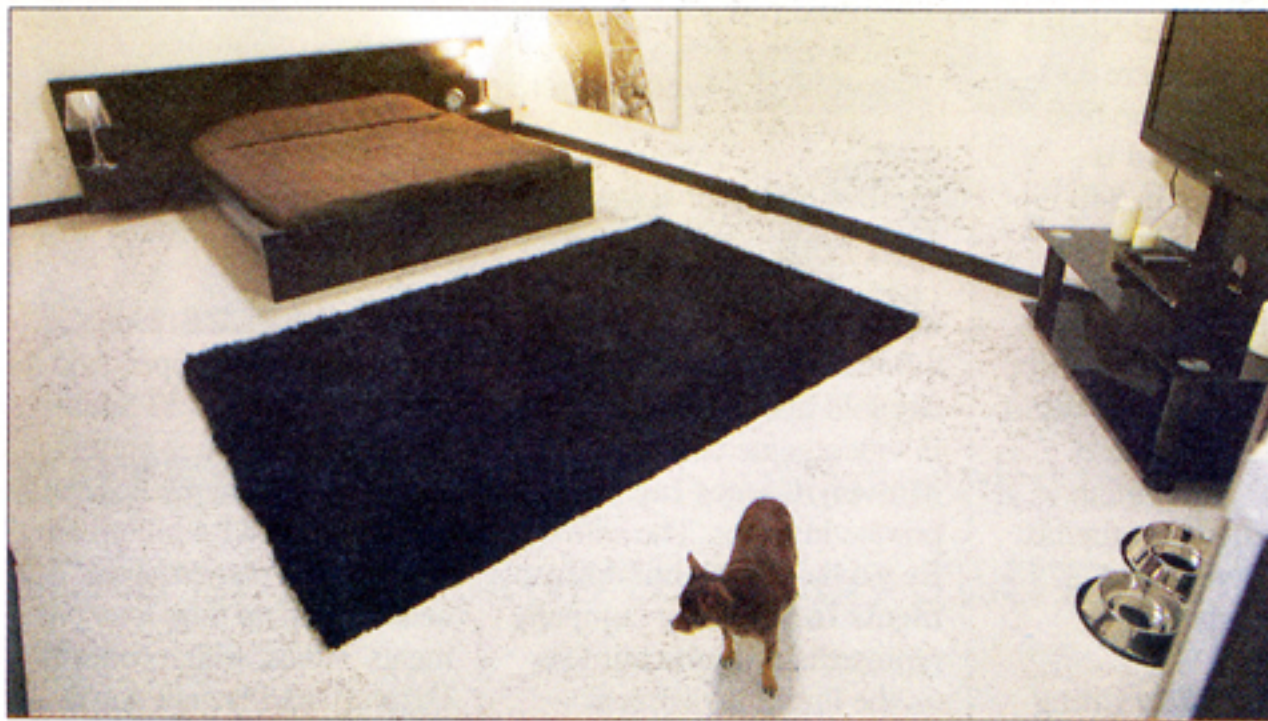


# Up Front



Why Alissa Cruz started an upscale pet hotel.  
**PAGE 3**

## UP FRONT



RINGO H.W. CHIU/LABJ

**Stay!:** A four-legged guest at D Pet Hotels in Hollywood.

### Doggie Digs

Hollywood hotel offers pet owners high-end amenities to pamper the family pooch.

And now, in Hollywood, there's chic lodging for that special someone — your dog. Oh, and please don't call it a kennel.

There are all sorts of "doggie day care" and overnight boarding establishments. There's even a "country club" for dogs in nearby West Hollywood, but that's for members only. So D Pet Hotels owner Alissa Cruz wanted to create a more affordable upscale doghouse.

Cruz, 32, invested nearly \$1 million into the creation of the hotel, which includes three play areas, a fitness room with dog-size treadmills, a spa, a full-service kitchen, a high-end pet accessory boutique and an on-call veterinary technician. The hotel offers chauffeured pickup and drop-off services, too.

Cruz said she considers her own dogs to be her children and always had trouble

finding a suitable place for them when she traveled. So she opened her own place, complete with dog-size luxury beds, night stands and flat-screen TVs. There is even artwork on the walls for Chihuahuas and Dachshunds who might like that sort of thing. Rates start at \$65 a night and go up to \$110 for the largest rooms; lower than "country club" rates but still higher than the \$30 per night that other cage-free kennels charge.

The establishment was created to cater to those dogs used to sleeping in beds, and owners who might be concerned about having their pets spend the night in cages.

"My dogs sleep in my bed," Cruz said. "I wanted to make it as seamless an experience as possible for the dogs. And in this economy, people may take away luxury items for themselves, but they wouldn't ever skimp on family, and dogs are like family."

The Hollywood location is the first for Cruz, but she has plans to open hotels in other major cities. The hotel currently accepts only dogs, but there are plans to take in other pets soon. How's business? Nearly half of her 32 suites are already booked for the upcoming holiday season.

— Maya Meinert