

Oh, my dog!

What to do with Fido this holiday season

AARTI VIRANI
aarti.virani@metro.us



On any given night, Los Angeles-based dog trainer Steve Brooks guarantees he has at least 10 to 15 pooches sleeping over.

"I live, breathe and eat dogs," shares the expert, before catching himself.

"Well, not eat, of course," he clarifies, chuckling good-naturedly.

As an avid observer of canine culture, Brooks was our go-to person for a concern that many city-dwelling pet owners will face this month — how do you survive the holidays with (or without) your dog?

Rate That Kennel

If you're opting to leave your pet behind, make sure you scout out a kennel at least a month in advance, recommends Brooks. A test-run won't hurt either. Kennels will set you back between \$30 to \$60 a night. When you tour the place, scope it out for cleanliness, the human-to-dog ratio — Brooks recommends 1 to 5 — and their emergency plan.

(i.e: is there a vet on-site if your dog gets ill?) "You want to go by sound and smell," he advises. And pay attention to the methods they use to keep the dogs under control, says Brooks, whose witnessed everything from shock and spray collars to the Chopin and Chamomile approach.

Road Trip!

Contrary to popular belief, Brooks claims that traveling with your pet actually fuels your bond — but only if

you're prepared. Arm yourself with a secured crate or kennel, or a doggie seat-belt (available in most pet stores) to ensure a smooth ride. To combat carsickness, gradually acclimate your pet to the car's interior about a week prior to the trip, advises

Brooks. "Most dogs get sick because of stress, not because they're motion sick." So let your dog associate a more relaxed experience with the car, by exposing him to it days before the ride.

Go to stevebrooksskgu.com to learn more about certified dog trainer Steve Brooks



Dogs love holidays, too