

Wild About Dogs

Elly and Ella spend much of their time playing and even sleeping on the job. But they're probably the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver's most popular employees, judging by the number of photos of them on Instagram. And they're willing to work for kibble.

Elly lives with Debbie Wild, a concierge at the hotel. All of the hotel's current and past dogs trained to be service animals but didn't finish, often because they were too friendly. "We don't like to call them flunkies," Wild says with a laugh. "We call them non-qualifying and career-changed." Guests are often tired and jetlagged by the time they arrive at the hotel, but quality canine time always improves everyone's mood.

Supervising Elly and Ella is easy compared to some of the challenges Wild faces at the concierge desk, everything from finding out-of-season gardenias for Vice President Joe Biden to give his wife, to having Christopher "the ultimate travelling pig" stay in the hotel for Vancouver Fashion Week. Less challenging is the task of recommending restaurants, because Vancouver has so many stellar ones. For regional cuisine, Wild likes Notch8 (page 88), Botanist (page 82) and Blue Water Cafe (page 97). For views, Cardero's (page 82), Lift (page 84), Miku (page 88) and the Cactus Club (page 86) at English Bay all top her list.

Wild recommends that all of her guests (both the two- and four-legged varieties) visit an off-leash dog park, because they're the happiest places in the city. Her favourites are in Pacific Spirit Park and at Spanish Banks. And if you do go, keep an eye out for Elly and Ella—when they're off-duty from their role as canine concierges, that is.

BY SHERI RADFORD 🐾



Debbie Wild sits with Ella, a Labrador/golden retriever mix, and Elly, a black Labrador

PHOTO BY KK LAW