



Pooches rejoice! In a year filled with a stinky economy, skyrocketing gas prices and a mind-numbing presidential race, the Tompkins Square Park dog run in Manhattan reopened July '08 better than ever.

After a nine-month-long upgrade, the renovated dog run located in the East Village is doing doggy business in style...so to speak. It's a bustling canine retreat now and pet owners are really digging it, too. So what's all the buzz about? This posh hot spot boasts a wealth of amenities that help place it head and shoulders above the near two-dozen dog runs that grace the Big Apple.

Very Fetching Dog Run

By Christine Auda

They may have made a lot of noise in transition but the new and improved dog runs are now fetching oohs and ahhs.

Some of the amenities to pamper snoots and paws include:

- Beach sand-like surface to delight the most discerning peds and paws
- Eco-friendly draining that also cuts foul odors to almost nil
- 18,500 square feet of play area with separate runs for large and small dogs
- A large tree deck equipped with benches so play-weary parents can rest or snooze
- 3 bone-shaped doggie pools so that Fido can wade and bathe
- Bucolic gardens that smell like fragrant aromatherapy -- not urine therapy

The dog run's \$325,000 grand metamorphosis was the result of a four-year collaboration between the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and Friends of First Run, a local non-profit organization. Garrett Rosso, the dog run volunteer manager, spearheaded the project. Rosso cites additional funding via grants from the Adopt-a-Park program that received sizeable contributions from several companies, the Lindsay Ashe Memorial Fund, and a volunteer run t-shirt sale.

When asked if he has seen a rise in attendance since the renovation, Rosso quickly responds, "Definitely an increase in dogs, and dogfights have plummeted!" He thinks the reason alpha dogs have hung up their boxing gloves is because the picnic tables were removed. The tables once lured the dogs and served as a sort of pseudo boxing ring. Now life here is more peaceful. Less mayhem and more ball tossing are the order of the day.

Also, now that the park is cleaner Rosso says, "We're a much better looking group of people. Now people arrive to the park after work in their business suits." Sounds like yuppie-puppy paradise. Before the renovation the dog run was a sea of muddy ripped jeans, tattered tops and unsightly long-forgotten Members Only jackets. People and pups were knee deep in yuk. Who wants to blaze a trail in that?!

Rosso gushes, "Working with the Parks Department was literally the most inspiring and educational experience in my life. We take

our parks for granted, but our [NYC] parks have never looked this good!"

A recent addition, the Lindsay Ashe Gardens, help to beautify the dog run. They were made possible by the Ashe family who created an in memoriam donation to the park in honor of their daughter, Lindsay, who frequented the run with her dog. A family turned tragedy into something positive for New Yorkers and their canines.

Creature comforts and a howling good time await both you and your pooch at the Tompkins Square Park dog run, located between Avenue A and B from East 7th to East 10th Street. It's just a bone's throw away from your Manhattan address. Just remember to leave your Members Only jacket at home. **cpg**

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Heliport Turns to the Dogs

By Courtney Kistler

After much talk and some scruples, the former heliport on the Upper East Side is now a \$1 million waterfront dog run complete with a seating area for dog walkers, watering holes for pets, and lush landscaping.

Located at East 63rd Street off York Avenue, the 5,000 square-foot run just opened September '08. For a while there, the new dog-friendly plans seemed to cause trouble between small pet owners and those with large breeds, who feared lack of separation and space allocation would reap havoc.

Under a Community Board 8 resolution the area was sectioned to allow small dog and big dogs to each have their own play space. Small dogs may frolic in the larger space. Bigger dogs; however, are not permitted in the area sectioned for small dogs to create a safety zone.

It seems we all can get along; we just need is a little (fenced) space.