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## Real Estate

### Who's Calling It A Dog's Life?

By ALISON GREGOR

THERE was a time when the New York City real estate world generally shunned owners of those furry creatures that chase cars and trucks, but times have changed. Now, the city's landlords and property developers are doing their own chasing — after dogs and, in particular, their well-heeled owners.

As residential towers work to incorporate puppy playgrounds and doggy doors into their amenities, the apartment management company Rose Associates has taken attentiveness to a new level, offering dog-care services en masse to thousands of residents. The services, provided by a dog-care group called the Spot Experience, will be offered first at the Aldyn and the Ashley on the Upper West Side beginning on Aug. 1.

The next buildings scheduled to roll out the new offering will be the Verdesian, the Visionaire and the Solaire in Battery Park City, and by the end of October, Rose plans to expand it to 20 of its dog-friendly buildings, said Jamie Kaufman, the manager of Rose's concierge

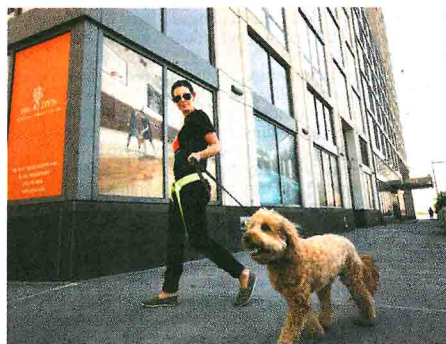
program.

Later in the year, Rose will extend the amenity at a rate of about three to four buildings a month, she said. The management company has more than 56 dog-friendly buildings serving thousands of residents.

The Spot Experience — with four Manhattan locations that offer dog day care, training, grooming, walking and retail pet services — will operate a dedicated shuttle service to transport residents' dogs to and from day care. At Spot facilities, on the Upper West Side and in TriBeCa and Chelsea, dogs can be groomed or trained or simply lounge about.

Residents of buildings working with Spot will have membership fees waived and receive discounts and priority access to services that might get booked up quickly, said Mitch Marrow, the founder and chief executive of the Spot Experience. For five- or seven-day-a-week day care, residents would pay \$26 to \$28 a day, he said.

"Compared to what you pay for a dog-walker in the city," Mr. Marrow said, "if you had to have a minimum of two walks while you were gone from 7 a.m.



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to 9 p.m., it's a discount."

The doggy day care amenity eliminates the need for multiple dog-walkers to wander throughout buildings, Ms. Kaufman said. "We wanted to make sure our buildings are secure," she said, "so it's not some random dog-walker bringing 10 dogs into the building and having them on every floor."

The dog-care services also will give Rose a marketing edge when it comes to leasing apartments, Ms. Kaufman said. Rose will offer dog owners information packets on the services, along with chew toys and dog treats, and those who don't own dogs will get information titled "Thinking of Getting a Dog?"

Already, at the Aldyn and the Ashley,

**YOU WALK, I WAG**  
Jesse Baron of Spot Experience takes Lucky for a walk near the Aldyn. The company, Spot Experience, in partnership with Rose Associates, a property manager, is rolling out dog day care in Rose buildings.

Spot Experience residents have been asking about certain dog breeds, Mr. Marrow said. "They want to get a puppy now, because having these services makes it easy for them to have it. We can housebreak it for them; we can do the basic training; we can do all the tough stuff, and they can have their pup to play with."

Mr. Marrow, a former hedge-fund employee who says he wants his dog-care company to compare to any other high-end amenity provider, describes Manhattan's dog owners as underserved. "Almost 70 percent of New Yorkers who live in residential buildings with an income of over \$150,000 own a dog," he said, "so that's a pretty big number."

As an Upper West Side resident with

a St. Bernard and a bull mastiff, Mr. Marrow said he struggled to find a company to provide the right care for his dogs, and would often run home from work to feed and walk them.

"I couldn't get my head around why there wasn't just somebody that came in and really did it right," he said, "because there's obviously such a need."

The next step for Spot is to work with property developers to create Spot facilities within or near a residential building, specifically for that building's residents, Mr. Marrow said. Ms. Kaufman said Rose was considering such facilities for some of its buildings.

Bob Cohen, a resident of the Park Millennium in the Lincoln Center area, urged his condo board to consider the Spot Experience as an amenity. Mr. Cohen, the owner of a golden doodle named Spike, had been disappointed with a previous dog-care company.

He described his first visit to a Spot facility as "kind of Zen atmosphere," adding, "The dogs just hanging out, and everyone was just kind of grooving."

Since January the Park Millennium has had a partnership with Spot, and about 30 of its condo owners use the service regularly. Spot has cameras in its facilities, enabling owners to log onto its Web site at any time to check up on their dogs, but Mr. Cohen said he trusted that Spike was getting good care. "I walk him there sometimes," he said, "and when he sees the storefront, he starts pulling to get inside. He's got friends there."