

A stress-free clinic that purrs for cats

By Brandon Bosworth

Cats are America's most popular pet, yet they visit the veterinarian less than half as often as dogs, and usually don't get treatment until they are already very sick. Annual checkups should be routine, but often aren't.

In a way, it's understandable, as getting a cat to the vet's office can be quite a chore. And once there, things can get worse. An already terrified cat often has to share a waiting room with loud, barking dogs that may be prone to trying to stick their noses into the cat's carrier.

At The Cat Clinic in Kapahulu, however, the waiting room is an oasis of calm. Inside, there is a slight scent of Feliway, a room fragrance to help soothe agitated cats, and soft-playing classical music can be heard on the stereo. Perhaps most

importantly, there are no dogs or other non-feline animals present.

The husband-and-wife team of Drs. Nick Palumbo and Sue Sylvester-Palumbo founded The Cat Clinic in 1988. "Both of us had an affinity for cats and we always wanted to open a cat clinic," she says.

Like many vets who specialize in felines, Sylvester-Palumbo was troubled by how often cats go without proper medical care. "Cats going to the vet need their own space," she says. "They need to be separate from other animals. We try to create a peaceful environment that causes less stress for them."

Since opening, The Cat Clinic has filled a definite niche. "We've been fortunate to have

significant growth even in a recession," she says. "We've developed a positive reputation in town and have many wonderful clients."

While being a cats-only veterinary office is certainly the primary niche,

it isn't the only one. What also sets The Cat Clinic apart is the level of human interaction and service.

"I appreciate the medicine, but I really appreciate the relationships I've formed with people,"

Sylvester-Palumbo says. "We're very personal. We want to know lots about you and your cat."

Contact Patrick Klein at pklein@staradvertiser.com if you wish to have your company featured in this section.



Photo courtesy of The Cat Clinic

Staff members are instrumental at providing a calming influence for visiting felines at The Cat Clinic.

The 411

Name: The Cat Clinic

Address:
1131 Kapahulu Ave., # 201
Honolulu, HI 96816

Phone: 732-8884

Website: www.thecatclinicahawaii.com

President: Dr. Sue Sylvester-Palumbo

Employees: 13

Benefits: Full medical and dental; paid vacation and sick days; 401k program

Founded: 1988

Noteworthy: The Cat Clinic is the only cats-only veterinary office in Hawaii. Dr. Sue Sylvester-Palumbo is listed on the Veterinary Honor Roll of the Winn Feline Foundation, a non-profit organization that works to improve cat health.

She's always ready to lend a helping 'paw'

Dr. Sue Sylvester-Palumbo of The Cat Clinic is very proud of her working relationship with Hawaiian Humane Society.

"I've volunteered there since I was in grad school in the late '70s," she says. Her late husband had worked there as a vet since the 1960s.

Recently, Sylvester-Palumbo helped to care for several cats at Hawaiian Humane Society that had been rescued from an animal-hoarding situation.

Despite being known primarily as a cat doctor, she also has stepped in to help other animals when needed. Last summer, for example, Sylvester-Palumbo helped provide medical care to the some of the more than 150 dogs that had been rescued from a notorious puppy mill in Waimanalo.

