

New local 'hotel' caters to very select clientele

BY MEGAN SPRAGUE

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Lake Norman cat owners can rest easy — and so can their pets — at the new Hotel 4 Cats, a boarding facility in Mooresville exclusively for felines.

Owners Marge and Chris Colas brought the idea from their successful New Jersey business to East Center Avenue after the birth of their first grandchild.

The Colas created boarding for cats only when they realized their own cats returned to them nervous and tense after a stay with a facility that housed dogs as well.

"We knew they were uncomfortable even though the dogs were in a separate area, because they would be high-strung when they came home and for a little while after," he said. "We have three rescue cats and think of them as family."

"We didn't want them to keep being traumatized, so we sat down and came up with a plan for a place with

just cats," Marge added. "Our New Jersey business was really well-received and we had clients that would drive an hour and a half to use us."

The Colas said their success comes from their philosophy of treating beloved pets like guests.

"We play with them, brush them several times a day, and talk to them; we want them to be comforted and let them know we're going to care for them and that they'll be OK," Chris said. "We recently had clients that took a trip to Florida and left their animals here, and they said they knew we did a good job because the cats didn't want to get up and greet them because they were so comfortable. We always joke that the cats are our best references."

While staying at the Hotel 4 Cats, residents reside in "kitty condos" or crates that are 55 inches tall, 42 inches wide and 31 inches deep, with three levels for cats to romp, eat and sleep.

"We have all the condos near windows and bird feed-

ers close to the windows so they can be entertained in addition to us playing with them," Marge said. "We supply the litter, water, a faux lambskin bed for a warm place to sleep and let owners bring in things like blankets or T-shirts that will comfort their pet while they're gone."

Chris said some of their feline guests even go home a little spoiled.

"We had a kitty named Oliver in here not too long ago and each night we hand out treats," he said. "Well, when Oliver got home, each night at about 7:30 he would go to the kitchen and start meowing and sniffing around. His owner, Megan, finally called us and asked what we gave him each night, because he was really missing it!"

The Hotel 4 Cats has 45 condos on a first-come, first-serve basis, but each condo can hold more than one cat if a family chooses to house their pets together. Summer is their busiest season, so they request that during those months, reservations be made two weeks in



MEGAN SPRAGUE PHOTO

Marge and Chris Colas have opened Hotel 4 Cats on East Center Avenue in Mooresville.

advance.

The business, which opened in January, is available seven days a week, 365 days a year, but without pick-up times on major holidays such as Thanksgiving or Christmas.

The boarding facility has

two drop-off windows, from 8-10 a.m. and 4-6 p.m. The specific pick-up and drop-off times are for the cats' safety, Marge said.

"During the day, we have the cages open at different times to clean them and play with each cat, so we don't

want the doors to be constantly opening and closing," Marge said.

The boarding fee is \$17 for the first cat, and \$12 for each additional cat. For more information, visit www.hotel4cats.com or call (704) 664-6369.