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Dogs — “Children of the New Millennium?”

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Dogs are wonderful creatures. Our home is shared with a beagle named Baxter, a sweet-hearted canine of simple tastes and constant optimism. I often wonder this: If I knew as little of what was going on as he does, would I be as happy as he is? Probably.

Baxter enjoys eating as much as the next dog, but he has never eaten in a restaurant. All that could change if we take him to Orlando, Florida, where dogs are now allowed on restaurant decks and patios.

As *Bloomberg News* reports:

Orlando, along with Miami, St. Petersburg and Tampa, is taking advantage of a change in state law and allowing dogs at restaurants' outdoor dining areas. Business is going to the dogs — in a good way. Sam Snead's sales are up 5 percent since its patio was opened to dogs, said owner Candie Ryser, who helped push for the new law. Customers eat and drink more if they don't have to rush home to their pets, she said. Additional revenue comes from the canine menu, including \$9.25 tenderloin tips and a \$4.25 "bow-wow pizza." "Sasha really enjoyed the experience," said Jason Callison, 34, a software development manager who dined at Sam Snead's with Sasha, his cocker spaniel. "The waitress brought a bowl of water with our drink orders. Sasha is a member of the family. She certainly likes to be around people and other dogs."

So Sasha can now chow down on restaurant food with her “companion humans.” She is not alone.

More:

Some owners dress up their dogs for their night on the town. "My Yorkies are like little socialites," said Henry Corona, a graphic artist who takes his two Yorkshire terriers to dine with him in Miami Beach's fashionable South Beach section. The dogs have Tiffany silver collars and "teddy bear" cuts that are short on the body and long at the ears. Nelly wears two pink satin bows, while Cosmo sports a cowboy handkerchief. "They enjoy the outing as much as I do," Corona said. "They love the attention."

Well, we must wonder who really loves the attention. A person who would put Tiffany silver collars on his Yorkies is looking for *some* kind of attention.

Here is the most troublesome portion of the article:

A proliferation of couples without children, divorcees and singles has made dining with dogs increasingly important, pet owners say. "Dogs are the children of the new millennium," said Tina Valant-Siebelts, a Boca Raton photographer who sometimes dines with Mack, her Australian shepherd. "The greatest benefit is you'll never have to dine alone." Jason Johnson, an Orlando lawyer, agrees. "My dog is like my kid," said Johnson, who eats with his golden retriever, Atticus, at Sam Snead's. "People come up and pet him constantly. You feel guilty leaving him at home."

Dogs are “the children of the new millennium?” The article indicates that dogs have become substitute children for many childless couples, divorcees, and singles. Now their owners demand a place at the table for the dogs, and many businesses see this as being to their advantage.

After all, why not cater to the canine set? Just offer a doggie menu and a “yappy hour” promotion. What’s too good for the millennium’s new “children?” There is something horribly wrong with this picture.

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